

INSPECTION REPORT

Castledown Community Nursery and Primary School
Hastings

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique Reference Number: 114474

Headteacher: Claire Ockwell

Reporting inspector: Michael J Cahill
19623

Dates of inspection: 11 – 14 October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707273

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery, Infant and Junior

Type of control: County

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Priory Road
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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Derek Ireland

Date of previous inspection: May 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Michael J Cahill, Rgl	Mathematics	Characteristics of the school Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management
Helen Barter, Lay Inspector	Special educational needs	Attendance Partnership with parents and the community Efficiency
Glenys Bramley	Religious education Geography Music	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Sanchia Pearse	Equal opportunities English History	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
Carolyn Powell	Under-fives Science Art Design and technology	
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REPORT CONTENTS

Paragraph

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well
Where the school has weaknesses
How the school has improved since the last inspection
Standards in subjects
Quality of teaching
Other aspects of the school
The parents' views of the school

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school
Key indicators

1 - 4

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

Attainment and progress
Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
Attendance

5 - 14
15 - 21
22 - 23

Quality of education provided

Teaching
The curriculum and assessment
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
Partnership with parents and the community

24 - 33
34 - 44
45 - 51
52 - 57
58 - 67

The management and efficiency of the school

Leadership and management
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
The efficiency of the school
Provision for pupils with special educational needs

68 - 75
76 - 87
88 - 96
97 - 107

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

Areas of learning for children under five

105 - 129

English, mathematics and science

Information technology and religious education

130 - 182

Other subjects or courses

183 - 220

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence

221 - 222

Data and indicators

Main findings

What the school does well

- Children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes.
- Standards of attainment in science are above the national average throughout the school.
- The school maintains a good partnership with parents and the local community.
- Staff demonstrate great care for and commitment towards their pupils.
- There are very good procedures for staff development.
- The school is very successful in promoting the health, safety and well-being of its pupils.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Standards of literacy are below the national average throughout the school.
- II. The National Curriculum for information technology is not fully taught and standards of attainment are below national expectations.
- III. The school does not make adequate provision for the teaching of art and design and technology throughout the school, or for geography at Key Stage 2.
- IV. There is no whole-school approach to promoting and rewarding good behaviour and there is too much variation in expectations of work and behaviour.
- V. Assessment procedures in Key Stages 1 and 2 are not followed consistently and planning does not build successfully on what pupils know, understand and can do.

These weaknesses are outweighed by what the school does well. The governing body will be producing an action plan for further improving the attainment of pupils and will be sending a copy to all parents of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The overall quality of teaching has improved, with 95 per cent of lessons graded at least satisfactory compared with 84 per cent in 1996, and 38 per cent of lessons graded good or better. Standards in music in Key Stage 2 and in religious education throughout the school are now satisfactory. The responsibilities of teachers with subject and other management responsibilities have been made clearer. The presentation of pupils' work has improved, although there is still no whole-school strategy for improving handwriting. However, assessment procedures are still not consistently used to promote pupils' progress.

The good partnership between the governing body, headteacher, staff and parents provides a sound foundation for further improvement.

Standards in subjects

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

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

Schools are described as similar when they fall into the same band with respect to the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, in this case between 35 per cent and 50 per cent. The inspection team looked at a wide range of work from the last school year as well as the present one and observed more than 80 lessons or parts of lessons. On the basis of this evidence the judgement of the team is that at Key Stage 1 standards are below average in English, average in mathematics and in line with expectations in science. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards are below average in English, average in mathematics and above average in science. In both key stages, standards of attainment are below expectations in information technology and in line with the expectations of the locally-agreed syllabus in religious education.

Attainment and progress in geography at Key Stage 1, history, music and physical education throughout the school are in line with what is expected of children of their age. In geography at Key Stage 2, and art and design and technology throughout the school, standards are below those expected, largely because not enough emphasis is given to planning the progressive development of skills, knowledge and understanding in these subjects.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 11 years
English	Satisfactory	Good	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Science	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Very good
Information technology	Not observed	Not observed	Satisfactory
Religious education	Not observed	Good	Satisfactory
Other subjects	Satisfactory	Good	Satisfactory

Teaching is at least satisfactory in 95 per cent of lessons, and in 10 per cent it is very good. Five per cent of teaching, all in the earlier half of Key Stage 2, is less than satisfactory.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	The behaviour of most pupils is satisfactory, both in and out of the classroom. A small minority of pupils behave poorly, showing little respect for others and a lack of interest in their work.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The vast majority of parents get their children to school on time.
Ethos*	There is a friendly, welcoming and supportive working atmosphere. Staff and parents show great loyalty to the school. In some cases, however, expectations of work and behaviour are not high enough.
Leadership and management	The headteacher has clearly identified what needs to be done to move the school forward and has already led significant improvements. The governing body and staff provide committed support.
Curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced except for aspects of information technology, art, design and technology and geography. Assessment procedures are not consistently carried out.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	There is sound provision in most respects and the school uses visits and visiting speakers well. There are too few planned opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	The hardworking and committed teaching staff are well supported by the team of classroom assistants. Accommodation and resources are sound, although there is barely enough playground space and some classrooms are small.
Value for money	The school provides sound value for money.

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

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
VI. Their children like coming to school. VII. They are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school. VIII. The staff are approachable. IX. The care and support provided for their children. X. Improvement in the provision for music.	XI. Limited accommodation and playground XII. Lack of a grass area. XIII. Lack of information about what is XIV. Inconsistency in homework

Inspection findings support the positive views of parents and the views expressed about space. Most parents feel that they are kept adequately informed about what is taught, and the view of the inspection team is that the school is largely successful in what it is doing. The school's home-school agreement and homework policy are positive steps towards improving consistency with respect to the setting of homework.

Key issues for action

In order to achieve the targets that the school has set itself in its continuing efforts to improve the quality of education provided and to raise levels of attainment, the governing body, with the headteacher and staff, should:

continue to give priority to raising standards in language and literacy by:

- XV. encouraging extended speaking opportunities in order to increase pupils' fluency and skills of persuasion and argument;
- XVI. checking for comprehension and developing higher order reading skills of prediction and analysis;
- XVII. developing a wider range of writing skills, while still focusing on details such as the use of punctuation, spelling, handwriting, and presentation;
- XVIII. continuing staff training and development in the effective use of the literacy hour and reinforcing literacy skills across the curriculum.

(see paragraphs 130 – 145)

improve standards in information technology by:

- XIX. accelerating the programme of staff training;
- XX. making sure that all aspects of the programme of study are taught;
- XXI. making sure that all pupils are allocated sufficient time to develop their skills across this subject;
- XXII. making sure that the potential for using information technology to raise standards in other subjects is more fully realised.

(see paragraphs 169 – 173)

improve standards of attainment and progress in art, design and technology throughout the school and in geography in Key Stage 2 by:

- XXIII. constructing schemes of work which show clearly what skills, knowledge and understanding should be acquired in each year group and built on subsequently;
- XXIV. raising the profile of these subjects in teachers' planning and making sure that adequate time is devoted to them.

(see paragraphs 35, 41, 182 – 200)

continue to improve the quality of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to work by:

- XXV. sharing the present good practice in behaviour management and the high expectations evident in the early years, in Key Stage 1 and the end of Key Stage 2;
- XXVI. implementing a whole-school approach to the public celebration and reward of good work and behaviour;
- XXVII. providing appropriate challenges throughout the school, as in the better lessons observed.

(see paragraphs 15 – 21, 28 – 31, 48, 49)

continue to improve the overall quality of teaching by:

- XXVIII. making sure that lesson planning includes a clear identification of what the pupils are intended to learn;
- XXIX. making sure that the assessment procedures are consistently used throughout the school;
- XXX. making sure that assessment information is effectively used to improve the progress of individuals and of groups of pupils.

(see paragraphs 24 – 33, 41 – 44)

In addition to these key issues, the governing body should include in its action plan how it intends to:

- XXXI. make sure that the roles and responsibilities of the deputy headteacher and other

members of the senior management team accurately reflect the school's priorities for development.

(see paragraphs 69, 73)

- **Introduction**

- **Characteristics of the school**

1. Castledown Community Nursery and Primary School is not far from the centre of Hastings. It serves an identifiable local community and has grown in size over the past few years in response to local population needs and parental pressure. The parental background includes people working in the professions and in the holiday and service industries, as well as some who are unemployed. Around 37 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, a figure that is well above the national average of 20 per cent. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and none who speak English as an additional language. Fifty pupils, including 12 with full statements, have individual education plans because of their special educational needs. These figures are well above the national averages.
2. The school has the equivalent of 426 pupils on its roll (219 boys and 207 girls) and they are taught in single-age classes with the exception of pupils in Years 5 and 6, who are taught in four parallel mixed-age classes. Fifty children attend the nursery for either the morning or the afternoon session from September in the school year in which their fourth birthday falls. They then transfer to the reception classes, autumn-born children taking up a full-time place in September and others doing so at the start of the term in which they are five. The attainment of most children on entry to the nursery is well below the national average.
3. The aims of the school emphasise the pursuit of quality and excellence in all aspects of school life, and the building of self-esteem. Current priorities include the raising of standards in literacy, numeracy and information technology.
4. The school was last inspected in May 1996 and the key issues at the time related to a failure to meet statutory requirements in religious education and collective worship, unsatisfactory standards in music in Key Stage 2 and a significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 2. The inspection report drew attention to the need to establish clearer definitions of the curricular responsibilities of co-ordinators and to improve assessment procedures.

4. Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1

For latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	29	35	64

4. National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	10	10	22
	Girls	24	26	31
	Total	34	36	53
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	56	59	87
	National	80	81	84

4. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	12	22	25
	Girls	28	31	31
	Total	40	53	56
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	66	87	92
	National	81	85	86

Attainment at Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2

For latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	21	15	36

4. National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	12	13	17
	Girls	7	5	9
	Total	19	18	26
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	54	51	74
	National	65	59	69

4. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	12	13	17
	Girls	6	6	8
	Total	18	19	25
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	51	54	71
	National	65	65	72

4. Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	5.4
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.6
	National comparative data	0.5

4.

4.

Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	6
Permanent	0

4. Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	10
Satisfactory or better	95
Less than satisfactory	5

4.

4.

4. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

4. **Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school**

4. **Attainment and progress**

5. The results of the 1998 assessments for seven-year-olds show that their attainment in reading and writing was well below the national average. In mathematics attainment was below the national average while in science it was above. Taking the three years 1996 to 1998 together, test results in reading, writing and mathematics are well below the national average. The school's test results in reading and writing are also well below average when compared with those of schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. In mathematics they are in line with the average. Although no national comparisons can be made, the school's 1999 results are broadly similar to those of the last three years. The results achieved by boys and girls are not significantly different. The school has set itself realistic targets for improvement over the next three years and is wisely focusing a lot of resources on improving the standard of literacy from the nursery upwards.
6. Inspection judgements are based on examination of a wide range of work from the last school year as well as from the current one, observation of lessons and discussions with pupils. Due in large measure to the successful introduction of the Literacy Hour, attainment in English, including literacy, is judged to be now below, rather than well below, the national average. In mathematics, including numeracy, attainment is judged to be in line with the average, and in science it is in line with national expectations.
7. The results of the 1998 national tests for eleven-year-olds were well below the national average in English, below in mathematics and in line with the national average in science. The trend over the last three years in all three subjects was one of improvement in 1997 compared with 1996, followed by a fall back in 1998 (but not to 1996 levels). The school attributes these fluctuations largely to variations in the numbers of pupils with special educational needs in the year groups. The 1999 results are broadly similar to the average of the last three years, except in mathematics, where there is an improvement in the proportion of pupils achieving at least the national expectation. There is no significant difference in the results of boys and girls. The school has set itself realistic targets for improving attainment over the next three years.
8. Standards of attainment in information technology are below the national average at the end of both key stages, largely because the National Curriculum Programme of Study is not fully covered and pupils do not get enough opportunity to develop new skills or to practise the ones they have. Progress is unsatisfactory in both key stages. In religious education, attainment is in line with the expectations expressed in the locally-agreed syllabus. Attainment in geography at Key Stage 1, history, music and physical education is in line with what is expected of pupils of primary school age, and progress is satisfactory. In geography at Key Stage 2, art, and design and technology, the absence of an adequate planning framework means that, although there are examples of good attainment, progress throughout the school is unsatisfactory. At the time of the last inspection there was unsatisfactory attainment in religious education and in music in Key Stage 2. This has now been remedied. In both key stages, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans.
9. The attainment on entry to the nursery of children who are under four years of age is well below the national expectation. During their time in the nursery and reception classes

they make at least sound, usually good and sometimes very good progress. However, attainment is still below average in most respects by the time children are five. (See paragraphs 105-129 for further detail about the attainment and progress of the under-fives.)

10. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils who had entered the nursery with unclear and underdeveloped speech start to express their ideas more fully. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils express their ideas more accurately and begin to express and justify opinions. At both key stages, pupils listen carefully when they are interested. Overall progress is sound. However, pupils' skills of persuasion and argument are under-developed.
11. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils can read and enjoy books from the reading scheme and a few more-able pupils read other books independently. However, many pupils do not always understand the meaning of what they have read and this lack of comprehension is reflected in the below average Standard Assessment Test results. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils successfully read simple texts and more-able pupils read fluently, accurately and with growing expression. Overall progress is sound.
12. Many pupils in both key stages have underdeveloped handwriting and presentation skills. However, pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are forming letters accurately and most can spell simple key words. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils are aware of the uses of punctuation, and more able pupils use speech marks correctly. Higher-attaining pupils in this key stage write full playscripts and show a good understanding of stage directions. Overall progress is sound. More detail on attainment and progress in the different aspects of literacy can be found in paragraphs 130 - 145.
13. Attainment in mathematics, including numeracy, at the end of both key stages is judged to be in line with national averages. In Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their number skills, including successfully counting in tens and mentally adding up three low value coins. Computational skills continue to develop satisfactorily in Key Stage 2 and pupils also make good progress in developing the skills of mathematical investigation.
14. In science, attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. Here pupils show a good understanding of the properties of common materials and of the changes caused by heat and cold. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to develop a good knowledge base and improve their experimental skills. At the end of the key stage attainment is judged to be above national averages.
14. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**
15. Most pupils have a sound attitude to learning. Children under five learn to play together and to share. In Key Stages 1 and 2, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, co-operate satisfactorily with adults and each other. A small number of pupils are not well motivated and need support and encouragement to concentrate and take part sensibly in lessons. Where teaching and support are good or better, pupils are keen to put forward ideas and focus well on their work. They learn to work independently in small groups. This is often seen in practical lessons, such as science, or when older pupils are doing research in small groups and in well-planned literacy and numeracy lessons.

16. Behaviour in class is not consistent and therefore is not satisfactory overall. Pupils do not have automatic respect for adults and for each other. In those lessons where work does not capture their imagination, the influence of a minority of pupils can spread and lead to interruptions, silly behaviour, and a lack of concentration. This hinders the learning of everybody. Where teaching is good or better, pupils behave well and concentrate on what they are doing. The staff work hard to maintain a satisfactory level of behaviour in and around the school. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils are behaving in a responsible way, showing respect for adults and more awareness of each other's feelings.
17. There is good practice seen in a few classes of pupils discussing, agreeing and writing up their own school rules. These rules are then regularly referred to and this acts as a constant reminder to pupils and helps them to feel that they are part of the decision-making process. The school has agreed sanctions for unacceptable behaviour but few public rewards for good behaviour. One good example of public reward is the recent introduction in Key Stage 1 of the *Golden Book* assembly where pupils are praised for good work, behaviour, or effort. They respond well to this and show pride in the recognition of their achievements.
18. There have been six fixed-term exclusions, involving three pupils over the past year. This shows an increase since the last inspection and is largely accounted for by the increase in the school roll. Exclusion is still seen as an ultimate sanction. Parents have been fully involved and the pupils concerned are now receiving appropriate support.
19. Relationships throughout the school are sound. Pupils benefit from the atmosphere of care and trust. They are learning to be courteous and show consideration for others, but this does not come easily to some pupils. Pupils are encouraged to listen to each other and to consider the impact of their actions on others.
20. There is a sound programme of personal and social development throughout the school. Personal and social development is rightly seen as a priority and is consistently reinforced through assemblies. Older pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities such as the *market trader* day, helping in the library and taking part in school productions. Pupils regularly help with the task of collecting lunchboxes. Residential trips also play an important part in developing social and personal skills. The cost of these trips is kept to a minimum so that most pupils enjoy their benefits. Most pupils do develop sound social skills and, by the end of Key Stage 2, are aware of issues related to personal development. They grow in self-esteem and confidence as they progress through the school.
21. Behaviour, attitudes to work and personal development were described as strengths of the school in the report of the last inspection. This is no longer the case and the school recognises the need to ensure the consistent application of agreed standards through regular training for staff, especially in strategies for managing the behaviour of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
21. **Attendance**
22. For the majority of pupils, attendance at school is satisfactory. Levels of authorised absence are in line with national averages, although the level of unauthorised absence is slightly above. The school has recently improved its procedures for marking registers

and making clear to staff what constitutes an authorised absence. This has resulted in a truer picture of pupils' attendance patterns so that the school can identify where any problems are arising, for example the increasing tendency for parents to take pupils away for holidays during term-time.

23. Pupils' punctuality is also satisfactory. Some pupils are regularly late, but the majority arrive in time for registration and the start of lessons. Registrations are held at the beginning of both morning and afternoon sessions. Pupils are encouraged to answer politely to their names. The youngest pupils in the nursery register themselves, with the help of their parents, by finding their names and pictures to put on the *tree*. This makes an effective contribution to their personal development. Throughout the school, registration periods are quick and efficient and no time is wasted before lessons get under way.

23.

23. **Quality of education provided**

23. **Teaching**

24. The overall quality of teaching is sound, with around 38 per cent of lessons judged to be good or very good. In fact one in ten of the lessons observed was very good and only five per cent were less than satisfactory. These figures represent a substantial improvement since the last inspection, when one in six lessons overall, and one in four of the lessons observed in Key Stage 2, were found to be unsatisfactory or poor.
25. High quality teaching is most evident in science in Years 5 and 6, English in Year 1, music in Years 2 and 5/6, and physical education in Year 1. Unsatisfactory or poor teaching occurred in Years 3 and 4 in English, mathematics, history and physical education. The most consistently good or very good teaching was in Years 1 and 2, where over 60 per cent of teaching fell into these categories. This compares with around 30 per cent in Key Stage 2 and in the nursery and reception classes that are composed largely of children who are under five years of age.
26. The teaching in the literacy hour was at least satisfactory in all lessons except one in Year 3, and around 40 per cent of those observed were good or very good. The teaching of mathematics, incorporating the National Numeracy Strategy, was at least satisfactory in all lessons except one in Year 4, and around 36 per cent of those observed were good.
27. The teaching of the children who are under five years of age in the nursery and reception classes is always at least satisfactory, and in terms of developing children's language it is sometimes good (see paragraphs 105 to 129). In the four Key Stage 1 classes teaching is also always at least satisfactory and often, as indicated above, it is good or very good. For example, very good literacy lessons were observed, based on clear identification of what the pupils were to learn, in Year 1. Questioning was used well to help pupils to remember the details of the poem *Mr Mad's Machine*, and discussion was organised so that all contributed. The teachers communicated enthusiasm for literature and provided tasks for pupils of a wide range of abilities. The pupils were told what they were going to learn during the session and enjoyed seeing the teacher tick items off on the list.

28. There is a consistency of approach and expectations of work and behaviour developing across the two Key Stage 1 year groups, which is already contributing to raising standards. For example, in a physical education lesson in Year 1 and in a music lesson in Year 2, expectations of work and behaviour are made very clear to pupils at the start of the lessons. Both of these very good lessons have clear learning objectives, and a structure which involves changes of activity, including an important sharing session at the end. Both lessons proceed at a brisk pace and pupils are fully involved, with very little opportunity to be inattentive or misbehave. In these and many other lessons special needs and learning support assistants make an important contribution in enabling some pupils to have a fuller access to the whole curriculum.
29. In the lower part of Key Stage 2 the majority of teaching is of a satisfactory standard, based on plans which include learning intentions, and with a sound focus on these during the lessons. Relationships are satisfactory, as is classroom management. Teachers try to make their lessons interesting and provide work which is appropriate to the pupils' needs. However, examples were observed during the inspection week of teaching in each of Years 3 and 4 which was not well planned or presented, with the result that pupils did not make satisfactory progress. For example, a literacy lesson in Year 3 was poorly planned and presented. Because of this most pupils did not pay attention or contribute in the whole-class part of the lesson. Group tasks were not well matched to pupils' existing attainment and most pupils chatted or fooled around. The teacher's attempts to gain control and attention either through threats or through entirely inappropriate praise were a failure. The majority of pupils made little progress in an hour.
30. Unsatisfactory lessons in one class in Year 4 stem largely from unsatisfactory planning. There is insufficient clarity in the identification of what pupils are to learn and as a result activities and tasks and the allocation of time are not always appropriate. A potentially interesting lesson on Tudor attitudes to crime did not achieve its potential because the pupils were expected to spend a long time listening to the teacher and became restless. This meant that the teacher had to spend too much time trying to regain pupils' attention and there was too little time for the planned drama and group activities.
31. Of the 21 lessons observed in the mixed-age classes in Years 5/6, eight were judged to be good and four to be very good; the rest were all of sound quality. Most of the very good teaching was found in the science lessons, where the planning and organisation were of a high order. Teachers in these lessons on forces demonstrated very good subject knowledge, used questioning very well to consolidate and extend learning, set tasks clearly and gave pupils a high degree of responsibility for their own learning. As a consequence there was a very high level of commitment to the work and pupils worked together very well on the tasks. The classrooms and shared areas took on the flavour of laboratory investigations, and support assistants made a valuable contribution to the lessons. Pupils who were inattentive and fidgety in other less challenging and less well-prepared lessons during the week displayed a very good level of responsibility and pride in their work.
32. Throughout the school, day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress is satisfactory, but few teachers actually make notes that would help to improve curriculum planning and teaching beyond the immediate future. There are, however, many examples of high quality marking which helps pupils to recognise what is good (or not) about their work and how they could improve it further.

33. Some parents were critical of inconsistencies in the setting of homework. Inspection evidence supports this view, although there is much good practice. The school is taking steps to improve further its work in this respect.
33. **The curriculum and assessment**
34. Children under five follow the nationally recommended guidance, which covers six areas of learning. An appropriate emphasis is placed on language and literacy, mathematics, and personal and social development. Children are well supported when they move on to the National Curriculum.
35. The school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum for pupils in both key stages. The curriculum as a whole is broad, balanced, and relevant to the needs of all pupils, although within this there are some relative weaknesses. The programme of study for information technology is not fully taught to all pupils, although plans are in place to remedy this. The curriculum for art and design technology at both key stages and for geography at Key Stage 2 is not planned in such a way that a coherent and progressive course is presented. The way the school approaches these subjects does not ensure that pupils make steady progress, building on previous knowledge and skills.
36. The school has dealt with some of the issues raised by the previous inspection, but not all. It now meets requirements for religious education and collective worship. There are no longer weaknesses in science investigations, or in listening to and appraising music. While most subjects now have policies and schemes of work, some, such as in information technology and physical education, have yet to be reviewed. Work has been put into improving assessment procedures, but their application is neither consistent nor regular, and as a result they remain unsatisfactory.
37. Pupils' overall intellectual development is catered for satisfactorily. The school's arrangements to promote their physical development are also sound, with a well structured programme of physical education as well as opportunities for older pupils to take part in extra-curricular sport and dance. Personal, social and health education is part of the taught curriculum. There are satisfactory links with receiving high schools.
38. The school meets its statutory requirements. There is a recently developed policy for religious education. Health and sex education is dealt with in the personal, social and health education course and pupils are also taught to be aware of the dangers of drugs. Parents are informed of their right to withdraw pupils from religious education, collective worship and sex education. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
39. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have equal access to the curriculum. In lesson planning, there are often separate tasks for pupils of different abilities. While these are usually appropriate for the average and less able pupils, those for more-able pupils are not always carefully matched to their abilities. Rather than extending pupils' abilities by challenging them, they sometimes consist of more work at the same level. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are deliberately grouped into four mixed-age classes. While the school has various reasons for preferring this organisation, pupils in Year 5, in particular, benefit from the curricular demands placed on them in most

lessons.

