

INSPECTION REPORT

Sussex Road Primary School

Tonbridge

LEA area: Kent

Unique Reference Number: 118286

Headteacher: Mr N Amos

Reporting inspector: Mr J Tyler
20506

Dates of inspection: 11th October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707469

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
Type of control:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sussex Road Tonbridge Kent TN9 2TP
Tel/fax number:	01732 352367
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Ripley
Date of previous inspection:	6 th June 1996

© Crown Copyright 1999

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated. Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

Under the Education (Schools) Act 1992 and the Education Act 1993, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr J Tyler (Registered Inspector)	Science; information technology; special educational needs.	Attainment and progress; teaching; the efficiency of the school.
Mrs S Cash (Lay Inspector)		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; attendance; pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; support, guidance and pupils' welfare; partnership with parents and the community.
Mr B Clasby	English; religious education; physical education.	The curriculum and assessment.
Mrs J Harris	Under-fives; history, geography; music.	Leadership and management.
Mrs R Scahill	Mathematics; design and technology; art; equality of opportunity.	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.

The inspection contractor was:

Qualitas Education Consultants Ltd
Wickham Court
Layhams Road
West Wickham
Kent BR4 9HH
Tel: 0181-777-1103

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints which are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

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

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

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

4

- Attainment and progress
- Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
- Attendance

Quality of education provided

23

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

The management and efficiency of the school

48

- Leadership and management
- Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
- The efficiency of the school

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

Areas of learning for children under five

62

English, mathematics and science

72

Other subjects or courses

91

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence

105

Data and indicators

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching for the under-fives is very good.
- The curriculum is broad and interesting. Good schemes of work show teachers how to plan for pupils to develop knowledge and skills systematically.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are good.
- Provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are given good guidance and support.
- There are excellent links with the community.
- Parental involvement in pupils' learning is effective. The school keeps parents very well informed.
- The headteacher, senior managers and the governing body have set a very good educational direction for the school and have brought about significant improvements in provision since the last inspection.

Where the school has weaknesses

- In a few classes, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory in a high proportion of lessons. Across Key Stages 1 and 2, there are instances when pupils' progress is reduced by weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge, the organisation and pace of lessons, or management of pupils' behaviour.
- Learning targets for pupils with special educational needs are often insufficiently helpful to teachers when planning work across the curriculum.
- Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in information technology.
- There are inconsistencies in teachers' use of homework for pupils in Key Stage 2.
- Higher-attaining pupils are often insufficiently extended.

The school has more strengths than weaknesses. The governors' action plan, setting out how weaknesses are to be tackled, will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

Very good progress has been made in addressing the key issues from the previous inspection. The curriculum and quality of teaching for the under-fives have improved greatly and are now strengths. Curriculum planning has been addressed effectively, as have the associated assessment procedures. A clear management structure has been established and subject leaders are working effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Although standards have not risen significantly since the last inspection, the period has been well used to lay the foundations for future success. The school's capacity to raise standards is good, with a clear vision, agreed policies and very strong leadership from the headteacher and deputy headteacher.

Standards in subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools
English	D	E
Mathematics	E	E
Science	E	E

Key	
<i>very high</i>	A*
<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
<i>very low</i>	E*

The table shows that in 1999 standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were below the national average in English and well below average in mathematics and science, and well below results in similar schools. This year group included an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The results in 1998 were average. Pupils currently at the start of Years 2 and 6 are working in line with expectations for their ages. Standards are below expectations in information technology at the end of Key Stage 1. Throughout the school, pupils make unsatisfactory progress in this subject although there is a strength in communicating information by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils make satisfactory progress in religious education and reach the expected levels of attainment. In other subjects, standards in the work seen were appropriate for the ages of the pupils. The under-fives made very good progress in lessons seen. Evidence from last year shows that their progress was satisfactory over time. They reach appropriate standards by the age of five.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	Very good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Very good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Science		Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Information technology		Insufficient observations made	
Religious education		Insufficient observations made	
Other subjects	Very good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 85% of lessons seen, good or better in 41% and very good or excellent in 15%. The quality of teaching was very good in four classes and unsatisfactory in two. Teaching was most consistently strong for the under-fives, with 88% of lessons seen being good or better.

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	Most pupils behave well and work hard but a significant minority sometimes distract other pupils.
Attendance	Levels of attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.
Ethos*	Satisfactory. Good relationships and learning environment but not all staff are equally committed to high achievement.
Leadership and management	Good. Particular strength in the educational direction set by governors and headteacher. Effective management of subjects has improved the curriculum since the last inspection.
Curriculum	Good schemes of work guide teachers when planning lessons. Some good cross-curricular links. Strength in extra-curricular activities.
Pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory progress. Very effective support from learning support assistants, but targets in individual education plans offer insufficient help to teachers when planning lessons across the curriculum.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Spiritual development is satisfactory. Good provision for moral, social and cultural development, including multi-cultural awareness.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Sufficient teachers, well supported by learning support assistants. Some good quality resources, but too few computers. New buildings will enhance provision.
Value for money	Satisfactory

* *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
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school encourages them to take part in the life of the school.• It is easy to approach the staff when children have problems.• They are well informed about what their children are learning.• The school enables their children to achieve good standards of work.• Children like going to school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school does not handle complaints well.• Teachers are inconsistent in the way that they set homework.

Inspectors agree with almost all the above statements. The school is enabling pupils to achieve average standards. When parents occasionally make complaints, the school does not always report back to parents about the action taken.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To improve further the standards of work and learning of the pupils, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- raise the quality of teaching. Aspects that should take priority for development are:
 - subject knowledge, and making use of the good schemes of work;
 - teaching methods and the organisation of lessons, such as carefully guided, independent group work;
 - the pace of learning;
 - planning for the needs of higher-attaining pupils;
 - consistent use of homework in Key Stage 2;
 - better guidance for teachers to deal with the small number of disruptive pupils; (see paragraphs 25-30)
- improve the quality of targets and strategies in individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs; (see paragraph 34)
- raise standards in information technology by ensuring that its use is planned as often as possible and there are sufficient resources. (see paragraphs 15,27, 61)

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

- improve records of assessment for the under-fives; (see paragraph 36)
- ensure that the behaviour policy is implemented with greater consistency; (see paragraph 43)
- clarify the arrangements for pupils' arrival at school; (see paragraph 44)
- when parents express concerns, inform them of the nature of the actions taken; (see paragraph 47)
- deploy learning support assistants where the need for help is greatest; (see paragraph 63)
- improve the range and quantity of pupils' extended writing. (see paragraph 77)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Sussex Road Primary School is bigger than most primary schools. The 400 pupils are organised into 14 classes. Pupils come from a range of backgrounds, with a socio-economic mix that is similar to the national average. 11% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is broadly average. The number of girls and boys is balanced overall, but there is one year group with many more boys than girls. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. There are 98 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, giving a proportion that is above the national average. Children enter the Reception class in September or January, depending upon age. Initially, they attend part time, with a small group staying each afternoon while baseline assessments are carried out. The balance of attainment on entry is average.
2. The aims of the school, which are set out in the prospectus, are to:
 - provide a caring, stimulating, disciplined and secure environment within which all the children can work on a broad, meaningful range of tasks, can build upon skills and knowledge, and develop the ability both to question and argue rationally;
 - place an emphasis squarely upon the core curriculum, preparing for the next stage of schooling, but within a balanced and enriching curriculum that covers the humanities, the aesthetics and physical areas of learning;
 - encourage and help each child to achieve his/her own personal excellence, to develop self-confidence and self-esteem and to begin to prepare him/her for life in the modern world;
 - guide the children towards tolerance of those with different cultures, religions, gender, age and abilities from their own, encourage good manners and an understanding of the value of co-operation, and develop moral and spiritual values;
 - open children's eyes to human achievements and aspirations and develop in them an ability to appreciate such achievements critically.
3. The school improvement plan sets out priorities for this year in detail. They include:
 - raising standards in English, mathematics and information technology;
 - developing schemes of work for art and personal, social and health education;
 - raise the performance of more able pupils;
 - achieve a Quality Mark award from the Basic Skills Agency, and from Investors in People;
 - further enhance the internal and external environment of the school.

Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	32	26	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	22	23	27
	Girls	19	21	19
	Total	41	44	46
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	71 (75)	76 (83)	79 (66)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

¹ Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	26	22	32
	Girls	21	20	24
	Total	47	42	56
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	81 (82)	72 (72)	96 (83)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Attainment at Key Stage 2²

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	25	31	56

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	14	14	18
	Girls	23	18	20
	Total	37	32	38
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	66 (66)	57 (58)	68 (70)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	14	16	23
	Girls	24	20	18
	Total	38	36	41
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	68 (68)	65 (72)	74 (53)
	National	(65)	(65)	(72)

Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	6.4
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.9
	National comparative data	0.5

² Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	3
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	15
Good or better	41
Satisfactory or better	85
Less than satisfactory	15

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

4. There is a wide range of attainment on entry to the reception classes though, from evidence of baseline assessments, it is average overall. Currently, in small classes with part time schooling, the under-fives are making very good progress. By the time they are of statutory school age, many will achieve or exceed the expected desirable learning outcomes. From the evidence of the previous year's work, the children made satisfactory progress overall.

5. The under-fives make very good progress in language and literacy development. They listen attentively and the role play areas very effectively encourage pupils' imaginative use of language. There is a structured reading programme and parental involvement in reading at home is very beneficial. Children hear a story daily and make very good progress as they join in reading, recognise letters and sounds and learn to read key words. Rapid progress with writing is evident as many now write their own name and higher attaining children are beginning to write sentences. Very good progress is made in early mathematical development. Higher-attaining children are beginning to add and subtract single digit numbers orally, and children of all abilities made good progress as they studied shapes. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world develops well. They used the computer, learned about seasonal changes and made good progress finding out about parts of the body and the senses. Physical skills develop very well in physical education lessons and when children practise cutting, complete puzzles, make models and use the computer mouse. Their creative development is satisfactory. Children sing tunefully, paint and print, and make models.

6. In the 1999 national assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, attainment was well below average in reading and mathematics, and below average in writing. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this year group was above average. In the 1998 assessments, attainment was average in reading, below average in writing and well below average in mathematics. Pupils presently at the start of Year 2 are working at a level that is broadly in line with expectations, though standards in information technology are below national expectations.

7. In the 1999 national assessments at the end of Key Stage 2, attainment was below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. This year group included an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. In 1998, standards were average in English and science, and above average in mathematics. Pupils presently at the beginning of Year 6 are working at levels appropriate for their age.

8. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress during their time at the school. Pupils' progress during the year varies between classes, especially in Key Stage 2. Progress is satisfactory in most classes, good in a few and unsatisfactory in some others. The major cause of the differences is variations in the quality of teaching, and this creates some inequality of opportunity. If, in the course of rising through the school, a pupil is taught by particular teachers progress is good: if taught by different teachers it is unsatisfactory.

9. Progress was at least satisfactory in 85% of lessons seen and good or better in 41%. The most rapid progress was in the Reception classes where it was good or better in 88% of lessons. In lessons seen in Key Stage 2, progress was satisfactory overall but varied between classes. In one class, pupils made very good progress in every lesson seen, while in two classes their progress was less than satisfactory in about half the lessons.
10. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. They generally meet the targets set in their individual education plans, although these are not always especially helpful to their particular needs. They often make good progress during lessons when they are helped by learning support assistants. Higher-attaining pupils often make insufficient progress in lessons because the work given them is not challenging enough.
11. In English, progress is satisfactory overall. In lessons seen, pupils made the most consistent progress in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, progress varied between unsatisfactory and very good, but was satisfactory overall. Throughout the school pupils have satisfactory speaking and listening skills. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Attainment in reading is average at the end of both key stages. Pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils are taught to recognise letter and sound patterns so that they are able to decode unfamiliar words successfully. In Key Stage 2, most pupils have a very positive enjoyment of books and are reading with increased fluency and expression, but there is a lack of consistency in the way that reading is taught. Overall attainment in writing is average. Pupils make satisfactory progress across the school. A strength in writing is poetry, and a weakness is the quality of extended writing. There is satisfactory development in pupils' handwriting and spelling.
12. Literacy skills are used well in other subjects. In most subjects there is an emphasis on recording work in proper written form rather than filling in spaces on worksheets. This is effective, both in supporting literacy skills and in encouraging careful thought about the subject being studied. Pupils use specialist subject vocabulary appropriately in many lessons. A weakness in a few mathematics lessons was the use of wrong vocabulary. Pupils make satisfactory use of reference books, for example, in history. Information technology is used too little. Teachers are not planning enough use of word processing and interactive programs to reinforce literacy skills.
13. Pupils throughout the school make satisfactory progress in mathematics. Work is of a similar standard in all aspects of mathematics. The work of pupils presently at the beginning of Year 2 is in line with expectations, although excessive use of work sheets does not allow the pupils to organise their own work. Pupils of all ages made good progress in oral and mental mathematics at the beginning of each lesson, particularly when they were expected to answer quickly. Pupils use numeracy skills well in other subjects. In science, older pupils used number skills and their knowledge of angles and degrees to work out time zones. Younger pupils reinforced their knowledge of shapes by making patterns and pictures using regular shapes. A mathematics week, which included the involvement of local businesses, effectively showed pupils the importance of mathematics in everyday life.
14. In science, standards are broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1, though there are some weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding of living things and life processes, and of materials and their properties. Pupils make satisfactory progress. In Key Stage 2, progress was unsatisfactory in a significant proportion of lessons because of weaknesses in teaching in some classes. Some pupils carry out too little experimental and investigative work. Standards at the end of the key stage were well below average in 1999. The present Year 6 are working at levels that are appropriate except for the more able pupils, who are not reaching expected standards.
15. Standards in information technology are below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. Standards in communicating information are satisfactory, but pupils' mouse control and use of keyboard are unsatisfactory. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is broadly in line with national expectations. There is a strength in many pupils' ability to communicate information. Progress is unsatisfactory across the school. Pupils do not use computers enough in most classes, partly because of weaknesses in resources.
16. Attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations of the local agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages. Pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have a good knowledge of Bible stories and talk about some of the miracles that Jesus performed. Older pupils explored the meaning of community and worked effectively in groups to present their ideas to the class.
17. In the work seen, attainment was appropriate for the ages of the pupils in art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. Good development in pupils' awareness of colour and texture was seen in weavings. Pupils designed and made good models last year, inspired by the building works. Visits make an important contribution to progress in geography and history. Pupils sing well and express their feelings when responding to music. Some skills are not developed appropriately in physical education, but extra-curricular provision is a strength.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

18. The personal and social development of the under-fives is very good. They are enthusiastic and very well behaved, clearly understanding classroom routines and teachers' expectations. Many persevere with activities such as model making or completing puzzles, and tidy away at the end of the lesson. They are developing satisfactory independence, for example, as they change for physical education lessons. Children relate well to each other, taking turns and sharing when appropriate.

19. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 have sound attitudes to learning and most enjoy coming to school. In about nine out of ten lessons, the response of pupils was at least satisfactory. In some lessons it was very good. Most pupils behave well and work hard. They listen attentively to their teacher, are keen to answer questions and settle to their work quickly. When required to do so, they co-operate well in pairs and groups but are also able to work independently. In most literacy lessons, pupils worked well on their own while the teacher focused on a particular group of children. This positive attitude to learning makes a good contribution to pupils' progress. In some lessons or parts of lessons, there is insufficient challenge or the pace is slow, which leads to pupils becoming restless and making unsatisfactory progress. There is a small but significant minority of pupils throughout the school who find it difficult to behave appropriately and who disrupt the learning of others.

