

INSPECTION REPORT

BRIARY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Greenhill, Herne Bay

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118520

Headteacher: Mr M Saffery

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Nelson
20991

Dates of inspection: 7-11 February 2000

Inspection number: 190690

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Greenhill Road West Herne Bay Kent
Postcode:	CT6 7RS
Telephone number:	01227 373095
Fax number:	01227 742946
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Stanley
Date of previous inspection:	September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs J Nelson	Registered inspector	Religious education French	The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught?
Mrs S Burgess	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs J Harris	Team inspector	English Music	How well is the school led and managed?
Mr A Howe	Team inspector	Science Physical education Under-fives Special educational needs	
Mr D Major		Mathematics Geography History Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mr P Morgan	Team inspector	Information technology Art Design and technology	How well does the school care for its pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Qualitas Education Consultants Ltd
Wickham Court
Layhams Court
West Wickham
Kent
BR4 9HH

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Briary Primary School serves the community of Greenhill, a mixed area of private and local authority housing, located on the outskirts of Herne Bay. It is a large school with 359 full-time pupils. Fifty children started school this year, aged four and five. Assessments when they started school show that they are below average overall in their language, mathematics and social skills. Twenty-nine per cent of pupils are entitled to free-school meals, which is higher than the national average. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Children who are from traveller families sometimes attend the school. Last year, a high proportion of pupils (48) joined the school part way through their primary school career. Half the school's pupils are on the register of special educational needs, which is much higher than the national proportion of a fifth. These pupils mainly need extra help with literacy and social skills.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school makes good provision for its pupils. A major strength is the way it is led and managed. Pupils are generally well taught in English, mathematics and most other subjects. Standards in national tests have risen, most substantially at Key Stage 1. Last year, pupils at both key stages performed better in these tests than pupils in similar schools. The school is effective and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good overall and particularly strong at Key Stage 1, where three-quarters of the teaching observed was good or better.
- The school is very well led and managed; the excellent leadership of the headteacher is a key factor, and the governing body is performing its role very effectively.
- Pupils usually behave well and their attitudes to work are generally good, which has a good impact on their learning.
- The support offered to pupils for their personal and social development is a major strength of the school.
- A strong and effective partnership is being forged with parents.

What could be improved

- A few teachers' short-term planning, lesson evaluations and marking of work.
- Aspects of assessment in English, mathematics and science.
- The organisation of the school week at Key Stage 2, and the provision of the amount of teaching so that it meets the recommended minimum hours for this key stage.
- Standards in religious education and geography for the oldest pupils and the demands in mathematics for the pupils in the higher ability set.
- Training for co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress in their subjects, and more focused monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and senior managers.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in September 1996. At that time, pupils' standards of work, the quality of education and the school's management and efficiency were all found to require substantial improvement. Three broad key issues relating to these matters were provided to guide the school's development. In 1998, a new headteacher was appointed. There has been recent, rapid improvement on all the key issues. The quality of teaching is now much better. Pupils' progress in many subjects was unsatisfactory at the last inspection because of unsatisfactory teaching, but this is no longer the

case. Teaching was particularly weak at Key Stage 1 but it is now good. The provision for pupils with special educational needs was previously unsatisfactory; this has been extensively developed and is now good. The school's management has improved and is now very good. Planning, assessment and monitoring have all improved, though more remains to be done on these aspects. The school's resources were generally found to be unsatisfactory at the last inspection and they have now been substantially upgraded. Overall the school is much improved since the 1996 inspection.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	D	E	C	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	D	D	C	B	
Science	E	E	D	C	

Last year, as the chart shows, pupils' performance in national tests for 11 year olds was similar to the national average in English and mathematics but below average in science. This was an improvement on the two previous years. Results were better in English and mathematics than those for pupils in similar schools, that is schools with a high proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals. Over a four-year period, pupils' performance in these tests has been below average when compared with national results. The standards of the present Year 6 are below average in English and mathematics. Over half of these pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs and require extra help with their learning, while a third of them have come to the school part-way through their primary school career. These features have an impact on the standards they are achieving. Last year, pupils exceeded the targets set by the school for the Key Stage 2 national tests by 9 per cent in English and 6 per cent in mathematics. This year's targets for English are ambitious, so will be difficult to meet, but those for mathematics are realistic. In other subjects, Year 6 pupils are mainly reaching the expected standards for their age. Their skills in information technology are better than expected, and singing is a good feature in music. However, their knowledge in geography and religious education is weak.