40. The school makes sound provision for extra-curricular activities. As well as coaching in soccer and netball skills, there is an art club for pupils in Year 3. The country dance club well embodies the community ethos of the school, with pupils, teachers and parents dancing together with obvious enjoyment.
41. The school has an overview, in broad outline, of the curriculum from year to year. Teachers plan weekly in some detail for the core subjects of literacy, numeracy and science, and there is an appropriate focus on information technology. However, planning for other subjects is not as good because teachers are not always precise enough about what they want pupils to learn. They emphasise the activity the pupils are going to do instead of the learning points. Teachers plan together in year groups, which means that pupils in different classes are offered the same opportunities. Where topics combine work in science, art and design and technology, the content is often mainly science based. As a consequence, knowledge and skills in art, design and technology and also geography are not thoroughly covered. The lack of effective schemes of work in some subjects makes it difficult for teachers to plan a steady development of skills, knowledge and understanding for their pupils.
42. The school has an assessment calendar which lists the assessments to be carried out with each year group. A useful individual tracking record has also just been developed. However, the individual assessments by teachers of pupils' attainment each term in English, mathematics and science, on which much of this record is based, have not taken place, and as a result the school's procedures for assessment are unsatisfactory. The achievements of each year group are reviewed annually. This helps to highlight areas for development, such as literacy at Key Stage 1, but the school is aware of the need to refine the process so that it provides more detailed and useful information.
43. Pupils enter Year 1 with between one and three terms of full-time education in the reception class. Some pupils return to the reception classroom on some afternoons for further early learning experiences. There is at present, however, no formal assessment at the end of the reception year to identify sharply which pupils would benefit most from this alternative provision, or what their specific needs are.
44. The school makes effective use of assessment information in some areas, such as the setting of pupils in Year 5 and 6 for mathematics, or when using assessment units in science to identify any weaknesses. Elsewhere, however, the school does not use pupil assessment effectively to help individual pupils make progress or to set challenging targets for overall improvement.
44. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**
45. The school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils, including the under fives, is sound.
46. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is fostered through religious education and assemblies. Most pupils take part in acts of collective worship through key stage and year group assemblies. These have an appropriately balanced multi-faith dimension and incorporate the use of music, stories and drama from different religions and cultures. Assemblies are well organised and provide the opportunity for the values of the school to

be shared. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 explore and reflect on the themes of friendship and kindness, and on the same theme young pupils give thanks to God through prayer. Other opportunities for reflection and spiritual growth are offered in the religious education curriculum, where many religions and festivals are celebrated and pupils learn to understand the beliefs of other people and reflect on their own beliefs, attitudes and values.

47. The previous inspection identified the need to consider a more planned approach to the promotion of spiritual development to enable pupils to explore further this aspect through other areas of the curriculum such as music, stories and writing. The school has made satisfactory improvements in this respect, but recognises that there is more to do.
48. The ethos of the school provides effective moral guidance from an early age. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and most are developing good habits of self-discipline. Principles are taught and reinforced as incidents arise. Most pupils know and respect the school rules and have a developing sense of fairness and honesty. Clear expectations of behaviour are laid down in the newly introduced behaviour guidelines for pupils and parents. Parents approve of the attitudes and values that the school promotes. Good work, effort and behaviour are recorded in the Key Stage 1 *Golden Book* and are celebrated in assembly. This positive strategy of using incentives could now be usefully extended throughout the school to include all pupils in a comprehensive merit/award system. Effective use is made of literature and discussion in raising issues with the pupils in the school's personal and social lessons.
49. Social education is encouraged in many aspects of school life. From an early age, pupils are encouraged to take turns and share. Adults act as good role models in developing a sense of community and belonging, in an atmosphere where pupils feel valued. Staff are successful in promoting trust between themselves and pupils. Most pupils listen to each other during discussions and show respect for other pupils' views and opinions. They share resources sensibly. Many show consideration for the needs of others; for example, they hold doors open and offer appropriate seating for visiting adults. They take responsibility for tasks around the school, and older pupils work with reception children to produce a mural. However, the range of opportunities has yet to be extended further to encourage initiative and pupils' developing independence. Provision for social development is well enhanced by visiting specialists, including representatives from the local police who explore aspects of citizenship with older pupils.
50. Pupils gain an insight into the needs of others through their fundraising activities for charity, support for *Red Nose Day* and *Jeans for Genes*, and holding *Blue Peter Bring and Buy Sales*. Pupils' awareness of the wider community is enhanced through opportunities to perform in concerts and meet people of different ages and backgrounds. For example, pupils in Year 3 work with, help and in some cases start to establish friendships with visiting pupils from Glyne Gap Special School. For example, when together they learn movements in order to perform a dance in celebration of the Hindu festival of Holi.
51. Pupils visit places within and beyond their own locality. They talk about other religions in collective worship and religious education lessons and experience examples of music and dance from different countries, including India and Ghana. Through these experiences pupils begin to explore the richness and breadth of other traditions. Through their involvement in the Comenius Project, which develops links with schools in

Italy and Finland, younger pupils are provided with opportunities to examine cultural diversity. In this respect the school has extended pupils' awareness of other cultural traditions since the last inspection. In English lessons pupils have the opportunity to listen to and work with a visiting author and poet during Book Week. Pupils enjoy educational visits to places of worship, museums and historical sites. Pupils in Years 4 and 6 make residential visits to Mallydams Wood RSPCA Centre and Climbing camp site. All these activities support and enrich pupils' cultural development.

51. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

52. The school provides a secure and caring environment for its pupils. Individual teachers are aware of their pupils' academic progress and personal development. However, procedures for recording and monitoring this are not yet fully in place and so teachers' planning does not build consistently on what pupils already know, understand and can do. Parents believe that the school is a safe place for their children and they are happy with the values and attitudes which the school encourages their children to develop. Pupils are very positive about their school and enjoy their time there.
53. There is a strong emphasis on raising pupils' self-esteem. This is emphasised during the personal and social education programme, but is also a common thread running through everything that the adults in the school community do. Relationships are generally good, although some pupils show a lack of respect at times. Good support is given to the youngest children in the nursery and reception classes, with helpful records kept of the progress they make. Pupils with special educational needs are known well by their teachers and are well supported.
54. Procedures for recording and monitoring attendance are satisfactory and comply with statutory requirements. Pupils' attendance is closely monitored and all absences lead to a telephone call on the same day. Unexplained absences of more than three days are always followed up by the school to ensure that there is a satisfactory explanation. The educational welfare officer visits the school twice a term to check registers and discuss areas of concern.
55. There is no whole-school approach to promoting and rewarding good behaviour and positive attitudes to work. The discipline policy issued to staff focuses on the sanctions which follow poor or unacceptable behaviour, in order to ensure consistency and fairness. There are clear strategies for dealing with incidents of bullying and harassment, with support for both the victim and the perpetrator. The only regular public celebration of pupils' achievements is at a weekly *Golden Book* assembly in Key Stage 1. There are also the Friday sharing assembly and occasions when sporting awards are distributed. Pupils in both key stages were unable to talk about occasions at which special effort, behaviour or work are publicly acknowledged. There is no school council or similar forum to encourage responsibility and debate. The recently introduced home/school agreement supports the school's efforts to improve behaviour. There is a sound policy for the use of force to restrain and control pupils.
56. The school's procedures for child protection are very good. There are three named members of staff who have received appropriate training, and there is a good level of awareness among the teaching staff. Training is also given to support assistants and midday supervisors so that they know how to deal with concerns they may have. Arrangements for first aid are thorough, with five members of staff who are fully trained.

In addition, one day training is arranged for all support assistants and midday supervisors. There are suitable arrangements for administering pupils' medication.

57. There is an appropriate health and safety policy. However, it does not provide clear enough guidelines for staff. A committee of the governing body meets each term, following a risk assessment carried out by the chair of the committee, the caretaker and either the headteacher or her deputy. There is a written record of points raised by this inspection, including the responsibility for dealing with it and the timescale involved. Health and safety are standard agenda items at every staff meeting

57. Partnership with parents and the community

58. The school's partnership with parents and the community is one of its good features and makes a significant contribution to pupils' achievements and the quality of their learning. In the questionnaires completed before the inspection and at the meeting with the registered inspector most parents showed good support for the school and its work. They report that it is easy to approach the school with any concerns or problems that they wish to discuss and appreciate the regular, informal contact that they have with teachers. Parents feel that the school provides their children with a caring and supportive learning environment and say that their children like coming to school. Parents are positive about the welcome and encouragement they receive to take part in the life of the school. These positive aspects of the school's work have been maintained since the last inspection.
59. Although most of the comments about the school's work were good, there were some less positive opinions in two specific areas and this was reflected in the questionnaire returns. Comments about the school's provision for homework range from opinions that children should not have to do additional work at home to expressions of feeling that children are not sufficiently prepared for homework when they move on to secondary school. The school has satisfactorily addressed these concerns through the recent introduction of a homework policy which clearly sets out what parents can expect their children to receive on a regular or occasional basis as they move through the school.
60. Some parents would also like more information about what is being taught in the curriculum so that they can support their children's learning at home. The school does currently send topic information in newsletters to parents, and teachers are always available to give parents more information about what their children are learning in school.
61. Overall, the quality of information that parents receive is good. The school's prospectus has been recently updated and provides good information for parents of children who are new to the school, although the information on special educational needs lacks detail. The separate information provided for children in the nursery is also good and helps parents to settle their children into school life. Information in the annual report from the governing body about the work and achievements of the school is satisfactory, although the financial information is limited. Through regular newsletters parents receive good information about daily organisation, visits outside school and work that pupils are doing in class.
62. The school places an emphasis on its informal contact with parents. Home visits made by staff in the nursery are an effective way of building a positive home-school

relationship with families. Many teachers are available in the playground to speak to parents at the end of the school day and this is effective in keeping parents regularly informed about their children's progress and any difficulties they may have had during the day. There are satisfactory arrangements in place for termly formal meetings with teachers, and parents have the opportunity to see their children at work during the summer open afternoon.

63. Although parents have a good understanding of what their children are doing through these arrangements, the quality of pupils' end of year reports is less satisfactory. In Key Stage 2, tick boxes are used to demonstrate children's progress and achievement against headings listed under each subject. Some targets are set for pupils' improvement, although these do not always have a specific focus on individual subject areas and can be vague, for example 'continue to work hard'. Comments on pupils' personal and social development are good and the contribution of pupils' own comments on their achievement and progress is a good feature. In Key Stage 1, however, a list of tick boxes against a series of statements does not give parents sufficient information about what a pupil has learned during the year and how well they have done. There is very little evaluation of pupils' strengths and weaknesses in each subject and there are no formal targets for improvement. The school is aware of the need to improve the quality and consistency of reporting across the school.
64. Parents' involvement in their children's learning is satisfactory. Some parents help in school with activities such as reading, and in the nursery and accompanying pupils to swimming lessons. In its documentation, the school actively encourages this support. Most parents are supportive of school events and attend concerts, sports events and open afternoons. Meetings to explain the national strategies for literacy and numeracy are less well attended. Parents give good support to the work of the Friends of Castledown, which holds fundraising and social events, runs a weekly uniform and book stall and makes valuable contributions to the school's resources. The school has introduced a satisfactory home-school agreement which demonstrates its commitment to a positive partnership with parents and encourages their involvement in and support of their children's learning. Although there are some parents who do help their children and hear them read regularly at home or send in items to support topics in the curriculum, there are many who are not actively involved on a regular basis in their children's work. The school recognises this and is placing a greater emphasis on providing 'research' homework rather than formal English and mathematics activities.
65. The school's partnership with the community is good and this has a positive impact on pupils' attainment and their social and cultural development. Pupils make a wide range of visits outside school to support topics in the curriculum. Visits to museums, theatres, churches and places of historical interest such as Battle Abbey and Rye, as well as visits to the local shops and the beach, are used well to support pupils' learning and enrich their cultural development. The school makes good use of visitors to enrich the curriculum. These include artists, church leaders, student teachers, theatre groups, authors and overseas visitors from the Pestalozzi village at Seddlescombe. This broadens pupils' understanding of the wider community and furthers their social and cultural development.
66. The school has good links with other local schools. Pupils regularly take part in inter-school sports tournaments and music festivals. The school has a strong commitment to the inclusion and integration of pupils with different educational needs. There are very

good links with two local special schools where reciprocal visits by groups of pupils and the use of sports facilities give pupils good opportunities to work with and understand pupils with needs which are different from their own. Staff meet regularly with colleagues from other primary schools and the main receiving secondary schools to discuss curriculum development and transition arrangements for pupils.

67. The school makes very good use of its links with local businesses, through the Education Business Partnership, to involve pupils in events such as a technology challenge, and to obtain resources for the school and improve its playground area. The school benefits from established links with the local newspaper to involve pupils in an annual competition and to publicise the school's work and achievements.