20. Behaviour in and around the school is satisfactory. Pupils are proud to receive house points for good behaviour and most appreciate the weekly certificates they are given, though some older pupils would prefer a mark on a chart. Pupils move around the school sensibly and are quiet in the dining hall. They play well together in the playground, with a buddy system so that those who have no-one to play with can find a friend. Pupils are good at looking after each other. Relationships throughout the school are good, with adults providing a positive learning environment in which pupils are encouraged to respect each other. Pupils and parents express confidence that there is little bullying. Three pupils have received temporary exclusions during the past year.

21. Pupils throughout the school carry out helpful tasks and take on increasing responsibilities as they get older. Representatives from each class form a school council and the oldest pupils, for example, help with assemblies and escort younger pupils to and from the canteen. Pupils show a growing self-confidence as they move through the school. They understand right and wrong actions and appreciate the need for rules in an orderly community. They listen with growing respect to the opinions of others and are invariably polite. Their personal development is good.

Attendance

22. Levels of attendance are similar to the national average, which makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' progress. At the time of the last inspection, levels of attendance were slightly higher but in the intervening years have been at or below the national average. Registers are called promptly and the formality of registration provides a calm and purposeful start to each session.

23. Punctuality is satisfactory. Although a significant number of pupils arrive after the official start of school, most are in class before the register is closed. The school sensibly emphasises to parents the need for their children to be in school for the start of literacy and numeracy hours.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

24. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 85% of lessons seen, good or better in 41% and very good or excellent in 15%. The quality of teaching was very good in four classes and unsatisfactory in two. Teaching was most consistently strong for the under-fives, with 88% of lessons seen being good or better, which is a very good improvement since the last inspection.

25. Teachers generally have satisfactory subject knowledge, and this is sometimes a strength. Pupils made good progress in an information technology lesson because the teacher's expertise enabled him to ask the right questions to extend their skills. Teachers' understanding of the under-fives' curriculum is very good. Particularly in Key Stage 2, individual teachers show weaknesses in specific subjects or aspects, such as mathematics, science and religious education. In a few lessons this led to pupils being taught facts incorrectly. Throughout the school, where teachers lack expertise, they sometimes misinterpret the good schemes of work and teach ideas at an inappropriate level. On the whole, however, teachers use these well to support their lesson planning and set appropriate learning objectives. These are displayed for each lesson. A feature of the most successful lessons was that the learning objectives were shared with the pupils at the start, referred to often and used as the criteria for evaluating success at the end. In lessons that were less than satisfactory there was a lack of focus on the learning objectives. Overall, the planning of

lessons has significantly improved since the last inspection. Plans are now appropriately related to the National Curriculum and the effective focus on learning objectives much more widespread.

26. Teachers have satisfactory expectations of what pupils should achieve, though these vary significantly between classes. In one English lesson, the teacher expected pupils to suggest an exceptional range of vocabulary and richness of expression, and helped pupils to achieve this. In the parallel class, pupils relied mostly upon the teacher's suggestions and made unsatisfactory progress because they were not sufficiently challenged. In some lessons, the higher-attaining pupils are not extended enough, but lower-attaining pupils are supported well. Lack of challenge for the higher attainers sometimes led them to become restless, disturb other pupils and make insufficient progress.

27. Teachers use resources well in many lessons. An exception to this is the use of information technology. This is rarely included in teachers plans except for specific information technology lessons. This gives pupils insufficient practice and wastes opportunities to extend learning in other subjects. Specialist vocabulary is used well in a wide range of subjects, which extends pupils' use of language.

28. Teachers sometimes kept the whole class together when independent work in groups would have been more effective. In a science lesson, for example, most pupils were not actively involved in a class discussion about litter they had collected. Had they worked in groups to sort and record their collections, they would have been more involved and learned more skills. Most lessons are well structured. Many lessons start with some revision and direct teaching of new ideas, include group or individual work and finish with a discussion to check and extend what pupils have learned. Some discussions or explanations take too long and pupils lose their concentration, sometimes becoming badly behaved. A few teachers find it difficult to maintain good behaviour, especially with a small minority of behaviourally difficult pupils. Behaviour is best in those classes where the pace and challenge of learning is fastest and teachers apply the school's behaviour policy consistently and firmly.

29. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. Some teachers make helpful observations to suggest a way forward, often linked to the learning objectives. Such comments often lead to improvements in following work. In other instances very substantial periods of work are either unmarked, or are marked in a way that does not assist learning.

30. Homework is usually relevant to work in lessons. However, teachers in Key Stage 2 have different expectations even within the same year groups. Some pupils say that work often fails to match their different needs. For example, some Year 6 pupils of widely differing abilities were required to identify prefixes and suffixes for three words. A very effective use of homework was seen when pupils spoke to their class from notes they had prepared at home.

The curriculum and assessment

31. Since the last inspection, the school has made considerable improvements to the curriculum and procedures for assessment. Weaknesses in the curriculum for the under-fives, the lack of schemes of work and poor assessment systems are now areas of strength.

32. The curriculum for the under-fives matches the needs of pupils of this age and progresses effectively into the early stages of the National Curriculum. The curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 is also good. It is broad and balanced, and reflects the high priority that the school places on English, mathematics and science. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are having a positive impact on pupils' progress. One weakness is that the full requirements of the programme of study for information technology are not met. Work is often made relevant and interesting through good cross-curricular links, such as when pupils used poetry and music to inspire expressive movement. There are suitable arrangements for teaching pupils personal, social and health education, including sex education and drugs awareness.

33. There are good schemes of work for all subjects. These offer effective support for teachers when planning lessons. When teachers use the schemes of work there is good progression in learning. Some teachers do not refer sufficiently to this useful planning, which leads to inconsistencies and unsatisfactory development of knowledge and skills. For example, some pupils have studied the same novel twice during Key Stage 2, and some aspects of science are taught at a higher level in Key Stage 1 than Key Stage 2. The schemes of work clearly set out next stages in learning so that teachers can plan to meet the needs of higher-attaining pupils. In practice, this often does not happen.

34. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are often insufficiently helpful to teachers when planning lessons. Some plans set targets that do not match the needs of the individual concerned, and others list activities without stating what the end result should be. A strength, however, is that all pupils on the register of special educational needs have plans written by their class teacher, supported by the special educational needs co-ordinator. This helps teachers to be aware of some of the particular needs of their pupils. Another strength is that

learning support assistants are involved in planning work and assessing pupils, which helps them to give effective support.

35. A very good programme of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum. Parents acknowledge and value the commitment of the staff and others who organise these activities. There is a good range of regular educational visits, culminating in a residential trip to the Isle of Wight in Year 6. The Expressive Arts Week was an ambitious and hugely stimulating event. Such activities and visits further enrich the good cross-curricular links. For example, whilst on the Isle of Wight, literacy was developed through the writing of diaries and pupils sent electronic mail to the school.

36. Assessment procedures are good. Assessment opportunities are identified in termly and weekly planning. In one class, a focus for the week was to assess how successful pupils had been in using a book index to retrieve information. Detailed records are maintained but are not always used enough when planning following work. New record books are very clearly linked to the schemes of work for each subject, are simple to understand and give a good indication of the next steps in learning that each pupil requires. They are not fully appropriate for the under fives curriculum. For example, personal and social development are not included. Pupils' attainment is systematically recorded from when they enter the school until they leave. Their records include standardised assessments and a record of achievement. Overall, the assessment system is successfully influencing whole school target setting, and individual pupils' targets.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

37. The school has maintained the satisfactory provision for pupils' spiritual development and good provision for moral and social development that was reported at the time of the last inspection. Provision for pupils' cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now good.

38. The development of spiritual awareness is an aim of the school. Assemblies are arranged around a theme for the week and most encourage pupils to reflect, for example, about times or things which have been special to them. In some lessons pupils are helped to think about their own feelings and how they relate to others. Teachers listen to pupils' ideas and value them. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to show respect for all faiths and belief systems, and to recognise that there are some important common principles.