At age four, when children start the school, assessments show that their early literacy and number skills are below average. Nevertheless, most pupils in the reception classes are on course to achieve the official learning outcomes for five year olds by the time they begin Year 1. In national tests for 7 year olds, there has been a substantial improvement in pupils' results in the last two years. Last year, reading and writing results were similar to the national average and mathematics results were above this. Pupils presently in Year 2 are well on track to achieve similar results. In all other subjects, pupils in Year 2 are reaching the standards usually expected for their age group.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils are attentive and keen to work in lessons. A few of the oldest pupils find it difficult to concentrate and give of their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils understand and follow the school rules well and the school is an orderly place. Most pupils are sensible in class, and lively but generally well behaved at playtimes. A minority of pupils, mostly in Year 6, have challenging behaviour, but they are helped to overcome this by positive guidance from staff.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are readily involved in the life of the school. Older pupils take on a range of useful responsibilities. Pupils are polite and courteous to visitors and eager to be helpful. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and amicable.
Attendance	Satisfactory and broadly similar to the national average for both authorised and unauthorised absences.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall: 88	Satisfactory	Good	Good

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

Overall, the quality of teaching across the school is good. Ninety-five per cent of the teaching observed was satisfactory or better; over half was good or better, with one in ten lessons judged to be very good or excellent. At Key Stage 1, three-quarters of the teaching was good. Four unsatisfactory or poor lessons were confined to a year group at Key Stage 2; here shallow subject knowledge, weak planning and insecure class management strategies limited pupils' opportunities for learning. The teaching of literacy and mathematics skills to the under-fives is sound. In the rest of the school, English and mathematics teaching is good overall. Teachers have successfully developed new approaches to teaching literacy and numeracy. Other subjects, such as history and geography, are used well to help pupils' apply their literacy skills. Teachers stress the importance of pupils learning and using new vocabulary. Most teachers have good skills in class management; usually this is reflected in calm classes where pupils are learning at a good rate. In the best lessons, teachers prepare interesting activities and present new ideas in lively, stimulating ways. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by learning assistants, who are skilled at assisting them with literacy and numeracy tasks. In Year 6, upper set pupils are not being sufficiently challenged by the mathematics teaching, and work in geography and religious education is not demanding enough for this year group.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. A sound curriculum is in place for children under five. The curriculum at Key Stage 1 is good quality and wide-ranging. The curriculum at Key Stage 2 is broad, with valuable additional activities such as French and specialist games tuition. However, its balance is unsatisfactory. Some subjects, such as religious education and geography, have too little curriculum time, so in Year 6 pupils do not develop an adequate depth of knowledge.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils make mainly good progress. The school has thorough and effective systems for identifying pupils' needs and then establishing their individual education plans to guide teaching.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. There are regular lessons to develop pupils' personal, social and moral awareness. Spiritual provision is good and collective worship provides both lively and meaningful experiences. Generally good provision is made for pupils' cultural development, although the cultural diversity within Britain is not adequately considered.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The care for pupils' welfare and their personal support are major strengths. The tracking of their academic progress is sound, but some refinements and improvement are required in assessing English, mathematics and science.

The school provides pupils, particularly those in Key Stage 2, with a good range of extra-curricular activities and school visits. However, the amount of time for teaching at Key Stage 2 is about an hour shorter than the recommended minimum of twenty-three and a half hours. Consequently some subjects are not taught in sufficient depth. The school puts a high priority on working in partnership with parents. This emphasis is starting to pay dividends, as the school's surveys show parents' confidence in the school is growing. It is a strength that the headteacher and governing body are consulting parents in this way and acting upon the findings. A small group of parents help in classrooms. There are regular, well supported, events for families as well as meetings about children's progress and curriculum matters.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher's excellent leadership is providing clear direction for the school's improvement. He is very well supported by an able deputy head. Staff and governors praise the headteacher's commitment, his strategies for forging a strong, professional team and a growing partnership between the school, governing body and parents. Subject co-ordinators are developing monitoring and evaluating soundly, but require more training to make the best of these management roles.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body benefits from excellent direction from the chair of governors. Through its committees, it is fulfilling its responsibilities to a very high standard. It is very effectively shaping the school's long - term future.