67. **The management and efficiency of the school**

67. **Leadership and management**

68. The leadership and management of the school are sound overall, with several strengths. The headteacher, who took up the post two years ago and some 16 months after the last inspection, has a clear vision of how the school needs to move forward. She does not regard social exclusion or deprivation as an excuse for underachievement and has already taken steps to improve the overall provision for pupils with special educational needs and to raise the level of expectation in Key Stage 1. On the basis of inspection evidence it can be seen that these two steps are well founded and are already contributing to raising standards. Under her leadership the school has revised many of its systems and structures in order to cope with the increase in pupil numbers and consequent reduction in space. She is well supported by staff who share her commitment and care for the pupils, and the school runs smoothly as a result of good day-to-day management and well established and understood procedures.
69. The headteacher, governing body and staff have made sound progress in remedying most of the weaknesses identified by the last inspection report. In particular the school now meets statutory requirements with respect to religious education and collective worship and has improved standards in music in Key Stage 2 - an improvement commented on by parents at the pre-inspection meeting. The roles and responsibilities of subject and other co-ordinators have been clarified in response to a key issue arising from the last inspection. However, there is insufficient regular, direct and focused monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher monitors as part of her appraisal role, but the deputy headteacher does not have a formal cross-school and cross-curricular monitoring role beyond his very effective support of science teaching.
70. Assessment procedures have been improved since the last inspection, although inspection evidence indicates that there is substantial inconsistency in the degree to which they are carried out and the extent to which results support subsequent planning. Progress on this key issue since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. There also remains more to do in raising the level of teachers' expectations of work and behaviour to the level of the best practice recorded elsewhere in this report.
71. The governing body plays an increasingly active role in supporting the school and in continuing to move it forward. It discharges its responsibilities through an appropriate committee structure and there are effective reporting procedures between the

committees and the governing body. Regular, minuted meetings make sure that the governors are kept fully informed and the governing body now meets its statutory obligations. The integration of pupils with special educational needs is the highest priority in terms of equal opportunity issues and this is appropriate for the school intake. The school is also aware of the need for its curriculum to reflect the richness and diversity of different cultures and is making sound progress in this respect.

72. The leadership and management of the provision for special educational needs are sound. The co-ordinator is a key member of the senior management team. She has recently been responsible for overseeing a large increase in the team of special educational needs assistants, and the transition to this form of support for pupils has been effectively carried out. The co-ordinator runs weekly support and training sessions for her staff and these make an important contribution to improving the service provided.
73. The current school development plan covers a three-year period and includes appropriate priorities in the areas of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. It is a useful working document and in most respects includes appropriate targets, success criteria and resource implications. The plan is a sound framework for financial decision making and its implementation is monitored largely by school staff. The governing body recognises that it needs to have its own procedures for holding the school to account for progress. In particular it recognises the need to review the role of the deputy headteacher to ensure that a substantial part of his time is sharply focused on helping to achieve the agreed priorities.
74. The school's vision statement and associated set of thirteen aims are well directed towards creating a secure, effective and high quality learning environment. The aims give purpose and direction to the everyday work of the school. There is a welcoming and caring atmosphere and all involved in the work of the school are valued. Parents comment favourably on the family atmosphere of the school and express strong support for the values and attitudes which it promotes.
75. The school has moved forward successfully since the last inspection, and the good relationships between governors, staff and parents and the evident common sense of purpose provide a secure foundation for further improvement in the quality of education which the school provides and in the achievements of its pupils.
75. **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**
76. The staff are suitably experienced and qualified to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and the age range of the pupils from nursery to the end of Key Stage 2. Staffing levels are generous, with neither the deputy headteacher nor the special educational needs co-ordinator having class-teaching responsibilities. The deputy headteacher provides effective teaching support in science as well as providing cover to allow other subject co-ordinators non-contact time for development and administration. Teachers are in the main deployed satisfactorily.
77. There is good liaison between the part-time teachers who share responsibility for the nursery and reception classes and between those who share one of the classes for Years 5 and 6. These job share arrangements are satisfactory.
78. The level of classroom and special educational needs support is higher than that usually

found in primary schools. Pupils with special educational needs are supported by 1.2 experienced and qualified teachers and by support staff. Support assistants are fully integrated into the life of the school and work closely with the teachers. They provide valuable support and assist in the pupils' progress and welfare.

79. The school has efficient lunchtime and caretaking staff who, together with the members of the administrative staff, contribute to the smooth running of the school and its welcoming atmosphere.
80. Arrangements for the professional development of the staff are comprehensive, thorough and well managed. Training meets the needs of individual members of staff and of the school as a whole. The appraisal procedure is fully established and up to date, and is carried out by members of the senior management team. It provides a valuable means of reviewing practice and identifying appropriate development targets. The special educational needs co-ordinator holds regular in-school training sessions for support staff.
81. A formal management structure is in place and job descriptions clearly define the professional duties of teaching staff and their roles and responsibilities as curriculum co-ordinators. The school has dealt effectively with the problem identified in this respect in the report of the previous inspection. The school has no newly qualified teacher at present. However, satisfactory arrangements for the support and monitoring of newly qualified staff and other new teachers are in place.
82. The school building provides adequate accommodation for the numbers of pupils on roll. However, where classes are large, classroom space is very limited and free movement is restricted. Activity resource areas between classrooms have sinks and do provide additional teaching space for art, craft, technology activities and small group work. The libraries in both key stages are too small for use by whole classes and are inadequately stocked. The two halls provide facilities for physical education. However, space in the smaller hall is inadequate for physical education to be taught effectively. The larger hall is well equipped and spacious enough to provide an assembly area for the whole school. A room has been developed for special educational needs and is used for work with pupils when withdrawal is considered necessary.
83. Displays in classrooms and around the school enhance the learning environment. Considerable time and effort have been spent on developing the school site, which basically consists of a hard playing surface and small, grassed playing area. Playground space is restricted and breaks are therefore phased to allow pupils adequate space to exercise and play. Opportunities for team games are constrained by the absence of an adequate playing field. Children under five and those in the nursery have separate fenced areas outside their classrooms. These are suitable for outdoor activities and large enough for children to use wheeled toys and large equipment.
84. Paintings, seating, tables, planting and an environmental area with a pond create additional opportunities for pupils. They provide a pleasant and attractive area for learning. The play area development committee has plans to enhance the site further and the school is actively pursuing the purchase of additional land. Local businesses have donated furniture for the conservatory, which is an attractive feature. The premises are clean and well maintained by the caretaking staff. A rolling programme of redecoration, maintenance and improvement is in place.

85. There are sufficient resources to support learning in all subjects and special educational needs. There is good provision for music, mathematics and children under five. The school recognises the need to provide a wider range of atlases, aerial photographs and globes to support teaching and learning in geography at Key Stage 2. Resources are readily available to staff, and subject co-ordinators receive an annual budget for replacement and improvement. Resources for the under-fives in the nursery and reception classes are of good quality.
86. The resources are well organised, and generally well stored and clearly labelled. Pupils have good access to them in the classrooms and take good care of them. Classroom collections of books are adequate in number, used well and of quite good quality and range. The quantity of books in the libraries, however, is barely adequate to support learning and there are few opportunities for browsing and personal study. The library is under-used.
87. The locality of the school is used well as a resource for learning. Good use is made of educational visits to the immediate locality and nearby places of interest, including residential visits to Climping by Year 6 and Mallydams RSPCA Centre by Year 4.
87. **The efficiency of the school**
88. Overall, there is sound financial planning and management of the school's budget. The governing body's finance committee has published terms of reference and meets each term with the headteacher to consider the financial information made available to it by the finance secretary. With this information they monitor spending, set a *skeleton* budget for the forthcoming year and agree the final budget for presentation to the governing body. Meetings of the committee and decisions made are fully recorded and reported at each governing body meeting.
89. The governing body is aware of the very small amount that was carried forward from last year's budget, which does not allow for any contingency. In the school development plan it has set a target of achieving a three per cent contingency sum by the year 2001. This is to be achieved in three ways. Firstly, computerised systems are to be used to monitor the budget more rigorously, and tighter procedures will be introduced to reduce over-ordering of supplies and, thus, waste. Secondly, there is now a more stable staffing picture, so that less reliance is placed on expensive temporary and supply teachers. Thirdly, the school recognises that efficient and effective use must be made of all teachers who have additional management responsibilities, including the members of the senior management team, in order to focus more sharply on raising pupils' levels of attainment across the curriculum.
90. Since the last inspection, the governing body has made some improvement to its strategies for forward planning and has identified targets for school improvement. These are linked mainly to the development of national initiatives for literacy and numeracy, securing funds for the improvement of information technology, a revision of schemes of work and continued work on playground development. Although the governing body is able to evaluate its success in achieving these aims in some areas, particularly the development of play facilities, it relies heavily on reports from the headteacher when monitoring and evaluating the cost-effectiveness of its spending decisions. The governing body is aware of the need to develop its own strategies for evaluating the

success of the aims set out in the school development plan in terms of improving standards in pupils' attainment and progress.

91. Additional funding, such as grants for books, numeracy training and supply cover to enable staff to take part in curriculum monitoring, is used appropriately to improve the expertise of teachers and augment the school's library resources. Funds available to support the education of pupils with special educational needs are allocated appropriately and are carefully controlled by the headteacher and the co-ordinator for special educational needs. The school is currently part of the bid for funding under the Hastings Education Action Zone and the National Opportunities Fund and has clearly identified where additional money can be used, if the bid is successful, to support developments such as a linked family-support worker and the introduction of an out-of-hours study support club. The school makes good use of money raised by the Friends of Castledown to improve the school's resources, for example classroom computers.
92. Overall, the school makes satisfactory use of its teaching and support staff, who are appropriately deployed to support pupils and make a positive contribution to their attainment and progress. The school has made good use of the Early Implementation Fund to increase the number of teachers in Key Stage 1 in order to reduce teaching groups to no more than 30 pupils. This has had a positive impact on pupils' levels of attainment and the progress that they make. Satisfactory use is made of learning support staff in lessons. They help teachers to manage classes and they provide satisfactory support for group work, helping pupils to make progress. Support staff working with pupils with special educational needs are also used appropriately to support groups in lessons and to work with pupils who have individual needs. The numbers of both learning and special needs support staff have grown rapidly in the last year. In some lessons, particularly the literacy and numeracy hours, their use is not managed as efficiently as it could be and this results in disruptions to lessons as pupils move in and out of the classroom for withdrawal and additional support.
93. The school makes satisfactory use of the accommodation and learning resources available to it, although the library and resources for information technology are not used as effectively as they could be to support pupils' learning and the development of research skills. Good use is made of outside visits and visitors to the school, as additional resources to support pupils' learning and their social and cultural development.
94. Since the last inspection, and following a period of staffing difficulties, the school administration and systems for financial control have improved and are now good. The financial secretary is well supported by the local education authority and is receiving ongoing training to increase her expertise. She is responsible for managing the budget, including ordering and receiving materials and equipment, and is supported by a newly appointed clerical assistant who is learning the systems for dealing with day-to-day administrative matters, including the handling of dinner money.
95. Recommendations from the audit held in 1997 have now been fully implemented. Instructions to staff for the correct procedures for ordering goods have recently been updated to ensure that there is clear and accurate monitoring of expenditure against different subject areas. The financial secretary works closely with the headteacher to ensure that all financial and office procedures are correct. They have a good understanding of the use of computerised systems to accurately monitor and control the budget and have made significant improvements in financial control as a result. The

financial secretary provides good information for the governing body and senior management team, and effective support for staff so that they may focus on their work with pupils without being distracted by administrative matters.

96. Since the last inspection, the school has made satisfactory improvement. Teaching is now satisfactory overall and good or very good in more than a third of lessons. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Overall, the school provides sound value for money.

96.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs

97. At the time of the inspection there were more than 150 pupils on the school's register of special educational need. Fifty pupils were at the later stages of assessment, including twelve with full statements of special educational need. Because of the extent of the provision needed to meet these needs, the inspection team is presenting its findings in this distinct section as well as in references throughout the report.
98. The provision to meet the full range of pupils' special educational needs is satisfactory and is effective in ensuring that pupils make sound progress towards the targets identified in their individual education plans. The school has a good commitment to providing a supportive and caring learning environment for all its pupils, including those with special educational and medical needs, and this is valued by parents. There is good support for the school's work from a governor who is experienced in the provision for, and teaching of, pupils with special educational needs.
99. The requirements of the Code of Practice¹ are appropriately fulfilled, although the special educational needs policy is out of date and requires review by the governing body. Pupils' needs and difficulties are identified at an early stage, often in the nursery or before entry to the school, and these are made clear in their individual education plans. There is an up-to-date register of all pupils in the school requiring additional support, and staff are aware of the criteria for placing pupils on the register.
100. The school has recently changed its staffing arrangements so that there are more special and individual needs support staff working in both key stages with groups and individual pupils. The co-ordinator is developing good systems of review and training to ensure that staff work together in helping pupils to meet the targets in their individual education plans. She regularly reviews the quality of the work of support staff with pupils and provides good guidance. This is appreciated by the staff and is effective in improving pupils' progress. All staff working with pupils show sensitivity towards and an understanding of pupils' needs. Support staff attend appropriate training relating to special educational needs and the particular, individual needs of different pupils in the school, and share their experiences in weekly support and training meetings run by the co-ordinator.
101. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils' individual education plans mainly focus on literacy targets, although they also relate to behaviour and concentration. Some pupils have individual behaviour plans relating to these

¹ Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

targets, and teachers use these well to ensure a consistent approach towards pupils' behavioural difficulties. Individual education plans are well established in the school and, since the last inspection, have been reviewed to improve the clarity with which pupils' targets are described. However, individual pupils are rarely referred to in class teachers' plans either to identify how work is targeted on their specific needs or the level of support they are to receive. This issue was raised at the last inspection and is still a weakness in the overall provision for special educational needs. Learning resources for teaching are satisfactory, and good use is made of advice and expertise from outside agencies and specialist support teachers to support pupils' individual needs.