39. Pupils are helped to develop a strong sense of right and wrong and an understanding of fairness through the way they are treated by adults. Through the discussion of class rules they understand the need for rules to maintain an orderly community. The work of various charities is explained by visiting speakers, so that pupils can help those less fortunate than themselves if they wish. Through the school council and by performing various useful tasks, pupils are given increasing opportunities to take on more responsibility as they move up the school.

40. Provision for the social development of the youngest pupils in the reception classes has recently improved and is now very good. In Key Stages 1 and 2, good provision for social development is made through the shared reading sessions between older and younger pupils and through the buddy system at lunch-times. Elderly neighbours are entertained at Christmas. Year 6 pupils go on a residential journey to the Isle of Wight, which contributes to their sense of responsibility and growing independence. Opportunities for working independently in pairs and small groups within lessons is still too limited, a criticism of the last inspection. There is a clear code of conduct for the whole school but this is not always consistently enforced. In some classes the personal and social education programme is used well to support pupils' moral and social development but is not of a consistently high standard throughout the school.

41. The school has begun to place more emphasis on raising awareness and understanding of other cultures. The head teacher led an interesting and thought-provoking assembly on cannibalism among a tribe in New Guinea with whom he once worked. The poems of Benjamin Zephaniah were the book focus for the week of the inspection and pupils were told some background information about Jamaica as well as enjoying the poems. Pupils listen to a variety of music, and the school has some good examples of the work of famous artists on display. Visits to museums, art galleries and places of historical interest also make a valuable contribution to pupils' understanding of their own cultural heritage.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

42. The school has developed good systems for monitoring academic progress since the last inspection. Targets are set in discussion with parents and pupils in February and are then reviewed in July. In one class these targets are displayed on pupils' desks as a constant reminder, which was seen to be effective when pupils referred to them. Some teachers write useful short-term targets in pupils' books, which is helpful. In some classes, teachers discussed these

at the start of the next lesson and this was very successful in leading to improvements. More consistent reference to these targets, in all classes, would make them even more valuable in supporting pupils' progress. Record books have been introduced this term for individual pupils' attainment and progress. Some teachers have already started to use them. Teachers know the children well and are alert to any potential problems in their personal development. Individual education plans related to behaviour are regularly reviewed.

43. The behaviour policy is based on assertive discipline. Class rules are discussed at the start of the year so pupils know what is expected of them. Where teachers have firm and consistent control of disruptive pupils and lessons are brisk and interesting, behaviour is good. Where lessons are slow and do not engage the pupils, the use of the policy is less effective. Some teachers use the sanctions more often than they use the rewards. Pupils understand the clear system of sanctions but rewards vary from class to class and are not always given consistently. Some parents and pupils expressed the view that the weekly certificates are not valued by pupils. The school is aware that it is not always dealing adequately with the small number of disruptive pupils. The anti-bullying policy is effective. Overall, the promotion of good behaviour and discipline is satisfactory, but comments made at the time of the last inspection about inconsistency are still valid.

44. Pupils are supervised well during play times, and discipline is firm in the dining room. Arrangements for pupils' arrival at school in the morning need to be clarified as information in the prospectus for parents and the staff handbook are inconsistent. The school has managed safety around the building site well. Pupils have been very effectively helped to overcome the disruption to their routines.

45. The school has satisfactory procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance. The class with the best attendance record for the month is awarded a shield, which pupils are delighted to win. The school has reduced the level of unauthorised absence since the last inspection, but it is still above average. Letters requesting an explanation for absence are only sent out every two weeks. The school has tried to improve punctuality in the light of the literacy and numeracy hours and has had some success.

46. Child protection procedures are sound. The school works closely with support agencies to the benefit of pupils. A part-time welfare assistant deals with pupils who hurt themselves or need extra care. She provides very good support for a range of needs in her homely room. All adults in the school are alert to the welfare of pupils and many offer good support. The youngest pupils are sensitively introduced to school and settle quickly, while ex-pupils, returning to see their former teachers, said they were well supported as they moved to secondary school. Time is set aside each week for a programme of personal, social and health education. A good policy has recently been written. Currently, lessons vary in their length and in the quality of what is taught. In a good lesson, the teacher invited Year 1 pupils to discuss what made them frightened and then drew out key points from what the pupils said. For example, she reinforced the need to tell an adult about anything frightening. In another lesson, Year 2 pupils were poorly behaved and gained little because they were not actively involved in any discussion.

Partnership with parents and the community

47. This aspect of the school's work has continued to improve since the last inspection and is very good, with excellent use made of the expertise and resources of the wider community. The school provides a very good range of useful information for parents. Reports, in particular, have recently been improved. They are now written in the Spring Term and are discussed in detail with parents and their children, with targets agreed for the rest of the year. Parents take a copy of the targets home with them. The following July, the school assesses progress against these targets and sends home an up-dated report. The school has consulted parents about this new format and has plans to make refinements. Parents are in the process of signing the new home/school agreement, which was drafted after appropriate consultation. There are good formal and informal opportunities for parents to view the work of the school. The head teacher and staff are readily accessible to parents who wish to speak to them. A number of parents expressed the view that their concerns are not always dealt with. Inspectors found no evidence to support this view, but there are occasions when the school does not inform parents about action that has been taken.

48. The school welcomes the involvement of parents, many of whom regularly work in the school and lead some extra-curricular activities. Others help with major projects such as decorating the school hall. An active school association raises considerable sums of money through social and fund-raising events for the benefit of pupils. Recent purchases include books for the library, a CD player and improvements to the fabric of the building. Almost all parents hear their children read regularly, which significantly contributes to progress. Some parents at the meeting and others answering the questionnaire were unhappy about homework. Their concerns were not so much about the quantity of homework as the consistency with which it was set. Inspectors agree teachers are not consistent in their expectations.

49. The head teacher and staff have worked very hard to develop links with business and the local community, to very good effect. A number of businesses were persuaded to help with the recent very successful numeracy week. An expressive arts week involved over 30 members of the community sharing a wide range of skills, many of which teachers have since incorporated into the curriculum. The school is part of an information technology consortium with other schools and this has enriched and broadened the curriculum. Links with local primary schools also contribute to pupils' personal development, as does involvement with the church, various charities and local elderly people.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

50. The leadership and management of the school are good, with a particular strength in the educational direction set by governors, the headteacher and staff with leadership roles.

51. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are providing very strong leadership and a clear educational direction for the school. They have a clear vision for the school to be one where excellence is given and excellence is expected. In response to the previous inspection report, a clear management structure has been established. Key stage leaders and a senior teacher form the senior management team with the head and deputy, and the team meets regularly to discuss a range of issues.

52. The school has leaders for all subjects apart from history, where there is a temporary leader at present. To address the key issue in the last inspection report, subject leaders have received training and support in the responsibilities attached to the role. They are now effective, being confident in their subjects and leading colleagues in developments such as preparing schemes of work and establishing assessment criteria. They are budget holders, have non contact time in order to monitor their subject and prepare annual subject development plans.

53. The governors are supportive and very involved in the life of the school. Their committees are established with clear terms of reference and each reports to full governing body meetings. Two governors visit the school each term with an agreed focus, and many visit less formally to help in classes or run extra-curricular activities. Newly prepared guidance for governors' visits to school has yet to be shared with all governors, but provides much helpful advice. A useful induction programme for new governors has been established. The headteacher's reports to governors are informative and some subject leaders have reported on developments in their subjects. Governors are effective in the role of critical friend. They are well informed and strongly involved in decision making at policy level. They maintain a focus on pupils' progress, for example, through discussions about test results and target setting.