The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school analyses pupils' performances in national tests and uses other performance data to judge improvement. There are sound procedures to monitor the curriculum, teaching and learning, but these are not yet used to maximum effect. New initiatives, such as the self-review of its arrangements for able pupils, aid the school in evaluating its performance.
The strategic use of resources	Very good; for instance as part of its drive to raise reading standards, the school has purchased many new books, including those that appeal to boys to promote their interest in reading.

The school benefits from very good accommodation, which is spacious, well cared for and bright with attractive displays. It has sufficient well-qualified teachers and a large number of efficient learning support staff. The resources for most subjects are good. Generally, the school is applying 'best value' principles well. The governing body is readily making use of information to measure the school's performance and compare its spending against that found in similar schools locally. With the headteacher, it consults widely to establish the views of the school community when proposing changes. However, the school has not sufficiently explored whether the organisation of the school day is making the best use of the time available, or whether the teaching time during a week should match the minimum that is recommended.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members are very approachable and work closely with parents. • The school expects its pupils to work hard and behave well. • The teaching is good. • The school is well led and managed. • The pastoral care in the school is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents feel their children do not get the right amount of homework.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. With regard to some parents' concerns about homework, the school has very detailed, high quality procedures that are explained in the school brochure. The amount of homework increases in variety and in the time needed for completing it as pupils get older. There is evidence that these arrangements are being followed, at least satisfactorily, and they are very similar to those found in many primary schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. When children start in the reception classes, many have below average language, number and social skills. This is confirmed by baseline assessments. Inspection evidence suggests that, by the time these children move into Year 1, almost all will have achieved the expected learning outcomes for five-year olds in literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development.
2. Analysis of the results of national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 reveals a marked improvement in pupils' achievements since 1997. Then standards were low in reading and writing and very low in mathematics, compared with those in schools nationally. A sharp improvement occurred in 1998 and this was maintained in reading and writing in 1999, and further built on in mathematics. In 1999, pupils reached the national average in reading and writing while results were above average in mathematics. Teachers' assessments of science indicated that pupils' achieved much higher standards than found nationally. They also performed much better in reading and mathematics, and better in writing, than pupils in schools with similar social circumstances. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level (level 3) in 1999 was also close to the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. The school attributes much of the improvements in English to a change in methods of teaching reading, such as placing a greater emphasis on teaching phonic skills. Although over the past four years pupils' test performances have been well below average, there are two distinct phases: low performance in 1996 and 1997 and average performance in 1998 and 1999.
3. At the end of Key Stage 2, the trend of results in statutory tests from 1996-1999 indicates that standards in mathematics were close to the national average, but were below in English and well below in science. Results of the tests in 1999 show the school achieving its best standards over the four-year period, with a generally improving trend. Pupils' results in 1999 were close to the national average in English and mathematics, though they were below average in science. Standards in all three subjects improved markedly, and more than the improvement found nationally. Much of the improvement in English can be attributed to the school's drive to raise reading standards, together with the effective use of the new national literacy strategy. In English, the percentage of pupils gaining the higher level (level 5) in the end of Key Stage 2 tests was close to that found nationally. In mathematics, the number achieving the higher level was above that found nationally, though in science it was below that found nationally.
4. To show how well schools are performing, their test results are compared with the results of schools whose pupils are from a similar background. This shows that pupils' performance in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 is above average by comparison with this category of schools, while it is average in science. When test results are analysed, over four years the differences in performance between the boys and the girls is smaller than that found nationally; boys perform a little less well than girls in English, but better in science. The governors have set targets for standards in English and mathematics from 1999 and beyond. The targets were exceeded by nine per cent in English and six per cent in mathematics in 1999. The target for 2000 for the present Year 6 in English is ambitious at 70 per cent and may be difficult for pupils to achieve. The mathematics' target of 54 per cent is realistic.
5. Inspection evidence confirms that, at the end of Key Stage 1, standards in English and mathematics are broadly average. For English, this is a major improvement since the last inspection, when standards were below average and pupils' progress was unsatisfactory. Children are achieving better in reception classes than at the last inspection, and this, together with good