102. The school has grown rapidly in recent years and an increase in support staff to care for the educational needs of pupils has meant that support arrangements are under constant review. At present, pupils are withdrawn for individual work, reading and literacy support, separate groups for literacy, numeracy and science, nurture groups and specific skills support groups. Although these activities are sound and focus specifically on pupils' learning and their personal and social development in nurture groups, the management of them sometimes results in considerable disruption to whole-class teaching. At times teachers are not aware of what pupils have been doing while out of the classroom, and lessons are interrupted when pupils return. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to continue careful management and review of the overall provision so that teachers and support staff are used in the most efficient and effective way while providing pupils with their correct entitlement to additional support.
103. Pupils with special educational needs have satisfactory attitudes towards their work. Most of the time they concentrate on their work and behave well, although there are examples of less satisfactory behaviour when pupils are withdrawn for teaching in support groups. They take time to settle to a different environment and are easily distracted by outside noise. Some pupils are reluctant to participate in group work and are anxious to rejoin their class. Throughout the school, pupils relate well to others with special educational or medical needs. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into the classes and those with additional medical needs benefit from the inclusive atmosphere promoted by all the staff in the school.
104. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed about their child's needs and the progress that they make. They are aware of the targets set for their children through regular meetings and informal liaison with teachers and the co-ordinator for special educational needs. There is good daily liaison with some parents of pupils with additional medical needs. The school has highlighted the need to improve the quality of information that it provides to parents. Reporting in the prospectus and the governing body's annual report is brief and the additional special educational needs leaflet is out of date. Funding is awaited to support the school's plans for a parent support group to develop parents' understanding of how they can best support their children's learning.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

104. Areas of learning for children under five

105. Children enter the nursery following their third birthday and attend either the morning or the afternoon sessions. At the time of the inspection there were 50 part-time children in the nursery and 58 in the reception classes. Children transfer to the reception classes at the beginning of the year of their fourth birthday. Autumn-born children have a full-time place and other children attend on a part-time basis until the term in which they are four.
106. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below the level expected for their age. An early years booklet is completed by parents on their child's entry to the nursery, indicating a small number of competencies for each child on admission. Home visits are undertaken prior to entry to the nursery and parents are invited to an introductory meeting. Most parents are involved in their children's learning through helping in lessons and supporting events.
107. By the age of five, although having made good progress, children have reached levels that are still below national expectations for their age in language and literacy, mathematics, creative development and personal and social development. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development are in line with levels expected for their age and progress is very good. Children who are identified as having special educational needs also make good progress in these aspects. Overall progress for children under five remains good. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the last inspection.
108. All children follow a broad and balanced curriculum, and planning is based upon the six areas of learning appropriate to children of this age. All areas of learning are integrated throughout the day. Activities in the nursery and reception classes are planned around a theme common to each year group, although not yet linked to the early levels of the National Curriculum. Teachers and support staff plan weekly in year groups, but whole early years team planning sessions are less frequent and this is a weakness.
109. The procedures for assessing children's progress are good. The results of tests set on entry to the reception classes are used to plan children's work, although no specific targets are set from these assessments. Profiles of children's progress, together with achievement folders, are carefully maintained as they move through the early years. Teaching and support staff ask questions skilfully and invite children to talk about what they are seeing and doing as part of this regular assessment process.

Personal and social development

110. Children in the nursery work happily, for example when taking turns with their friends on the rocking horse. They co-operate well in activities such as building a house for *big bear*. In lessons they show independence in selecting from a good range of prepared activities, although most children only concentrate for a short while. Nursery children behave well and share resources without argument. The bears' picnic proved to be a good social occasion as children waited patiently to be served with their sandwiches. Children treat living things with care when looking at worms before placing them in a wormery, showing delight when exclaiming, "They are dancing". Children's personal and social development continues to be fostered in the reception classes, where children

are encouraged to be more independent. They work co-operatively on the Humpty Dumpty board game, taking turns without fuss. They share fairly, particularly in the role-play *emergency centre*, taking turns to telephone for the ambulance. Children use the 'parachute' in physical education, and this encourages them to work as a group successfully, with obvious delight in the activity. Reception children care well for Ziggy and Zaggy, hens brought for the day, looking forward with anticipation to an egg being laid. Despite good progress, children do not reach the levels expected in their personal and social development by the time they reach the age of five.

110. **Language and literacy**

111. When children start in the nursery, their attainment in language and literacy is well below the national expectation. By the age of five, although making good progress, very few children achieve the expected standards in language and literacy.
112. The majority of those who have attended both the nursery and the reception classes make good progress in their speaking and listening skills. In the nursery, staff talk to children both individually and in groups, asking questions and helping them develop their language skills. Children listen well to stories such as *Little Mouse and the Big Hungry Bear* and join in with songs and rhymes. They are developing confidence in their role-play in the home corner and the exciting *bear cave*, with good planned opportunities for adults to ask questions, inviting children to talk about what they are seeing and doing. Reception children use the role-play *emergency centre* enthusiastically, seeking help for Humpty Dumpty. Integrated activities and skilled staff provide a wide range of opportunities for children to develop their language skills well. Good encouragement is given for children to talk about and share their completed activities at the close of lessons.
113. Children in the nursery and reception classes enjoy listening to stories and sharing books with adults, but are less interested in using class library areas individually. *Big books* are used well to introduce literacy sessions, where stories are shared in an enjoyable way. Children in the nursery learn that words and pictures have meaning, as parents help their children find their names and photographs on arrival at the beginning of each session and place them on the *name tree*. A few children in the reception classes recognise some letters of the alphabet, using 'Letterland'. Children can use pictures and make marks to record their ideas and some can write their own name.
114. The teaching of language and literacy is sound overall, with some examples of good teaching. Teaching is often good in small groups with teachers using interesting resources such as the *story sack* or worms and compost in literacy and science. Successful activities involve the use of good questions encouraging children to use a growing vocabulary.

Mathematics

115. When admitted to the nursery, children have levels well below those found nationally. Although they make good progress, the majority do not reach the expected standards for five-year-olds in mathematics.
116. In the nursery, sand and water activities are used to help develop mathematical understanding. The rhyme-time theme of *Teddy Bears* also provides good opportunities

for children to count and discuss the sizes of bears and sing a counting song. Children sort different autumn seeds into various types by size and colour. They understand that things can be too big or too small when making a house for teddy and benefit from planned opportunities to use jigsaws and mathematical apparatus. Reception children understand the importance of numbers in every day lives, such as the use of 999 in an emergency. They are becoming familiar with shapes such as circles and rectangles as they use them to draw Humpty Dumpty. Children can count to ten and play, with understanding, a board game involving positional language.

117. The teaching of mathematical development is sound. Teachers have good relationships with their children and encourage them to do well. They record clearly what has been done and use this to plan for future lessons.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

118. Children enter school with a limited knowledge and understanding of the world, well below the national expectation. Children make very good progress by the age of five, and whilst for the majority attainment is not significantly different from national expectations, for some it remains below that level.
119. In the nursery, children explore autumn seeds and look at the differences between them. They use compost to create gardens and build a wormery from different types of soils. Reception children look at raw and hard-boiled eggs in their topic on Humpty Dumpty. They test the properties of various materials to find which is most likely to prevent the egg breaking when dropped. They develop an understanding of living things through a range of good experiences, as when two hens were brought to school in the hope of one laying an egg!
120. Computers are used well by both nursery and reception children who understand how to use a mouse and how to use simple programs to support their learning.
121. Children learn about times past in the story of Little Lumpty, enjoying the *magic* of changing an ambulance to a horse and cart using the *story sac*.
122. The teaching of knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory. Teachers make investigations fun and encourage children to ask questions by providing valuable experiences.

Creative development

123. Children enter school with skills at a level well below national expectations and, although they make good progress, by the age of five, most children's attainment is still below this level.
124. In the nursery, children use different media to create attractive displays. They use collage to produce bear faces, and painting to create attractive mobiles of three-dimensional fish. Children paint patterns on large pieces of paper to represent a bedspread for bear's bed. They explore exciting media such as trays of compost, a large lump of clay and brown finger paint. Percussion instruments are used to accompany 'Teddy bear, Teddy bear, touch your nose' as children sing, dance and play with obvious enjoyment.

125. Reception children work in two dimensions, constructing a snail trail, and use paint and collage in a large composition of *The five little speckled frogs*. Children experience a variety of media, including eggshells to produce a large picture of Humpty Dumpty. Reception children produce imaginative pictures by rolling hard-boiled eggs in paint and then across sheets of paper. Children use musical instruments in planned activities to accompany songs and nursery rhyme sessions.
126. The teaching of creative development is satisfactory overall. Planning for the involvement of support staff in creative activities is good and enhances the curriculum for children under five.

Physical development

127. Children make very good progress in their physical development. Although they enter school with levels well below those expected nationally, by the time they are five, children are in line with the expected levels.
128. Children in the nursery have access to an outdoor area which is small but safe, secure and adventurous, offering a range of experiences in climbing, balancing and using wheeled toys. Reception children have a larger secure play area, which is being developed at the present time. They have opportunities to use wheeled toys and use the hall apparatus to practise climbing and balancing during physical education lessons. All children use scissors sensibly for cutting and tools for folding and joining card. Younger children play with pasta and flour to make imaginary mixes, and older children use pink playdough to make Humpty Dumpty.
129. The teaching of physical development is sound. Teachers use a range of methods to ensure that children's concentration is maintained. They provide good resources both inside and outside, with plenty of opportunities for children to develop and improve their skills.

129. English, mathematics, science, Information technology and religious education

129. English

130. Pupils enter the school with language and literacy skills which are well below the national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 2, their National Test results are above average in comparison with those in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. However, the 1998 results show that pupils are performing well below the national average. Since the previous inspection, the school roll has increased by around one quarter and the levels of attainment in English appear to be worse. However, raising standards in literacy is a priority in the school and there are now good strategies in place in Key Stage 1 and the end of Key Stage 2 which are improving levels of attainment. On the basis of the work and lessons seen, the school is therefore now judged to have standards of attainment below the national average.
131. A high number of pupils enter the nursery with unclear and underdeveloped speech. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are starting to express their ideas more fully. However,

standards of attainment are below the levels expected for pupils of this age. Many pupils still have difficulty finding the right word or speaking in a grammatically correct form. In the good or very good lessons seen, teachers extend vocabulary and improve fluency through activities provided within the literacy hour and in other curriculum areas. For example, Year 1 pupils offer suggestions to help rewrite a poem, giving alternative adjectives, and talk about the difference between old and modern cars and bikes. Many pupils need help with specific terms, such as *bonnet* and *spokes*. Pupils in Year 2 describe old toys which they have just been shown in detail, but need help in extending their descriptions.

132. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils express their ideas more accurately. They begin to give and justify opinions and are more aware of the differences between spoken and written language. They still need help with extending vocabulary and correct grammatical construction. At both key stages, pupils listen carefully when they are interested. A minority of pupils, with special educational needs, find listening for any length of time demanding. They benefit from support and stimulation which helps maintain their concentration. Overall standards of attainment in speaking and listening are below national expectations at the end of the key stage.
133. Reading skills are improving in the school, with a recent large increase in support and a great improvement in the range of books, including big books and shared readers. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils enjoy books. Most can read books from the reading scheme at an appropriate level and a few are moving on to read other books independently. Pupils recognise key words in class reading and join in shared reading. They recognise features such as rhyming words. They use the sounds and names of letters to work out words they do not initially recognise. However, pupils do not always readily understand the full implications of a story. For example, Year 1 pupils took some time to understand that the crocodile had eaten the animals which were accidentally standing on his back. They did not pick up on the visual clues and found it hard to predict what had happened. This lack of comprehension is reflected in the Standard Assessment Test results. Attainment is below the national average.
134. By the end of Key Stage 2, there is a wide range of attainment, although overall it remains below the national average. Most pupils are able to read simple texts and show reasonable understanding of plot and character. They can retell the story and predict future possibilities. The higher attaining pupils read fluently with accuracy and expression and are beginning to appreciate different genres and styles. Most pupils are familiar with using reference books and show reasonable understanding when using personal research skills in topic work across the curriculum.
135. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are forming letters accurately and most correctly spell simple key words. They are beginning to understand how a sentence is formed, and the higher attaining pupils are able to write consecutive sentences legibly and accurately. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are aware of the uses of punctuation, and the higher attaining pupils are accurately using more advanced punctuation such as speech marks. Many of the pupils with special educational needs are still finding accurate spelling difficult, although they are developing strategies in this respect. The additional literacy support recently allocated to the first two years of Key Stage 2 is appropriately aimed at improving these standards. Overall standards in writing are below the national average at the end of both key stages.