54. The previous inspection report identified a weakness in the monitoring and support for teaching and curriculum development. The school has addressed this issue effectively. There are now good schemes of work for all subjects. A very good monitoring policy was agreed six months ago, which focuses on improving teaching. The headteacher, deputy and subject leaders monitor standards and provision through classroom observation, work scrutiny and talking with staff and pupils. Non-contact time is provided regularly for all staff with leadership roles. Although this process has only been established for a relatively short time, there have already been significant improvements. For example, classroom environments have been enhanced in a number of ways and learning objectives are now shared with pupils in almost all lessons. Subject leaders' monitoring is enabling them to understand how their subject is taught through the school, to make recommendations and provide support. Overall the monitoring and support of teaching and curriculum development is good, though there are still some significant teaching weakness to be addressed. Pupils of the same age in parallel classes are not always being taught to the same standards.

55. The school aims and new mission statement are appropriate and underpin the agreed teaching and learning policy. Many policies have been drawn up since the previous inspection and some are not yet fully embedded in practice. For example, there are inconsistencies in the setting of homework. The school improvement plan is good. It identifies relevant targets which encompass national as well as school priorities. Staff and governors are involved from the draft stage and governors receive termly updates on progress.

56. Relationships in the school are good and there has been considerable effort to maintain an effective learning environment amid the present building works. There is a desire to raise standards, and the much improved provision for the under-fives is an important step forward. The school improvement plan identifies the need to raise the achievement of higher-attaining pupils.

57. Very good progress has been made in addressing the key issues from the previous inspection. The curriculum for the under fives is now fully appropriate, addressing the required areas of learning and moving into the National

Curriculum. New staff in the reception classes have high expectations and the quality of teaching is very good. Test results in Key Stage 1 do not yet show higher standards, but with improvements for the under fives, the school anticipates that results will reflect this in time. Curriculum planning has been addressed effectively, as have the associated assessment procedures. In-service training is now good, addressing individual, school and national requirements. A clear management structure has been established. Although standards have not risen significantly since the last inspection, the period has been well used to lay the foundations for future success. The school's capacity to raise standards is good, with a very strong partnership between the headteacher and deputy headteacher, a clear vision and agreed policies. Subject leaders are working effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

58. The school has a sufficient number of qualified teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum. The range of experience is good, with a balance between longer serving staff and those more recently qualified. All full-time teachers, except the two newly qualified teachers, are responsible for at least one aspect of the curriculum. There is an above average number of well qualified learning support assistants who, together with a large number of parent volunteer helpers, make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

59. Job descriptions are reviewed annually and the appraisal programme is up to date. All teachers new to the school are supported well by a mentor. There is a strong commitment to staff development, which is well organised. The whole staff have attended residential training sessions and subject leaders have led workshops. Learning support assistants attend some training sessions with teachers, for example, for the new literacy and numeracy strategies, and this helps them to work effectively as a team.

60. In the last report the school's accommodation was judged to be poor. This is now being addressed and the school will shortly have a new building with four new classrooms, a computer suite, group-teaching rooms and a hall. Although causing considerable inconvenience in the short term, the benefits will be enormous, greatly enhancing the learning environment. Classrooms in the existing buildings have been redecorated and refurbished, and displays make them stimulating and attractive. The school works closely with relevant bodies to ensure regular access to a field, but access is inconvenient and sometimes restricted.

61. Resources for learning are satisfactory. There are sufficient books of good quality for the literacy hour and two adequately stocked libraries. There are insufficient computers but money has been allocated so that this will be improved when the new building is completed. The provision of artefacts for religious education has improved since the last inspection. Many resources for all subjects are of good quality and are well looked after.

The efficiency of the school

62. The school provides satisfactory value for money. It has maintained the strengths in administration and financial planning reported during the last inspection. Within the school, there are good systems for financial control and administration. Governors monitor spending regularly. Spending decisions are based on the school's educational priorities, and the governing body gives careful thought to long-term planning. This has enabled the school to redecorate many rooms and allocate large sums for future spending on information technology at the same time as carrying out major buildings developments.

63. Teachers are appropriately deployed. The special educational needs co-ordinator has no class responsibility, which enables her to devote adequate teaching time to special educational needs as well as supporting mathematics teaching. Although there are subjects in which individual teachers show particular strengths or weaknesses, there is little sharing of expertise through specialist teaching. However, shared planning makes a positive contribution to the curriculum and the quality of teaching. Learning support assistants are not always deployed in accordance with the greatest needs, but work well with teachers and make a very positive contribution to pupils' progress. The whole staff is managing the present disruptions caused by building works with calm and efficiency. This is so in all aspects of school life: learning, lunch and playtimes, administration and premises maintenance, and out-of-school activities.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

64. There is a wide range of attainment on entry to the reception classes, though from evidence of baseline assessments, it is average overall. There is a thorough induction programme, which includes visits. The information booklet gives many helpful ideas to parents, but is not specific to the school. Children enter in September or January, depending upon age. Initially, they attend part time, with a small group staying each afternoon while baseline assessments are carried out. This entry policy is effective. Currently, in small classes with part-time schooling, the

children are making very good progress. By the time they are of statutory school age, many will achieve or exceed the expected desirable learning outcomes. From the evidence of the previous year's work, the children made satisfactory progress overall.

65. The personal and social development of the children is very good. They are very well behaved, clearly understanding classroom routines and teachers' expectations. They are enthusiastic, and keen to tell visitors how much they enjoy their 'learning jobs'! Many persevere with activities such as model making or completing puzzles, and tidy away at the end of the lesson. They are developing satisfactory independence as they change for physical education lessons. Children relate well to each other, taking turns and sharing when appropriate.

66. Children listen attentively to the teacher and each other, and enjoy hearing stories. Some are articulate and speak confidently in front of the class, while others are more reticent. They extended their vocabulary as teachers talked about hibernation or, when introducing a new computer program, referred to the mouse, monitor and printer. The role play areas are related to current topics and very effectively encourage pupils' imaginative use of language. There is a structured reading programme and parental involvement in reading at home is very beneficial. The children hear a story daily and make very good progress as they join in reading, recognise letters and sounds and learn to read key words. They discuss books enthusiastically in small ability groups. Very good progress with writing is evident as many now write their own name and higher-attaining children are beginning to write sentences. The weekly focus on a letter of the alphabet is effective. Children are making very good progress in language and literacy development.

67. Very good progress is made in early mathematical development. The daily mental mathematics session, focussing on numbers to twenty, is very effective in developing the children's ability to count and recognise numbers. The weekly focus number provides good opportunities to consolidate understanding and practise writing it correctly. Higher-attaining children are beginning to add and subtract single digit numbers orally, and some followed a repeating bead pattern, recognising both colour and shape. Children of all abilities made good progress as they learned to distinguish shapes with curved or straight sides.

68. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world develops well. They used the computer to paint pictures and to dress the teddy, which improved their mouse control. The current focus is autumn, and a walk in the locality enabled the children to observe and discuss seasonal changes. Their previous work in the topic on 'Ourselves' led to good progress with understanding the parts of the body and the senses.

69. Physical skills develop very well as the children participate in physical education lessons. In a very good lesson, they showed good awareness of space, moving in a variety of ways around the hall. The theme of travelling, using hands and feet, was effectively developed and the children showed very good control and imaginative movements as they used the apparatus. Physical co-ordination also develops well as the children practise cutting, complete puzzles, make models and use the computer mouse.

70. Children enjoy singing and know a number of songs, many with actions, which they sing tunefully. They paint, make collages and their playdough models are of a good standard. During the inspection, the children successfully made leaf prints with autumn colours. Their creative development is satisfactory.

71. The quality of teaching for the under fives is very good overall and some is excellent. This is a very significant improvement since the last inspection, when teaching was unsatisfactory. Teachers plan together in detail for each area of learning. They enjoy very good relationships with the children and have established clear routines. The teachers give good demonstrations, such as showing how to print with leaves or use the new computer program. The pace in all lessons is very good, with appropriately high expectations for children of different abilities. The classes are well organised, with activities carefully planned for the morning to ensure all pupils experience the full range. The two classroom assistants are well qualified and are very effective in supporting groups of children.