achievement at Key Stage 1, is enabling higher standards. The school has been successful in its drive to improve reading and writing standards in response to a key issue of the last report. For instance, higher attaining pupils in Year 2 read quite fluently, and most pupils understand what a definition is, which is work that is usually developed in Year 3. Pupils make good progress in learning to write in sentences. In mathematics, most pupils in Year 2 have a sound knowledge of two-digit numbers. They use estimation strategies and are able to solve simple problems through the support of apparatus, such as a number line or square. They experience games and opportunities for applying mathematics.

6. Pupils presently in Year 6 are unlikely to achieve standards as high as last year in the end of Key Stage 2 tests. Their attainment is below average in both English and mathematics. There are clear reasons for this: over half are on the special educational needs register, with a third at the higher stages; a third of the year group entered the school part-way through their primary career, and these pupils represent a quarter of those on the special educational needs register in the year group. Elsewhere in the key stage, pupils are mainly achieving at the expected standards in English and mathematics, with particular strengths in Years 3 and 4. There is an appropriate emphasis on literacy, numeracy and the use of technical vocabulary in other subjects. In spoken English, while higher-attainers have a wide vocabulary, those who are less able find it difficult to express their views clearly. There are still a number of pupils at Key Stage 2 who have insufficient phonic knowledge to break unknown words into syllables. Pupils have the opportunity to write in different styles and for different purposes. They use their literacy skills well in other subjects such as history and geography. For instance, Year 5's Remembrance Day poems use evocative language and are high quality. Nevertheless, some of the oldest pupils do not use language imaginatively, and this weakness relates to their lack of vocabulary and narrow range of reading. In mathematics, the oldest pupils have below average understanding in number and their mental recall of number facts is weak. Elsewhere in the key stage, pupils achieve a good rate of learning in mathematics and reach expected standards, but progress slows at the end of the key stage, particularly because the pupils in the upper set are under-achieving, as not enough is being demanded of them.

7. Science standards are close to national expectations at the end of both key stages, and pupils learn effectively in most lessons. At Key Stage 1, pupils show they are building up their scientific knowledge steadily, with strengths in their understanding of how to make a fair test. At the end of the Key Stage 2, pupils achieve sound competence in scientific investigation skills, as shown in their explanations about testing the growth rate of mould on bread in different conditions. They carry out tests under fair conditions, and consider the results to draw conclusions. Their knowledge of living organisms and processes, materials and physical processes is sound. In information technology, pupils in Year 2 demonstrate sound learning, and are achieving the expected standard in all elements of the subject. They are competent in using word-processing and art applications for communication, and control programs for robot toys. Then, at Key Stage 2, many of these skills are built on successfully and progress is good. The standards are higher than usually seen at this age. Pupils' communication skills develop quickly and they use the computer to write at some length. This work is well presented, and, in some instances, contains pictures and illustrations from a range of sources including the Internet. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils program successfully, using logo, and can draw simple and complex shapes.

8. Pupils' attainment in religious education at Key Stage 1 meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, and this is an improvement on the standards noted at the previous inspection. Pupils' learning about religious customs and people's lives in different religious traditions is sound. However, at the end of Key Stage 2, standards are now lower than they were at the last inspection for three reasons: the time allocated to the subject is less than that laid down in the school's long-term plans; teachers are not challenging pupils to reflect in depth on the topics being studied; there is a substantial difference in the range and quality of written work between the parallel classes in Year 6. Consequently, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. Elsewhere at Key Stage 2, pupils are acquiring a suitable amount of knowledge about Christian and Jewish traditions and Sikhism, and

are exploring the links between religion, social convention and morality. The pupils in these year groups are achieving satisfactorily.