136. Within the structures of reporting on science experiments or writing a newspaper report in history, most pupils record facts well and describe correctly the processes they have undertaken. With support, pupils with special educational needs write playscripts and dialogues. Higher attaining pupils write full scripts with an understanding of stage directions and the need to maintain an appropriate register for a given character. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 transcribed parts of *Goodnight Mister Tom* into playscripts. They worked at three different levels and were able to show an understanding of the original texts and an appreciation of the ways characters spoke and reacted. Many pupils, however, still have underdeveloped handwriting and presentation skills.
137. Pupils, including the high proportion with special educational needs, are making sound progress overall. Good or better teaching and the positive implementation of the literacy hour throughout Key Stage 1 and in the last two years of Key Stage 2 are beginning to improve standards in these classes. The recent additional literacy support and special needs support are having a positive impact on individual progress through carefully structured learning programmes. Satisfactory procedures are in place for checking on the effect of this extra provision, including the regular reassessing of pupils in order to ensure that they continue to make progress.
138. Most pupils co-operate satisfactorily with adults and each other. A minority of pupils need constant support and help in managing their own behaviour. The generous levels of support and small group work help these pupils to focus on work. Where teaching is good or better, the behaviour of all pupils is good. In these lessons, pupils show that they can concentrate and enjoy participating fully. In all but one of the lessons seen in Key Stage 1, pupils completed most if not all of the work set. They worked hard and were pleased with their efforts. In Key Stage 2, pupils worked satisfactorily or better in two-thirds of the lessons seen, but there was an unsatisfactory level of disruptive behaviour and a lack of concentration in the other lessons, mainly in Years 3 and 4. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils enjoy doing their own research and creating their own plays and dialogues. They work well together and draw on each other's strengths.
139. As at the time of the last inspection, the quality of teaching is sound overall. In nearly half the lessons seen, teaching was good or better. The rest, with the exception of one poor lesson, were satisfactory. In Key Stage 1, there were no unsatisfactory lessons and all except one showed good or better teaching. This is an improvement since the last report. In Key Stage 2, most teaching is sound, with some good teaching in Years 5 and 6. In the good or very good lessons seen in Key Stage 1 and the end of Key Stage 2, teachers deliberately extend vocabulary and improve fluency through activities provided within the literacy hour and in other curriculum areas. They manage the different elements of the literacy hour with confidence and have well-planned activities which are well matched to the wide range of attainment in the class. They stimulate discussion and challenge pupils, insisting on them thinking further and searching for a better way of expressing themselves. They constantly check for understanding and are quick to recognise individual misconceptions or difficulties. They know the pupils well and praise efforts appropriately. They maintain a good pace which ensures that pupils do not become bored, and allow maximum pupil participation throughout the session, ensuring an appropriate balance of speaking, reading and writing. Where teaching is poor, the pupils are not involved in their learning. Their behaviour is not well managed and the tasks are not matched to their levels of attainment. As a consequence, little is achieved during the literacy hour, even though the framework is being applied. There are

examples of good use of the literacy hour in both key stages, where expectations of pupils in terms of work and behaviour are high and they respond accordingly.

140. There is a generous amount of support for literacy and this is being carefully targeted to meet individual needs. The division of classes into smaller groups for literacy in Key Stage 1 is working well, especially when the groups can work in discrete areas without interruptions. The present arrangements for withdrawing pupils for special needs support, additional literacy support, and reading with parents and governors, result in too many interruptions to lessons. In-class support is used well to support individual and small groups of pupils with special educational needs, especially during independent group work in the literacy hour.
141. Further training in the application of the literacy framework is planned in order to build confidence and exchange ideas which work well. The co-ordinator and headteacher undertake formal monitoring of all staff which is helpful in identifying and sharing the ideas which work well in practice. Until September 1998 there was no discrete post for a co-ordinator of English. There is now sound, efficient management and monitoring by the co-ordinator, who has a good grasp of the needs and priorities within the subject.
142. The school is fulfilling the requirements of the literacy hour and has a good practice of reinforcing literacy in some subjects such as history and science, as mentioned in the last report. There has been training and documentation responding to the issue raised in the previous report about unsatisfactory standards of handwriting and presentation. Most classes are now having discrete handwriting lessons, but there is still a lack of consistent application of good standards throughout the school.
143. Although there are regular standardised reading tests, there is a lack of regular formal assessment, recording and analysing of results to inform future planning. There is no consistently kept record of work which has been accurately assessed to National Curriculum levels. However, there are some good examples of well-marked pieces of work with constructive comments and targets for improvements. In some classes pupils are involved satisfactorily in their own assessment.
144. The literacy framework has provided the policies and basis for schemes of work which were lacking during the previous inspection. Literacy funding has been well spent on big books and sets of shared readers. The libraries at both key stages are small and are still being developed. Overall, resources are adequate, as stated in the previous report.
145. The school recognises the need to continue to prioritise improving levels of attainment in English by sharing good practice, improving assessment practices and making further concerted efforts to improve standards of literacy consistently in all lessons.
145. **Mathematics**
146. The results of the 1998 National Tests at the end of Key Stage 1 indicated that attainment was in line with the national averages overall, although very few pupils achieved an above average level. These results are around the average for schools with pupils of similar backgrounds. Over the three years 1996 to 1998 results have shown a small improvement in relation to the national average. The 1999 results show a similar pattern, again with very few pupils achieving the above average levels.

147. The national test results for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1998 show that attainment was below the national average, although above the average for schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Results over the period 1996 to 1998 improved and then went down again. The school attributes the fluctuation largely to variations in the numbers of pupils on the special educational needs register in the year group. Although no national averages are available for the 1999 tests, the indications are that the proportion of pupils who achieved at least the national expectation has increased.
148. At the time of the last inspection, standards of achievement throughout the school were judged to meet national expectations. Inspection evidence, including examination of a substantial amount of work completed during the last school year, lesson observations and discussions with pupils, indicates that levels of attainment are in line with national averages at the end of both key stages. The school is successfully introducing the National Numeracy Strategy, and a small proportion of older pupils demonstrate confidence and accuracy in mental arithmetic. Overall standards of numeracy are in line with national expectations.
149. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress over time. During the inspection there were a few examples in both key stages of pupils making good progress in individual lessons. For example, when one of the Year 3 teachers taught a well planned lesson, building directly on what pupils already knew about litres and millilitres, there was good progress in rounding off to the nearest ten or hundred. However, the relatively low proportion of pupils achieving the higher test levels at the age of seven indicates that in the past potentially higher attaining pupils have not been stretched. Current inspection evidence suggests that the school is taking appropriate steps to improve this situation.
150. Year 1 pupils, some of whom have spent only one term in full time education in the reception class, count successfully in twos and many recognise evenness and patterns on the number square. Most are less confident about counting in tens and in writing numerals such as 30, although all are comfortable with single-digit numerals. Pupils in Year 2 progress to knowing which numbers add up to 10, and some more-able pupils add up in their heads while others achieve the correct answer by counting on. Most pupils in Year 2 are confident about counting in tens and accurately add up three low value coins in their heads.
151. Pupils in one of the Year 4 classes also work with money, successfully working out what the shopping bills come to and learning to use correctly the decimal point between the pounds and the pence. Their progress is helped by the creation of a shopping situation with real groceries, itemised bills from supermarkets and realistic prices. This activity helps pupils to develop and apply their number skills and represents good practice.
152. Pupils in the four classes in Years 5 and 6 are set for mathematics. The top set at the moment is entirely composed of pupils in Year 6, and the co-ordinator recognises the need to check that more-able pupils in Year 5 are also sufficiently challenged. Pupils in the bottom set benefit from well planned and sharply focused work designed to increase their confidence as well as their competence. Examination of the work of these classes last year shows that there was sound progress throughout the year, most obviously in relation to computation. This progress is helped by good quality marking which takes on the flavour of a dialogue between teacher and pupil and is directed towards improvement. There was less evidence of progress in respect of shape, space and

measurement, and the development and use of the proper mathematical terms are recognised by the school as being inconsistent. An articulate Year 6 pupil, for example, was not familiar with the term *equilateral*.

153. A strength of the attainment and progress of pupils in Years 5 and 6 lies in the mathematical investigation side of the curriculum. Pupils' work shows a growing maturity both in their approach to the problems set and in the increasingly confident and appropriate way in which they record their results and present their findings. The work of the co-ordinator in encouraging this aspect of the mathematics curriculum is making an important contribution to raising standards.
154. When lessons are well prepared and presented the response of the pupils is one of interest and willingness to focus on the tasks set. In these lessons, behaviour is at least satisfactory and pupils make good contributions in the oral part of lessons. Most work well in pairs or small groups and respond well to a firm and consistent approach by their teachers. Where teachers have high and realistic expectations of both work and behaviour most pupils respond favourably. In the minority of lessons that are not prepared well enough, expectations are too low, the work is not presented in an interesting and challenging way, and pupils become inattentive, fidget and distract each other and the teacher.
155. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is at least satisfactory, with half of the lessons that were observed judged to be good. The better teaching is securely based on good classroom routines and organisation combined with good questioning skills based on good subject knowledge. Another very important ingredient is the clear identification of exactly what the pupils are intended to learn and tasks that are carefully chosen with that end in mind.
156. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching varies between unsatisfactory and good; the overall quality is satisfactory, with around thirty per cent of lessons judged to be good and fourteen per cent judged to be unsatisfactory. In the better lessons observed, teachers make clear their expectations and maintain pace and interest through a well balanced mixture of whole-class, group and individual work. In these lessons, teachers use mathematical language correctly and effectively support the learning of individual pupils. Pupils' behaviour is managed through good organisation and the provision of interesting and appropriately challenging work. Where the work set is not sufficiently challenging and the teacher is not communicating sufficient enthusiasm and motivation, as in one of the Year 3 lessons observed, behaviour deteriorates and pupils become inattentive.
157. Most teachers in the key stage teach in a brisk and purposeful manner and the pupils respond positively to this. In a lesson with lower attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, the teacher starts promptly, makes clear what the purpose of the lesson is, conducts a brisk oral session and then moves quickly on to well prepared group work. She moves from group to group, keeping pupils working, encouraging and challenging them. This is good practice. By contrast, in a Year 4 lesson the work which the pupils are doing is not directly related to the teacher's planning, which itself is not sufficiently detailed. The teacher has to spend more time dealing with low level misbehaviour and inattention than teaching mathematics, because the tasks set are not appropriate for the pupils or for what they are supposed to learn. Most pupils do not benefit from the whole-class session because it is not well focused, the teacher's presentation of work on the

whiteboard is poor, and attention wanders.

157. Science

158. Pupils' attainment in National Curriculum assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 was lower than in the previous year, when it was judged to be above national expectations. The results of the 1998 National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2 show that attainment was above the national average and also above average when compared with the results of similar schools. Results in 1999 were below those in 1998, although national averages for 1999 are not yet available. The school's results have shown a decline at the end of both key stages over the last two years, with the attainment of boys being higher than that of girls and above the national average.
159. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils' attainment in science at the end of Key Stage 1 is broadly in line with national expectations. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is above the national expectation. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress and pupils in Key Stage 2 make very good progress. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior achievements.
160. Since the previous inspection, the policy and scheme of work have been completed and greater attention is now paid to the development of investigative skills. Pupils are increasingly confident in designing and carrying out their own experiments. There is improved emphasis on building on pupils' existing knowledge and on the assessment of their work.
161. In experimental and investigative science younger pupils learn about temperature and its effect on materials. They take part in experiments to test how heat and cold change materials such as eggs, jelly and chocolate. Older pupils in Key Stage 1 experiment with various materials to find one suitable to make a rain hat for 'Teddy', recording their findings appropriately. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils investigate and conduct experiments related to electricity, solids, liquids, gases and forces. In discussion, pupils explain what makes a test fair and how many variables can be changed. All pupils record their scientific investigations using a good, structured plan, including diagrams, tables and graphs, paying good attention to presentation.
162. In Key Stage 1, pupils acquire knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things through their topic work. They look at insects as part of a mini-beasts topic and name various types of animals which have skeletons. Pupils at the end of the key stage discuss the importance of the right conditions for plant growth. Older pupils learn about pollination, germination and photosynthesis, through a topic on living and growing. Pupils in Year 6 confidently discuss the effects of climate on a habitat and the conditions required for the growth of micro-organisms.
163. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties are well developed throughout Key Stage 1. They can name various types of materials and discuss their properties, naming which materials carry electricity. They talk happily about changing materials by heating and cooling, using the examples of chocolate and water, and how this process can be reversed. In Key Stage 2, pupils describe the differences between properties of materials. They use examples of metal, glass and water, explaining accurately how they change when heated. Pupils explain why some materials are suitable for specific purposes, such as metal for electric cables, and understand the

terms *translucent*, *transparent* and *opaque*.

164. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 correctly name some sources of light and know what is needed to make a bulb light up. They know that pushing, pulling and blowing are all forces and that they cause objects to move, but are unable to say what makes an object slow down, or the difference between loudness and pitch. Pupils in Year 6 are confident in their work on physical processes. They can explain that friction generates heat and discuss in good detail its effect as a force to slow moving objects. Pupils confidently explain with considered scientific reasoning the cause of day and night.
165. Pupils are confident in performing experiments and conducting investigative work. They demonstrate clear understanding of physical processes. Pupils' acquisition and use of scientific vocabulary improve significantly in Years 5 and 6. The recording of their work, in all aspects, is a strength. Pupils are provided with opportunities to write extended accounts of their work, following a familiar and consistent format. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are well developed through science.
166. The attitude of the majority of pupils to their science lessons is good. Pupils have positive relationships with their teachers and are generally highly motivated, particularly in work that involves investigation and experimentation. Most pupils listen attentively and show pleasure in achieving success, although a small number of pupils in Year 4 are disruptive and demanding. When pupils are allowed to perform investigations and experiments themselves, they demonstrate high levels of enjoyment and clearly achieve great satisfaction from the opportunity to learn through discovery. In Key Stage 2, pupils' behaviour is unsatisfactory when teacher expectation is low.
167. The quality of teaching is good overall and very good in some lessons in Key Stage 2. In the best lessons, where teaching is good or better, teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. Explanations are effective in enabling pupils to develop an understanding of scientific ideas and concepts. Teachers' questions challenge and extend pupils' thinking through their own enthusiasm for the subject. In a few lessons, however, teachers do not use effective strategies to control pupils. Too much time is spent on gaining pupils' attention, and respect is not achieved by the use of casual speech. Planning through topics is thorough with a clear scientific focus, and lessons are consistent between parallel classes and year groups. Good resources are provided for all lessons. Teachers make few references to health and safety.
168. The co-ordinator supports his colleagues well both in the classroom and in providing expert advice in the teaching of science, thus helping to raise levels of attainment. Science experiments are imaginative and exciting. Assessments are analysed to identify any weaknesses and these are used in future planning. The co-ordinator has high expectations for his subject. Resources are well organised, accessible and of good quality. The pond in the school grounds is an excellent resource for all pupils.
168. **Information technology**
169. Pupils' attainment in information technology is below national expectations at the end of both key stages. Standards found are therefore not as high as they were at the time of the last inspection, when they were judged to be in line with national age-related expectations. The school does, however, now have a clear development plan in place designed to give pupils the opportunity to learn about all aspects of the information

technology curriculum, which does not happen at present.

170. There are weekly whole-class teaching sessions in all year groups apart from Year 2. This improves pupils' knowledge and understanding, although there are insufficient computers available in some year groups for pupils to put what they learn into practice while it is still fresh in their minds. Information technology is not planned or used sufficiently to support learning across the curriculum. As a result most pupils make unsatisfactory progress at both key stages. Where there is small-group directed teaching, as there is at times for pupils with special educational needs, progress is satisfactory.
171. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have experience of using both mouse and keyboard controls. They complete some basic word-processing, but do not know how to communicate or handle information or enter data, for example to produce tables or graphs. Some pupils have not printed work, or used control technology to give commands and predict outcomes. Apart from some pupils who have been shown how to turn the computer off and on, pupils in Year 2 have not used information technology sufficiently in their present class.
172. At Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 3 successfully use an adventure program linked to literacy work to explore and solve problems. Pupils in Year 4 work with the headteacher to send an e-mail to Canada, but the size of the group and the length of time available make it a largely theoretical experience. In Years 5/6, pupils program both a floor turtle and the cursor on the screen to draw regular shapes, although this activity has only recently been introduced. Pupils' experience of data handling and spreadsheets is restricted to collecting the information; they have not had the chance to enter or analyse it themselves. Word-processing at present is restricted to making printed copies of written work, using different fonts and sizes. Pupils are learning about 'tools' such as dictionaries and thesauri. They have had no opportunity to monitor external events, such as the weather, using information technology equipment and software, nor have they explored control technology by linking working models to computers.
173. Pupils' response to the subject varies. Where they have the chance to use a computer and explore its possibilities they show enjoyment and work with interest. Pupils are willing to help each other and work well co-operatively, as in Years 5/6 when programming. At other times, when taking part in whole-class lessons, their attitude reflects the quality of the teaching they receive, and they are sometimes bored and lose interest.
174. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, but information technology is not yet integrated into lessons. Weekly planning includes information technology, but the present emphasis is on learning new skills. This is appropriate because of both the amount of equipment new to the school and the low level of experience of the pupils. There is a draft list of skills to be taught which is designed to improve attainment, although expectations are not high enough. There is no planning which indicates how information technology can contribute to other subjects, using skills in a practical way. Assessment information is not gathered systematically in order to help teachers plan appropriate work for the pupils. A lack of whole-school staff expertise and confidence, coupled with the lack of a scheme of work which shows clearly what skills, knowledge and understanding are to be acquired in each year group and built on subsequently are important reasons for the below average standards achieved by the pupils.

174. Religious education

175. Although religious education is planned and taught throughout the school, only four lessons were observed during the inspection, two in each of the key stages. Evidence from these is supplemented by discussions with pupils, and an examination of planning documentation and a scrutiny of pupils' previous work.
176. Standards achieved in religious education by pupils in both key stages are satisfactory, although a significant number of older pupils in Key Stage 2 are making only limited progress in relation to the expectations of the locally-agreed syllabus. Most pupils, however, in both key stages, including pupils with special educational needs, make sound progress.
177. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have a basic knowledge of Bible stories and recognise some festivals in the Christian calendar. Pupils in Year 1 learn about Jesus as a friend and storyteller. They have a sound understanding of the moral content of the stories and are able to relate these to their own behaviour and experiences. For example, after listening to the story of the rich man they explore the qualities of generosity and fairness and how they can share with friends. Through discussion, they begin to appreciate that other people may have different values and opinions from their own. By the end of the key stage, pupils have a developing knowledge of the main festivals celebrated by different world religions. Pupils learn about special people and events from other faiths. Pupils in Year 2 look for similarities and differences between Christianity and Islam. Their spiritual awareness develops as they consider the wonders of the natural world.
178. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are developing a personal response to right and wrong, good and evil. Through their lessons and assemblies pupils become increasingly aware of Christian values. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 discuss the Ten Commandments, exploring and considering their own activities and experiences. These pupils have a basic knowledge of holy books and how people worship in different ways.
179. Pupils in Year 3 learn about the Hindu festival of Holi and some recall other religious festivals which take place in the spring. Older pupils learn the key beliefs and practices of Judaism. Some recall stories about Rama and explore issues of good and evil. However, pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs and their ability to talk about the significance of religious activities are underdeveloped overall. The subject makes a broadly satisfactory contribution to the development of pupils' literacy.
180. Most pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. They are interested and motivated and many are beginning to gain insights into people's beliefs, practices and celebrations.
181. The quality of teaching is sound across the key stages. Teachers set appropriate objectives and present material with sensitivity. They have a good rapport with pupils and use praise and encouragement constructively. Most lessons are well paced, providing a suitable balance between teacher exposition and pupil involvement in activities.
182. Religious education is co-ordinated by two well qualified and enthusiastic members of staff. They have recently produced a scheme of work based on the locally-agreed syllabus, which considerably improves the planning for religious education. The links

with pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Assessment opportunities incorporated within the scheme of work are a recent development and have yet to be fully implemented. There are adequate resources for religious education and these are organised efficiently for ease of access. The school is in the process of extending the range of artefacts and texts to support teaching and learning. School assemblies support religious education and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. The school has taken the necessary steps to ensure that religious education meets statutory requirements. This was a key issue in the last inspection.

182. **Other subjects or courses**

182. **Art**

183. From the evidence of lessons, looking at pupils' work and displays around the school, and discussions with teachers and pupils, progress is judged to be unsatisfactory. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making less progress than at the time of the last inspection. Art is used successfully to support learning in other subjects, but in both key stages the development of skills and techniques is insufficiently planned. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of art, including the work and style of famous artists, are also insufficient.
184. When art is used within a topic to support or illustrate another subject, sound progress is made, with good examples of pupils' creativity. For example, in their topic on transport, Key Stage 1 pupils use observation to draw with good detail parts of a car engine and musical instruments. They use wax and colour wash to represent the sea and blue waves. Two-dimensional transport models have been made to create an attractive display. In discussion, however, pupils do not know the primary colours and are unsure about colour mixing. They are unable to talk about texture, pattern, shades and tones in art.
185. In Key Stage 2, pupils' art work is linked to other subjects such as history, in which they produce satisfactory drawings of a Tudor timber-framed house and paintings and drawings of the school now and in the past. There are attractive examples of batik work, and scientific drawings and models in design and technology are of a good standard. Older pupils make observational drawings of natural objects and have produced masks during Africa Day.
186. Pupils' knowledge of famous artists is inadequate. There is no systematic approach to the knowledge and understanding aspect of art. Key Stage 1 pupils are unable to talk about famous artists. In Key Stage 2, pupils have worked in the style of Vincent Van Gogh and Clarice Cliff. Examples of pupils' paintings, in the style of Pablo Picasso, make a colourful display.
187. When asked, pupils say they 'love art'. Mostly they concentrate well and persevere even when some show a lack confidence in their work. They are interested and pleased with the final result, sharing materials and tidying away sensibly.
188. The co-ordinator has been in post for one year and is working hard to improve the progress that pupils make in both key stages. There is a commercial scheme which is used as a source of ideas, and there are technical notes to assist the non-specialist.

The co-ordinator is aware that the development of skills is inhibited by the topic approach and the demands of other subjects, and is planning to implement a more systematic approach in both key stages.

189. Resources are of good quality and there are useful portfolios of artists' work. The school participated in the recent art festival *Walking Fish*, when artists came to school to work alongside the pupils. This is an annual event. The co-ordinator organises a club for pupils in Year 3 which is very well attended.

189. **Design and technology**

190. The overall progress made by pupils is unsatisfactory, although there are examples of good progress made by pupils in Years 5 and 6. Time for design and technology is shared with art and science in many lessons and the subject does not have sufficient emphasis in its own right within teachers' planning. Standards at the time of the last inspection were judged to be in line with national expectations.
191. Pupils in Year 1 design and make hot air balloons and aeroplanes as part of their science experiments and ask, 'Can we make something that floats?' Pupils in Year 2 plan and make puppets and mobiles for their bedrooms. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2, in their work on food technology, design a pizza and make ginger beer. In Year 4, pupils use wood to make Tudor roses, and older pupils design and plan electrical quiz boards linked to science. In their topic on the 1930's and beyond, pupils design wartime recipes, invitations and menus when planning a street party. In discussion, older pupils display an understanding of design when considering purpose and the importance of a strong and stable construction.
192. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress in the *challenges* set by teachers. These include a *market challenge* where objects are made, bought and sold, with pupils working in groups. A Christmas tree challenge is popular with pupils, when the task is to make a newspaper Christmas tree that will remain standing overnight, complete with lights designed by the pupils.
193. The pupils' attitudes to design and technology are good overall. In some classes pupils work in groups on their chosen tasks, changing their ideas as they progress. Younger pupils help one another by sharing their design skills with their friends. Older pupils behave and listen well, being very attentive when spoken to.
194. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In the few lessons seen, teachers provide good resources for pupils. They encourage them by asking skilful questions which help them to extend their learning. Teachers move around groups of pupils, supporting them well and helping to develop ideas. Good links are established when teachers encourage pupils to bring resources from home to illustrate the lesson. For example, an older pupil in Key Stage 2 brought a wartime recipe book to support the design and planning of a wartime menu for a street party. However, the lack of a scheme of work makes it very difficult for teachers to plan the design and technology curriculum at both key stages.
195. The co-ordinator has only recently been appointed and is aware of the development needs of the subject. The school lacks an overall policy and a scheme of work which clearly defines how skills, concepts and knowledge are to be developed systematically as pupils move through the school. There are no assessment procedures with which to

record prior attainment and the skills already taught. Resources are adequate, but are currently not well organised.