72. Classrooms are well organised and lively, with stimulating displays. One room is small, but storage trolleys on wheels enables items to be moved for certain activities. Book areas are not sufficiently attractive and some books are worn. There is a good supply of puzzles and small construction equipment, though not enough large construction materials. The classes currently share a computer, which is unsatisfactory because children cannot use one regularly. There is no outdoor area for the under fives. It is hoped to create one when the building work is completed, though details have not yet been drawn up.

73. The previous inspection report noted deficiencies in the provision for children under five, which reduced progress. Curriculum and assessment practices were unsatisfactory. A great deal of development has been undertaken and these weaknesses have been addressed very effectively. A very good, detailed scheme of work identifies progression into the National Curriculum. The policy is useful but too general, giving insufficient detail of

practice in the school. Teachers assess children's progress effectively, but individual record books do not include the full range of learning outcomes for this age group. For example personal and social development is not covered, which it should be. The new early years co-ordinator works closely with the other reception teacher and support staff. The Reception classes provide a very good start for children entering school.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

74. In the 1999 national assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, attainment was well below the national average in reading and below average in writing. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment was below average and well below the average for similar schools. These year groups had an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Attainments in the 1998 national assessments were similar to national averages at the end of both key stages, but below the averages for schools with similar intakes of pupils. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' performance remained broadly similar in the three years to 1998. For Key Stage 2, performance was inconsistent over the same period. Pupils at the beginning of the current Years 2 and 6 are working at levels that are broadly in line with national expectations. Standards are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. Progress is satisfactory overall. In lessons seen, pupils made the most consistent progress in Key Stage 2.

75. Throughout the school pupils have satisfactory speaking and listening skills. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Pupils gain confidence through speaking in front of a class, in assemblies, chanting responses, and reciting performance poetry. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils articulate their aspirations and expectations for their time as Year 6 pupils. They do this in thoughtful and reflective ways as they evaluate their relative strengths and those areas which they think will require further development if they are going to progress in their learning. Some older pupils made very good progress when they retold stories from the Bible during a religious education lesson. They improved their skills in working from notes, and evaluated their own performance. In a few lessons, teachers gave pupils answers too soon, rather than asking questions to help them find ways to express their thoughts. There are insufficient opportunities for discussions in small groups or pairs, both in English and other subjects, and this limits the progress that pupils make in speaking and listening.

76. Attainment in reading is average at the end of both key stages. Pupils make satisfactory progress. Some pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the high level of support they receive. In Key Stage 1, pupils learn to read using structured commercial schemes, as well as other fiction and non-fiction books. They show satisfactory levels of understanding and accuracy. Pupils are taught to recognise letter and sound patterns so that they are able to decode unfamiliar words successfully. In Key Stage 2, most pupils have a very positive enjoyment of books and are reading with increased fluency and expression. The home/school reading record ceases to become used as pupils start to use a homework diary. However, this gives less opportunity for recording useful observations about how the pupil has read. There are few stimulating book displays and corners in classrooms. There is a lack of consistency in the way that reading is taught, such as how teachers focus on a specific group during the literacy hour or guide pupils when choosing books. In some classes, pupils have good opportunities to read quietly on their own. A shared reading project involving pupils in Years 2 and 4 is of limited impact because there is an insufficiently strong focus on actual reading. The library includes books written by pupils and these are read with interest by other classes as well as giving the young authors a strong sense of achievement.

77. Overall attainment in writing is average. Pupils make satisfactory progress across the school. A strength in writing is poetry, in which pupils make good progress. Pupils use language with precision to explore ways of expressing their thoughts and feelings. A high numbers of pupils have had their poems accepted for future publication in a national anthology. This indicates the quality of their poetry and the enthusiasm with which it is advanced by their teachers. These achievements are not matched by pupils' extended writing. The range and quantity of writing at length, or over an extended period of time, are insufficient to enable pupils to make satisfactory progress. Some teachers plan specific lessons for extended writing, but their expectations of what pupils should achieve are generally too low. Progress in this aspect is unsatisfactory. Pupils' handwriting develops satisfactorily. They are taught to join letters at an early age, which is effective. Pupils write legibly and confidently, and take care to present their work well. Throughout the school, the standard of spelling is average. Pupils learn spellings regularly, and successfully use a look/cover/spell/check system. They make good progress when teachers challenge them to spell words aloud during lessons across the curriculum.

78. Pupils have positive attitudes towards the work in English. They listen attentively to the teacher and other pupils, and are enthusiastic during discussions. They work well in pairs or groups except when the work lacks sufficient challenge, when they become talkative. Most pupils take care with spellings and neatness. In some classes, pupils independently fetch a dictionary to look up spellings, which also supports their reading skills.

79. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers use the guidance in the National Literacy Strategy effectively to plan appropriate learning objectives and to structure their lessons. The beginning and end of lessons are particularly effective. There is generally clarity and purpose about these times, when teachers explain new ideas, check pupils understanding and extend their knowledge and skills. The middle phase of the lesson, when pupils work individually or in groups, is too often used for activities that lack sufficient purpose or challenge, which sometimes leads to unsatisfactory progress. In some lessons, pupils became talkative during this part of the lesson, especially the higher-attaining pupils for whom the work was too easy. In an exceptionally successful lesson, the teacher set very high expectations for Year 5 pupils and demonstrated what can be achieved by modelling writing about an astronaut in space. The verve and vitality of the discussion, together with individualised follow up work which accurately matched the pupils' needs, resulted in excellent progress. Pupils enjoyed the challenge and felt justifiably pleased with the results of their endeavours.

80. Literacy skills are used well in other subjects. In most subjects there is an emphasis on recording work in proper written form rather than filling in spaces on worksheets. This is effective, both in supporting literacy skills and in encouraging careful thought about the subject being studied. A range of writing styles is encouraged, for example, factual description about science investigations and expressive writing in religious education. Specialist vocabulary is used well in a wide range of subjects, which extends pupils' use of language. In a few mathematics lessons, wrong vocabulary was taught, which was a weakness. Pupils make satisfactory use of reference books, for example, in history. Information technology is used too little. Teachers are not planning enough use of word processing and interactive programs to reinforce literacy skills.

81. The subject leader has worked very successfully to establish the literacy hour. Good monitoring procedures enable weaknesses in teaching or the curriculum to be identified and some important improvements have taken place. The school has set appropriate targets for raising standards over the next few years, showing a commitment to high achievement. Many resources for English are of good quality. There are sufficient books for the requirements of the literacy hour and a central library for fiction. Reference books are in an integrated resources area which is also used for information technology and television during the present building works. Access to books is therefore sometimes restricted.

Mathematics

82. In the 1999 and 1998 national assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 attainment was well below the national average and that for similar schools. The work of pupils presently at the beginning of Year 2 is broadly in line with national expectations, although excessive use of work sheets does not allow the pupils to organise their own work. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in the 1999 national assessments was well below the national average and that for similar schools. In the 1998 assessments it was close to the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 was average in 1999 and above average in 1998. In 1999, both Years 2 and 6 had an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils currently in Year 6 are working in line with national expectations. The newly introduced National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive effect on overall standards.

83. Pupils throughout the school make satisfactory progress over time. In lessons seen, their progress varied between unsatisfactory and very good. Pupils made good progress in the oral and mental mathematics at the beginning of each lesson, particularly when they were expected to answer quickly. Some older pupils made good progress when the teacher's very good questioning and lively explanation encouraged pupils to think quickly. They gained a good understanding of how to multiply and divide numbers to two decimal places. Some Year 1 pupils made good progress when they revised the names and properties of simple two and three-dimensional shapes which had been studied earlier in the week. Progress was unsatisfactory in two lessons because the pace was not sufficiently demanding for higher-attaining pupils and some facts were taught incorrectly. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress, especially when they are helped by a learning support assistant or volunteer helper.