9. In other subjects at Key Stage 1, pupils are generally achieving at least as well as expected for their age. Improvement is apparent in history, geography and art, where there were low standards and unsatisfactory progress in 1996. In response to a key issue of the last report, a more challenging curriculum and better teaching have led to improved standards. At Key Stage 2, standards in art, design and technology, history, music and physical education are broadly as expected. Singing is a good feature in music. Geography standards are below those usually found at the end of the key stages, because there are inconsistencies in the depth and quality of the work recorded by pupils in each year group. Year 4 pupils soundly develop map-work skills in local studies. These activities build on pupils' previous knowledge and skills, and are effectively linked to work in other subjects. However, this good progress is not maintained in Years 5 and 6, where pupils' recorded work lacks detail and does not reflect the full programme in teachers' plans.

10. Pupils' generally sound skills in literacy enable them to learn appropriately in other areas of the curriculum. The emphasis on using technical terms in mathematics and other subjects, such as science, music and history, promotes pupils' understanding. Good use is made of the wider curriculum to develop pupils' literacy skills. For example, their writing in history is often of a high quality, and links made with music encourage pupils to interpret their responses to listening. Standards of speaking are not strong enough to enrich class discussions generally. However, these skills are promoted widely in the curriculum, for instance in personal and social education lessons. Pupils enjoy their French lessons and are building a basic vocabulary, while this study also benefits the development of their speaking and listening skills. Pupils make good use of their numeracy skills in some science and geography activities. For instance, they use their number skills effectively in pinpointing places on maps, and use graphs when they record and interpret their science results. Nevertheless, they are not given opportunities of this kind often in these or in other subjects.

11. At Key Stage 1, and in the reception classes, pupils on the special educational needs register make good progress relative to their prior attainment. Clear and relevant targets are identified in their individual education plans, and the reviews of their progress indicate that many of these targets are met. Effective early identification and support, particularly with reading, has a good effect here. At Key Stage 2, these pupils make at least satisfactory progress. In 1999, the majority of pupils on the register attained national test results in English and mathematics that were below national standards, but a significant group did better than this. In addition, their gains were at least satisfactory in learning in both English and mathematics since their Key Stage 1 national tests. Overall, there has been a substantial improvement in the attainment and learning of pupils with special educational needs since the last inspection when it was found to be unsatisfactory. The school has identified a small number of particularly able pupils. A study club is provided for them at Key Stage 2, and individuals have a tailored curriculum, for example in mathematics.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good. Pupils are interested in their work and generally sustain concentration during lessons. They are supportive of each other when working in groups, for example when rehearsing for a class assembly or listening sympathetically to others during circle time. Pupils throughout the school are happy to talk about themselves and their work. They are welcoming and courteous to visitors. Relationships are good between pupils and staff and between pupils themselves. They applaud the achievements of others and are polite and confident with visiting adults.

13. High standards of behaviour have been maintained since the last inspection. Behaviour in class, in assemblies and around the school is generally good. Lunchtimes are relaxed and sociable although the noise level is very high when the hall is full. Pupils are considerate to others in their movement round the school, walking in a quiet, sensible way and routinely holding doors open for those following. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting commented favourably on the high standards of behaviour they had noticed in school. Pupils play amicably together at break times and clearly enjoy the large area of play space available. There is, however, a small minority of pupils, particularly in Year 6, whose behaviour falls below the school's expectations. In most instances, the strategies that staff use to help them recognise when their behaviour is unacceptable are proving effective. For example, individuals are given tasks to help around the school or support a younger child, so they may learn to show responsibility. There was one permanent exclusion last year, of a pupil who has since left the school, and two fixed-term exclusions. These were all for aggressive behaviour.

14. Attendance (at 94.03 per cent) is satisfactory. Unauthorised absence is 0.5 per cent. Both are broadly in line with the national average. The attendance rate would be higher, however, if fewer parents took their children out of school for holidays during term time. Very few pupils are late for school.