195. Geography

196. No geography lessons were observed during the inspection in either of the key stages. Geography units are taught in topic cycles in both key stages and these are scheduled as a block of lessons at different times of the school year rather than on a regular weekly basis. Judgements about attainment and progress are based on discussions with pupils about what they know and can do, on a scrutiny of their work and on teachers' planning documents. No judgement can be made on the quality of teaching.
197. In the previous inspection pupils in both key stages attained standards in line with national expectation. Pupils' standards of attainment in Key Stage 1 continue to match expectations for pupils of their age, and pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. They make satisfactory gains in acquiring a range of geographical skills and knowledge.
198. Pupils in the reception classes and in Key Stage 1 make daily observations about the weather and record what they see in written and pictorial form. Pupils recall the four seasons and identify the weather features associated with each. They observe the local neighbourhood and its features. Pupils begin to understand simple maps, follow directions and discuss routes. Younger pupils give elementary descriptions of their route from home to school and some know their addresses. Some pupils identify features such as bus stops and telephone boxes on simple maps. Younger pupils follow directions using simple geographical terms and vocabulary. However, few pupils name or identify the countries of the United Kingdom on a map or understand how to get geographical information from atlases or other sources. Some pupils show an awareness of places beyond the locality in which they live and express views on attractive and unattractive features of the environment.
199. In Key Stage 2, pupils' standards of attainment are below expectations, and progress is unsatisfactory. In discussion no pupils define geography correctly. Their learning is fragmentary and superficial. Many have not acquired sound geographical skills, knowledge and understanding and fail to make the progress that they should. Information technology is little used to support and extend learning, and the subject makes little contribution to the development of literacy and numeracy.
200. Planning indicates that pupils study land use and how settlements differ and change. However, few pupils can discuss the reasons for early settlements. In contrast, many show a well developed awareness of pollution and its effects. Pupils in Year 4 study weather and climatic conditions. They compare the weather at home with that of Saskatoon in Canada. They complete weather record sheets containing information on temperatures, cloud type, wind force and direction. Few pupils give reasons for similarities and differences between these locations. Pupils study the geographical processes associated with rivers, but are unable to relate their studies to any major rivers. There is no evidence of how the various skills of making, interpreting and using maps are presented and understood in Key Stage 2. Pupils have insufficient understanding of gradient, scale and geographical terminology.
201. Resources are generally adequate. There is some good use of the local environment as

a learning resource. There is a satisfactory draft scheme of work, but this programme of work has not been fully developed and implemented. There is no framework for assessment in this subject.

201. History

202. It was only possible to observe a small number of lessons during the inspection and these were of satisfactory quality. However, displays, photographs, previous written work, and talking to pupils, reflect a standard which is to be expected with this age range. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, show a satisfactory increase in knowledge and understanding as they progress through both key stages.
203. In Key Stage 1, pupils develop an awareness of the passage of time through comparing artefacts, such as old toys and forms of transport, with their own experiences. They are beginning to look carefully for similarities and differences and talk about their preferences. They learn facts from stories and are beginning to recognise the difference between fact and fiction.
204. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are developing research skills. They use primary and secondary sources to build up a picture, for example, of life during the Second World War. They write pieces, such as letters from evacuees, which show they are developing empathy. They write newspaper articles in which they start to explore bias. Most pupils understand timelines and have developed a sense of chronology.
205. Pupils say that they enjoy history because of the wide range of activities offered to them. They remember their educational visits with enthusiasm. They work well together, for example when researching and preparing for V.E. Day street parties. They are keen to take part in role-play, which they feel helps them to remember facts. They benefit from actually handling artefacts and listening to people, for example the visitors who brought in a wonderful collection of old toys which amazed and fascinated the pupils in Year 2.
206. As in the previous report, history continues to be sound overall and plays an important part in extending the discussion and literacy skills of the pupils.

206. Music

207. Pupils' levels of attainment are in line with what is expected for their age in both key stages. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress and sing well, often from memory, with good pitch, rhythm and enjoyment, both in class lessons and in assemblies. The standard of singing is good throughout the school. Older pupils sing a range of songs in different styles and perform syncopated rhythms effectively. Pupils listen to recorded music from other countries and traditions, mainly in assemblies, but have little opportunity to show their response to it through either writing or art.
208. Pupils in Key Stage 1 sing confidently. They use percussion instruments successfully to add an accompaniment to a song and are developing a good sense of rhythm. Younger pupils select their instruments thoughtfully. They hold and play them carefully. Pupils create simple compositions and use basic notation and symbols, controlling the rhythm of their music. Younger pupils know a wide repertoire of songs and remember all the actions associated with the accompanying lyrics. Pupils in Year 2 make good attempts

as they participate in the early stages of singing in rounds.

209. Standards attained in Key Stage 2 have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils extend their range of songs. They improve their articulation and increase their control of pitch and dynamics. Older pupils sing songs from the war years with genuine enjoyment. The songs are based on their history topic of Britain since the 1930s, and the pupils have a growing awareness of the context in which they were written. They create their own composition as part of this theme. They experiment with instruments to create more interesting sounds reflecting their feelings and response. Pupils co-operate well using pitched and unpitched instruments and enjoy the opportunity to appraise and improve on their work. Most pupils are keen to display inventiveness when they compose and concentrate well on aspects of their performance.
210. Most pupils enjoy music and work well in groups. Most listen well in order to appreciate the music that they learn and to help them perform as a group. This makes an effective contribution to their social and cultural development. They sing with obvious enjoyment in singing assemblies and understand that rehearsal improves their performance.
211. Overall, teaching is sound and sometimes good. Many teachers enjoy music and inspire the pupils in the subject. Not all teachers feel secure when teaching music, but make good efforts to ensure that their pupils have access to the subject. Where teaching is good, lessons are well planned with clearly identified learning objectives, and activities are suitably matched to pupils' abilities. Teachers use appropriate methods for improving pupils' performance. Music lessons are of good length and involve everyone well. Teachers make their expectations clear so that the pupils know what is expected of them. Teachers give all pupils, including those with special educational needs, good opportunities to contribute to the lessons. Members of staff with particular expertise in music are used well to support key-stage singing lessons. However, listening opportunities are not sufficiently systematic to ensure that pupils listen to a wide range of music covering different composers, styles, cultures and times to enrich further their knowledge, love and understanding of music.
212. The curriculum is planned with a sound policy and scheme of work providing guidance for class teachers. The scheme of work outlines the progressive development of skills. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. There is also a suitable amount of time allocated to music. At times, music is well linked to other subjects, for example historic war songs. There is little monitoring of progress to ensure that all year groups are learning appropriately for their age and that the musically more-able pupils are challenged.
213. Practical resources for music are plentiful and of good quality. They include a range of instruments from different cultures and traditions. This wide range helps teachers to take a positive practical approach to class instrumental work. Classroom resource boxes are used well.
214. Pupils combine music with physical education when they learn country dances as an after-school activity. Most follow the step patterns with energy and maintain phrasing and rhythm. The curriculum is enriched for some pupils by the provision of instrumental lessons taught by a visiting specialist teacher. Pupils enjoy and benefit from taking part in school concerts where they perform for families and friends and through participation in music festivals and events such as the Africa Day Music Workshop.

214. Physical education

215. Pupils' attainment is in line with that expected for the age concerned. This is a similar picture to that found by the previous inspection team. Pupils make sound progress overall. This includes those with special educational needs, many of whom receive considerable help in lessons from learning support assistants.
216. Thirteen lessons were observed during the course of the inspection, covering the curriculum areas of educational gymnastics, games and dance. Over the school year a full programme of physical education activities is planned for. The teaching of swimming is particularly thorough. For example, at the start of a recent school year only seven of the sixty pupils in Year 3 could swim. By the end of the school year only four could still not swim. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 learn lifesaving and ten pupils in the present Year 6 have gained awards. Outdoor and adventurous activities are only catered for through residential visits, and opportunities are missed to develop these through other subjects such as geography, using the school grounds.
217. The youngest pupils in Key Stage 1 slide and spin on the apparatus, showing awareness of pushing and pulling movements. In dance they adapt their movements in response to a poem, with some using words such as 'twisting' and 'swirling' to describe their actions. By Year 2, they show greater control, and the majority can perform a rotation while balanced, although only a few are able to link one movement to the next. In games, most are able to throw and catch accurately over a small distance.
218. Pupils in Year 3, while learning to include the idea of 'stillness' in their movement work, still have difficulty in putting together a sequence of controlled movements. When learning an Indian celebration dance for later performance many are able to keep in time to the music. In Year 4, pupils show an understanding of the principles of attack and defence when creating their own games, although they find it difficult to decide on suitable rules. By the end of the key stage, some pupils are able to sustain balances and combine them smoothly to form a sequence. However, the level of attainment is not consistent across the classes, with some pupils making better progress. Throwing and catching show sound progress, with pupils able to transfer their skills to small-sided games.
219. Pupils' response to their lessons is always at least satisfactory, and sometimes good. They collaborate and co-operate well, both in pairs and groups. Equipment is used sensibly and even the younger pupils understand the need to take turns. They watch each other's performance with interest, making constructive comments. Their relationships with their teachers and other adults are good, except those of a few boys who sometimes show a lack of respect. Some pupils show poor listening skills, not always paying close attention to instructions.
220. With one exception, teaching is always at least satisfactory, with four lessons judged to be good and one very good. Good teaching occurs in both key stages. Planning is sound, although sometimes insufficiently detailed, with not enough focus on the skills teachers wish to improve. The absence of a whole-school agreed scheme of work makes it more difficult for teachers to plan so that pupils make good progress. A feature of the better teaching is the way in which pupils are fully occupied with a good variety of activities which maintain their interest and enthusiasm. Where pupils have to sit and

listen for lengthy periods lessons lose momentum and pupils as a result make little progress. Whilst warm-ups feature in most lessons their purpose is not often discussed, and some are inappropriate, for example where stretching activities are preceded by running energetically on the spot!

220.

220. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

220. **Summary of inspection evidence**

221. Six inspectors, including a lay inspector, visited the school for a total time equivalent to 24 days. Before the inspection members of the team attended a meeting of the parents to discuss inspection issues and to hear the views of the 15 parents who attended. In addition, 72 completed questionnaires were analysed.

222. The main evidence considered by the inspection team was gathered from:

- observation of 82 lessons or parts of lessons, covering all classes and including pupils with special educational needs, for a total of some 55 hours;
- attendance at daily acts of collective worship, observation of registration periods and extra-curricular activities;
- observation of pupils' behaviour in and around the school;
- listening to a sample of readers from across the school;
- examining a representative sample of pupils' work for the current year and last year from each class, work on display around the school and work in progress;
- discussions with pupils about their work;
- discussions with the headteacher, teachers and education support staff, other staff working in the school, governors and parents;
- scrutiny of the school development plan, minutes of meetings of the governing body, policy documents, teachers' planning and other documentation;
- examination of attendance registers, financial statements, records of pupils' progress and reports for parents;
- examination of the use of the accommodation and resources provided by the school for the pupils.

DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y6	426	12	156	151
Nursery	25	0	4	N/a

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)

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

18.9
22.54

Education support staff (YR – Y6)

Total number of education support staff:
Total aggregate hours worked each week:

23
429.5

Qualified teachers (Nursery)

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

1.0
25

Education support staff (Nursery)

Total number of education support staff:
Total aggregate hours worked each week:

3
42

Average class size:

30.4

Financial data

Financial year:

1998/1999

	£
Total Income	741853.00
Total Expenditure	753343.00
Expenditure per pupil	1666.69
Balance brought forward from previous year	12120.00
Balance carried forward to next year	630.00

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

480

Number of questionnaires returned:

72

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	33	57	4	6	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	43	44	4	8	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	25	44	17	14	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	15	48	18	17	1
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	17	64	11	8	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	24	58	13	6	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	21	63	11	4	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	20	51	10	17	3
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	28	53	15	4	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	9	51	25	9	7
My child(ren) like(s) school	42	53	3	3	0

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents were concerned about limited accommodation and playground areas and the lack of a school field. Parents were pleased with the improvement in music provision at Key Stage 2.