84. Pupils have positive attitudes to mathematics. They are keen to answer questions and participate well in discussions. When explanations are long, some pupils lose concentration and talk among themselves. In a few classes, pupils called out during discussions without putting their hands up and this slowed the pace of the lesson further. Pupils concentrate on tasks when working independently and co-operate when in pairs or groups. Some pupils checked each other's work, which helped them to sort data accurately. They are confident in explaining their work to the class and this contributes to their progress in speaking and listening. Work in older pupils' exercise books is neat and well organised.

85. The quality of teaching is sound overall. Teachers' planning is good; year groups plan together weekly and identify mental arithmetic, the main teaching activities and vocabulary to be introduced. In most lessons, teachers told pupils what they were hoping to achieve by the end of the session. This was referred to during the course of the

lesson and helped maintain a clear focus, which was effective. Teachers made sure that all pupils were involved in oral and mental work by asking appropriate question to pupils with different abilities. In some lessons, the pace of questioning is slow and higher-attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged. Although they are given extra work, they make little progress because it does not extend them mathematically. In a few lessons, wrong or inappropriate vocabulary was used, such as muddling *sum* and *product*, or *block* and *column* graphs. Usually, however, vocabulary is used effectively and correctly. Pupils' errors were not always seen and corrected. Some teachers found it difficult to meet the needs of pupils of widely differing attainment when they had no learning support assistant to help. Homework is set throughout the school and is usually supportive of work in lessons, but teachers' expectations are inconsistent in Key Stage 2.

86. Pupils use numeracy skills well in other subjects. In science, older pupils used number skills and their knowledge of angles and degrees to work out time zones. Younger pupils reinforced their knowledge of shapes by making patterns and pictures using regular shapes. The school's countdown to the millennium and time lines are referred to frequently. A mathematics week, which included the involvement of local businesses, effectively showed pupils the importance of mathematics in everyday life.

87. The curriculum for mathematics is good. There is appropriate emphasis on mental mathematics, number work and mathematical vocabulary. A detailed mathematics progression document, together with the National Numeracy Strategy, is the basis of the effective planning. The subject is well managed. The subject leader supports her colleagues well. Teachers' plans are monitored each term and lessons are observed to monitor teaching and curriculum. Lesson observations are followed by written feedback and support where needed. Main points are raised at staff meetings and this has had a positive impact on standards. Assessments are analysed and pupils' progress tracked so that strengths and weaknesses are effectively identified. There are sufficient resources and they are easily accessible to staff and pupils. Insufficient use is made of information technology. The management, planning and assessment of the subject have improved since the last inspection, three years ago. Standards have been inconsistent during this period, but there is strong evidence that the improvements are leading to a more consistent quality of teaching.

Science

88. Attainment in the 1999 teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 was above the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was well above average. However, evidence from last year's recorded work and discussions with pupils presently at the start of Year 3 show standards to be broadly average. There are some weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding of living things and life processes, and of materials and their properties.

89. For pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in the 1999 national assessments was well below the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was below average. Standards were average in 1998. Work samples from last year show that lower-attaining pupils had broader knowledge than expected, but that higher-attaining pupils were not achieving as well as expected. Pupils at the start of the present Year 6 show a similar balance of attainment. Standards are similar in all aspects of science.

90. There was a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Years 2 and 6 in 1999. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 1, where the overall quality of teaching is sound. In Key Stage 2, progress is unsatisfactory; the quality of teaching varies between very good and unsatisfactory, and is unsatisfactory overall. The good scheme of work is used well by some teachers to help plan lessons in such a way that pupils' knowledge and skills develop systematically. Some other teachers make little use of the scheme of work and so pupils make less progress. Some scientific ideas suitable for Year 5 or 6 are taught to pupils in Key Stage 1 before they have grasped foundational work. For example, some pupils learned inaccurate information when they carried out experiments with seed germination before knowing simple facts about green plants. Some pupils in Key Stage 2 carry out too little experimental and investigative work even though it is a clear requirement in the scheme of work. However, in most classes, this aspect of science is taught effectively. Most pupils record their findings well but do not accurately interpret them in order to draw conclusions.

91. Pupils have satisfactory attitudes to learning. They are inquisitive and keen to carry out practical investigations. They behave well in most lessons, but become restless and talk over others when discussions carry on too long. In a few lessons, the higher attainers disturbed other pupils because they were insufficiently challenged and so became bored.

92. Throughout the school, there are wide differences in teachers' expertise in teaching science. Some teachers question pupils effectively. In one lesson, pupils made good progress learning about food chains because the

teacher's questions constantly checked their understanding of energy flow and reinforced the correct language. Most lessons seen had been planned with clear learning objectives. This helped pupils make good progress when the objectives were shared with them and remained the focus of the lesson. Pupils in one year studied how they can use science to help them in everyday life; in this lesson, by using their knowledge of how the earth's spin creates day and night. One class made very good progress as they frequently referred back to their objectives, while using good numeracy skills and appropriate resources to find out about time zones. The other class made unsatisfactory progress. The teacher did not effectively share the learning objectives. Pupils spent too long colouring in a map and what they did learn about time zones left them slightly puzzled because they did not know the purpose of the lesson. In several lessons, there were missed opportunities for carefully guided, independent group work. One effect of this was that higher-attaining pupils worked at the same level as all other pupils rather than being extended, and so they made slow progress.

93. The curriculum is good, and is effective when it is used properly to support teachers' lesson planning. It is enriched by extra curricular activities, visits and some useful cross curricular links. The strong emphasis on investigative work contributes positively to pupils' social development in some classes. Literacy and numeracy skills are practised effectively in science lessons. The recently agreed assessment system is carefully linked to the scheme of work. There are sufficient resources, some of which are of very good quality. They are carefully stored but access is too restricted. The subject leader has carried out an excellent analysis of Key Stage 2 assessments, accurately identified strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment, and shared these with colleagues. Weaknesses in teaching, such as non-adherence to the scheme of work, have not been sufficiently addressed. Since the last inspection, standards have risen broadly in line with national standards and assessment procedures have improved. There has been insufficient improvement in meeting the needs of higher-attaining pupils.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Information technology

94. Attainment in information technology is below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. Standards in communicating information, such as using text and pictures, are appropriate, but pupils are not sufficiently confident in general skills such as saving and printing work. Their mouse control and use of keyboard are unsatisfactory. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is broadly in line with national expectations. There is a strength in many pupils' ability to communicate information. For example, pupils have created multimedia files containing linked pages of text, pictures and sound. They are generally confident using a mouse and sometimes resort to this rather than use simpler keyboard commands.

95. Pupils of all ages enjoy using information technology equipment. Some older pupils were excited by the possibilities of linking pages but also recognised the limitations of the software. A younger pupil with behavioural difficulties made good progress in English with the help of a tape recorder. When working together, they co-operate, take turns and give constructive criticism.

96. Progress is unsatisfactory across the school. Pupils do not use computers enough in most classes. In a few classes, pupils make good progress because, after being taught a specific skill in an information technology lesson, they have opportunities to practise it for the rest of the week in supporting work for other subjects. However, there are not enough computers to have one in each room and some teachers do not plan their use even when they are there. There is a lack of software for pupils to make adequate progress in some aspects, such as modelling. The weaknesses in hardware and software will greatly improve when a computer suite opens in the new buildings. Whether standards improve or not will depend upon whether teachers use the resources appropriately.

97. When planning lessons, across the curriculum, most teachers do not automatically consider how they will use information technology. This is partly due to lack of confidence and expertise, although several teachers say that training within school and support from the subject leader has raised their confidence greatly. Some teachers also make effective use of the good scheme of work to plan lessons which develop pupils' skills methodically. Some Year 3 pupils successfully learned to highlight and edit text because the lesson built on their previous knowledge. The worst feature in the few lessons seen was the poor computer furniture, which hampered pupils' progress because their arms and necks were at such uncomfortable angles.