15. Personal development is enhanced by the increased responsibility that pupils take as they progress through the school. For instance, pupils return registers to the office, pick up litter, scan their own library books unsupervised, and willingly contribute to the school's various recycling projects. Paired reading is taken seriously and is well organised. Monitors, prefects and house captains understand their responsibilities and undertake them willingly. There is very good support for various charities throughout the year, and pupils are often imaginative in their ideas for fund-raising. Pupils enjoy all the extra-curricular activities that the school offers. The good range of educational visits, visitors to school, participation in sporting fixtures and the Year 6 French exchange all contribute very positively to pupils' personal and social development.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teaching was good or better in fifty-six per cent of lessons, resulting in a good rate of learning for pupils. Most teachers taught several high-quality lessons. Seven staff taught at least one very good or excellent lesson, amounting to eleven per cent overall. Of the rest, thirty-nine per cent of lessons were satisfactory and four lessons (five per cent) were unsatisfactory or poor. Most of these weak lessons were in one class where the teaching was often inadequately planned and undemanding, so pupils did not make enough progress. Teaching quality has improved substantially since the previous inspection when forty per cent was unsatisfactory. This improvement is particularly significant at Key Stage 1, which had the weakest teaching in 1996 and now has much of the best; three-quarters of the teaching observed in these classes was good or better.

17. Teaching is satisfactory for the children under-five and for those aged five in the reception classes. Teachers and support staff show a well-developed awareness of their needs, to which the support is well matched. This enables them to learn productively, as seen when some were investigating how to draw a fish using a computer program. The support assistant and children discussed the task as the assistant steadily expanded their knowledge of the technology, and then allowed them freedom to investigate and produce some realistic, colourful pictures. Resources are used well to promote progress. For instance, as part of a 'Pets' topic, children were encouraged to observe and talk about the goldfish kept in class before making their own three-dimensional fish from paper. Teachers assess carefully, using baseline information to set targets and they then evaluate the progress children make in different activities. In the good teaching observed, the consistently high-quality class management is a strength, which ensures an orderly,

calm classroom in which children learn to listen and follow instructions. In a few lessons, the management of children was less secure as the teacher used too few strategies to promote good behaviour. Sometimes too many free-choice activities are offered, which makes it hard for the teacher to move learning forward.

18. At Key Stage 1, the teaching of English, mathematics, science, art, music and physical education is good overall. Too few lessons were seen in other subjects to make a judgement on the quality. Teachers are using the new strategies in literacy and numeracy effectively and all teach lively, purposeful introductory parts to these lessons. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson for example, the teacher injected lots of fun into the introduction of a new mental mathematics activity. The pupils grasped the new strategy quickly, and after ten minutes most were speedily adding in twos and sometimes in fours. Planning for the literacy and mathematics hours is usually good. A strength is the attention that teachers pay to developing pupils' speaking skills, not just in English but through developing the technical vocabularies of the wider curriculum. For example, in a literacy lesson, pupils were encouraged to think of definitions for words they were learning in science. This contributes strongly to pupils' learning. Pupils are usually expected to record work for themselves, which is a strength in developing their literacy skills in the wider curriculum. All teachers guide pupils in organising and presenting their work neatly.

19. All Key Stage 1 teachers have a good knowledge of the curriculum, which is reflected in their teaching and the high-quality learning that it promotes. These findings are much better than those of the last inspection, when teachers' knowledge of most subjects was criticised. A good feature is the way teachers plan opportunities for pupils to develop their information technology skills in literacy and mathematics lessons, as seen in the use of a logo program to extend the pupils understanding of position and turns. Pupils are expected to be independent when they work in literacy and mathematics groups, which provides challenge in its own right. Teachers provided very interesting books and artefacts to stimulate pupils' interest in various topics. In geography, for example, teachers have produced attractive displays to kindle pupils' interest in distant countries.

20. Teaching in English, mathematics, science, information technology and art are good overall at Key Stage 2. In other subjects, teaching is generally satisfactory, but there are some good features within this, particularly in the lower parts of the key stage. For instance, in Year 4 very good, uncontrived links have been made between the study of Herne Bay in history, geography and literacy lessons. Pupils are enthused by using texts that are linked to local events. They take pride in producing leaflets recommending the town and, for example, are taught to use alliteration to create adverts. In contrast, less effective teaching in an upper key stage literacy set did not focus sufficiently on the specific styles of writing in a leaflet, so pupils' learning was less productive. The oldest pupils are not being offered enough opportunities in history and geography to develop independent research. Literacy and mathematics hours are mainly well organised and match the expectations of national strategies. Where teaching is weak, planning has been only superficial. This was apparent for a mathematics set in the upper key stage, when tasks for higher attaining pupils were undemanding, so that they marked time instead of extending their knowledge.