98. The subject development plan is good and the school is fully aware of the long-term financial implications of developing the subject. Money is allocated for the new suite, and there are already some good quality resources in the school. The knowledgeable subject leader supports colleagues as much as possible and has a clear grasp of the most important principle in successful information technology training: learn a few skills at a time, and only just before the skills will be put into practice. Since the last inspection, three years ago, there have been good improvements in

curriculum planning, assessment and the leadership and management of the subject. Weaknesses, especially in resources and teaching, have led to insufficient improvement in standards.

Religious education

99. Attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations of the local agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages. Pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have a good knowledge of Bible stories and talk about some of the miracles that Jesus performed. Some Year 2 pupils enjoyed listening to the Hindu story of Rama and Sita, and then acted the story. This gave them a lively understanding of the victory of good over evil, and they made good progress. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 considered the inter-relationships and inter-dependence of those who live or work in a community, such as the school. They made satisfactory progress as they worked effectively in groups to present their ideas to the class.

100. In most lessons, pupils focused well on what they were trying to achieve because the teachers shared the learning objectives. This was a successful approach, which enabled pupils to evaluate their success. Teachers used the very good scheme of work when planning lessons. This helped them to prepare activities that consolidated and extended learning from previous topics. They made good use of resources, such as artefacts from world religions and videos. In one lesson, pupils made poor progress learning about the Sikh naming ceremony because the teacher's subject knowledge was unsatisfactory. Class discussions went on too long and pupils became bored and disinterested.

101. Improvements since the last inspection include more appropriate allocations of time and the inclusion of studies of a broader range of faiths, which helps pupils to understand the wider community to which they belong. The subject leader regularly monitors standards and the work of teachers. Suggestions for improvement are made either to individual teachers or the whole staff. This support, together with the improved curriculum, has been effective in developing a more consistent approach to religious education across the school than was reported three years ago.

Art

102. Standards in art have risen since the last inspection. In the work seen, attainment was appropriate for the ages of the pupils. The curriculum is broader and pupils make good progress in developing skills. This term, pattern, texture and textiles are the themes being developed throughout the school. Work is planned so that pupils' skills are developed systematically. For example, the simple awareness of colour and pattern learned in Year 1 is developed in Year 2 with simple weavings using different materials. By Year 6 pupils wove patterns on bicycle wheels to represent the wind. Pupils are well-behaved in lessons. They work well together, share materials sensibly and help each other. Lessons are well planned and skills are taught well, which gives pupils the confidence to develop their own ideas. Some older pupils were successfully taught techniques for designing and creating Batik work. The teacher had a parent helper supervising a small group, which was effective organisation. A successful Expressive Arts Week, involving many artists and experts, gave the pupils the opportunity to experience a variety of skills.

Design and technology

103. In the work seen, attainment was in line with expectations for the ages of the pupils. Pupils learn both designing and making skills. Inspired by the builders on the site, some older pupils sketched vehicles and drew detailed plans for each stage of model making. They used different materials to build models, which included moving parts powered by either hydraulics or pneumatics. Their models were finished off with features that they designed and printed from computers. The project was successful because it included elements of all the important processes in design and technology and also included valuable cross-curricular links. The subject leader has recently updated the scheme of work which, together with the new assessment procedures, offers good support to teachers when planning lessons.

Geography

104. Pupils attain standards appropriate for their ages in both key stages, as indicated in the previous inspection report. Pupils in Key Stage 1 made sound progress studying the local environment, comparing the town of Tonbridge with a village. They discovered differences between urban and rural environments and undertook traffic surveys in both locations, which developed data handling skills. A river study in Year 5 led to some good quality work. Pupils clearly understood the stages of a river, and built on map skills learned in Year 4. The school journey to the Isle of Wight for Year 6 pupils enables them to undertake fieldwork in a contrasting locality. Pupils study tourism in Sandown through surveys, and compare physical and human features with those in Tonbridge. Pupils throughout the school enjoy their geography studies. A particular strength in the curriculum is the number of visits which enrich and

extend pupils' learning. There is satisfactory support for pupils' cultural development through studies of other places.

History

105. Standards in history are similar to those expected for the pupils' ages. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils make sound progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress in some classes in Key Stage 2, where a lively, enquiry based approach involves and motivates the pupils. For example, in Year 5 last year, pupils acted out the Battle of Bosworth, making their own weaponry, and held a banquet where part of *The Midsummer Night's Dream* was acted out. Research skills developed well as groups made beautifully presented books. The Year 6 study of wartime Britain was enhanced by visits to the air raid shelter. Good literacy development followed, with pupils writing diary extracts and reading war poems. They used information technology very effectively to record some of their work. Pupils in Key Stage 1 develop a good sense of chronology through, for example, studying toys and visiting the Museum of Childhood. Appropriate time lines are in use throughout the school. A good range of sources of information is used, enabling pupils to develop enquiry skills.

Music

106. In those aspects of music observed, pupils attained standards appropriate for their ages. They sing tunefully throughout the school, successfully sustaining two part singing in assembly and hymn practice, and showing awareness of dynamics. In some lessons seen in Key Stage 2, a brisk pace was sustained, with increasingly challenging activities which pupils enjoyed. Year 5 pupils made very good progress as they recognised different rhythm patterns and sang in four parts. In another very successful lesson, Year 6 pupils recognised pitch and learnt the structure of a chord. Pupils listen to a variety of music as they enter assembly. In some classes, they express their feelings after listening to recorded music. Pupils have the opportunity to play the recorder and the beginner group is making very good progress. Some pupils have private brass lessons in school. Pupils perform in front of the school, and to parents in the annual concert. The previous inspection report noted that the music curriculum lacked cohesion. The new subject leader has successfully introduced a published scheme, is training staff in its use, and has purchased additional instruments.

Physical education

107. In lessons seen, standards were appropriate for the ages of the pupils. Pupils make satisfactory progress over time. They make the best progress when they enter the school and the pace slows down as they grow older. For example, movement sequences tackled with determination and enthusiasm at the earliest stages are not significantly better in later years. Some older pupils lack sufficient precision, poise and inventiveness. Physical education is sometimes linked with other subjects effectively. Some Year 3 pupils recalled poems they had written about spiders and moved expressively to music. A good range of extra curricular activities is organised by teachers, parents and governors. This provision, greatly appreciated by pupils and parents, helps to meet the needs of those pupils with particular interests and talents. Some pupils have gained county recognition for their achievements, for example, in cross country running.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

108. The inspection was carried out over a period of one week by 5 inspectors for a total of 24 inspector days. For the majority of the time in the school the inspectors visited classes, talked with pupils and evaluated samples of work from each year group. In total 78 observations of teaching were made, taking over 64 hours. Pupils from each year group were heard reading and inspectors looked at samples of previously completed work. Planned meetings were held with the headteacher, teaching and non-teaching staff, and governors. Policy documents, teachers' planning and assessment records were inspected. A parents' meeting was held before the inspection with 32 parents attending.

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	400	4	98	44

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)

16

Number of pupils per qualified teacher

25

Education support staff

Total number of education support staff

10

Total aggregate hours worked each week

170

Average class size:

28.6

Financial data

Financial year:

1998/99

	£
Total Income	628,747
Total Expenditure	595,337
Expenditure per pupil	1,431
Balance brought forward from previous year	21,507
Balance carried forward to next year	54,917

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

400

Number of questionnaires returned:

70

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	27	63	7	3	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	34	50	7	7	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	9	33	30	14	6
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	24	61	7	6	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	20	53	13	13	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	11	67	14	6	1
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	17	57	14	9	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	13	63	13	10	1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	17	53	19	11	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	10	49	26	13	3
My child(ren) like(s) school	44	41	10	1	1

Some rows may not add up to 100% because parents did not respond to specific statements.