21. Overall, good teaching and support is offered by all staff to the very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Teachers and assistants use appropriate strategies to manage challenging behaviour well, so that these pupils are usually attentive in whole class activities and do not slow the rate of learning of others. Teachers write well-targeted individual education plans that identify appropriate strategies and the support needed to help pupils meet those targets. The school is staffed with an efficient group of support assistants. Teachers liaise with assistants to plan the support given to pupils, and in many cases these arrangements help pupils to make good

progress. For instance, support assistants work effectively with groups in Key Stage 2 to develop reading skills and comprehension, handwriting and spelling as part of the literacy hour. As a result, these pupils make good progress. Nevertheless, in one weak lesson there was an over-reliance on support assistants to develop the tasks for the pupils. Some of the additional literacy support offered to pupils involves withdrawal from other lessons. There is rotation of the withdrawal, but these sessions in the afternoons are causing concern to teachers because pupils miss parts of introductory sessions, so sometimes find it hard to understand what is expected of them.

22. At both key stages, the short-term planning for non-core subjects is generally secure. A good feature is the French teaching at Key Stage 2, taken by a specialist teacher. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils were eager to contribute and learned new vocabulary quickly because of lively and effective teaching. This subject also contributes to the development of pupils' listening skills and confidence in speaking in class. Most teachers write well-focused learning objectives for lessons. It is a new strategy to share these objectives with pupils, and this is improving pupils' learning because they understand the purpose of their work. However, written evaluations of the outcomes from lessons are not used well. The quality of these comments is too varied; sometimes they are not present at all, and only in a few classes do they provide a tool to aid the planning of future work.

23. Across the school, teachers have very good relationships with their pupils. The mainly high-quality management and consistently applied behaviour strategies contribute positively to pupils' rates of learning. Teachers offer appropriate praise and encouragement. There is a productive working atmosphere in almost all classes. Where management is less effective the behaviour of the oldest pupils is less satisfactory; such as in one physical education lesson, where pupils did not listen consistently and a few lacked pride in performance. Assessments, using probing questioning to gauge pupils' understanding, are evident in many lessons. Some teachers write assessment comments beside pupils' work when marking, which is a useful strategy, but this is not a general practice. Teachers provide a good range of homework, mainly linked to literacy and mathematics class-work. Pupils are expected to read at home. Older pupils are guided to undertake other activities linked to the broader curriculum; for example Year 6 pupils have undertaken a study of micro-organisms for home work and produced short projects.

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

24. The school meets statutory requirements to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Children under five experience a sufficiently wide-ranging and stimulating curriculum. The curriculum offered to Key Stage 1 pupils is good, for example with lots of interesting practical experiences provided in subjects such as science, religious education and geography. It is broad, balanced and relevant to their needs. However, at Key Stage 2, the amount of time for teaching, excluding registration and assembly periods, is well below the recommended minimum allocation of twenty-three and a half hours. The curriculum taught within Key Stage 2 is relevant and broad, including regular French lessons in each year group. Nevertheless, some subjects are not taught in each term, for example, geography or history. Several subjects are scheduled for whole afternoon sessions in Years 5 and 6, which makes sustaining an appropriate degree of pace and challenge difficult in subjects such as physical education. Also, lessons are occasionally interrupted to go to an alternative activity and then these lessons lose their impetus. The school has recognised that it needs to review the balance and organisation of the curriculum at Key Stage 2, and plans to review the length of the school day in consultation with parents.

25. A high but appropriate amount of time is spent teaching English and mathematics throughout the school. The national literacy and numeracy strategies are fully and soundly implemented throughout both key stages, and modified appropriately for younger children in the reception classes. The setting arrangements in English and mathematics in Key Stage 2 were judged as

being unsuccessful at the last inspection, but this is no longer the case. The school has adapted the national frameworks to structure daily lessons in literacy and numeracy for pupils grouped according to attainment in Key Stage 2, which has helped to raise standards in these subjects in recent years. Nevertheless, closer attention needs to be paid to meeting the needs of all groups across the range of attainment in Year 6.

26. The policy for special educational needs has been revised since the last inspection, and the latest draft is very clear and useful, ensuring that provision meets statutory requirements. The needs of these pupils are identified by teachers and through a range of formal assessment activities, including baseline assessment. The school is committed to early intervention for pupils at risk. Pupils' needs are clearly targeted in their statements and individual education plans, then linked to necessary strategies and support. For instance, pupils with fine motor control difficulties are given exercises to strengthen fingers; pupils with reading and spelling difficulties are put on phonic programmes; older pupils with reading difficulties are given 'reading buddies' to ensure they have regular practice. Setting, in which lower attaining pupils are well supported, is also used to provide a curriculum matched to the needs of the lower attaining pupils, and there is clear evidence that this is successful in mathematics.

27. The curriculum includes appropriate opportunities to develop personal and social education. Weekly 'circle time' sessions in each class help to promote meaningful discussions on life in and out of school, and give pupils good opportunities to express their own feelings and develop their points of view. The local police liaison officer often joins in these class discussions, to help raise awareness on local issues that are relevant to the pupils. Health education is taught throughout the school, closely linked to science topics in different year groups. The school has not yet implemented a planned programme of drugs awareness themes within health education, but visits from a local theatre group have been used to promote understanding. There is an appropriate programme for teaching sex education to older pupils. This is also well linked to the science curriculum, and takes full account of the governing body's policy statement.

28. There is equality of access for all pupils to the full range of subjects. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good, and many pupils benefit from a wide range of clubs and activities. Several sports clubs are organised throughout the year, and the school participates successfully in football, netball, cricket, touch rugby, table tennis and other competitions. There is a large school choir and other musical groups. Other clubs are organised to stimulate pupils' interest and extend learning, including art, computing, French and science. There is a study club for higher attaining pupils. A good range of visits to places of interest supports learning, particularly in history and geography. Year 6 pupils also benefit from residential visits, including an outdoor pursuits weekend and a journey to France.

29. The school meets the statutory requirement for collective worship. Assemblies are characterised by good behaviour and clear social, moral and spiritual messages. Good use is made of visitors to promote spiritual and moral values in assembly. Assemblies have a sense of occasion, and quiet moments are set aside for reflection. They also reinforce the sense of school as a community and provide opportunities for celebrating individual and collective achievements. Themes are carefully planned in line with the local agreed syllabus, and are often followed up with class discussions. The quality of assemblies seen was good, and this represents a good improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum also provides opportunities to experience special moments. This is particularly true when young children experience natural phenomena, such as rainbows or magnets for the first time.

30. Provision for pupils' moral development remains good. In addition to learning the difference between right and wrong, the school promotes the message that pupils can make choices about their behaviour, but that those choices and their actions have an impact on others. Teachers are consistent in offering clear moral direction to pupils. Provision for social education is very good and represents a particular strength of the school. Pupils live and work in an orderly school

community, with rules and expectations that they understand and to which they respond positively. Many opportunities are made for pupils to take responsibility and use initiative, for instance as monitors in many roles and in the classroom through such practices as paired reading and circle time. Extensive extra-curricular provision also encourages co-operation and positive social interaction. Well thought-out strategies underpin the school's approach to managing pupils' behaviour. There are plans to introduce a school council to further develop pupils' sense of shared responsibility for the school community.

31. A good range of cultural experiences is provided, so that pupils learn more about their own heritage and something of other cultures, such as France, India and Japan. Local visits are integral to the curriculum and develop pupils' understanding of the area's character and communities. While some other faiths and countries are examined as part of pupils' work in subjects such as geography and religious education, there is insufficient focus on the ways of life of other peoples in Britain's diverse, multi-ethnic society.

32. Since the last inspection, the school has developed good links within the local community, which have helped to raise its profile. Visitors from the local community regularly share their skills and expertise, helping to broaden the curriculum and pupils' experiences. These include an archaeologist, newspaper editor and sports coaches. Good links exist with local churches, with members of the clergy participating in school assemblies. The school has also improved its links with partner institutions since the last inspection; for instance, it has developed very good links with local universities and with the local high school, regularly using its computer suite. Briary School has been instrumental in setting up in-service training for teachers within the local consortium of primary schools. The school has also developed its links with overseas institutions, for example, hosting pupils from a school in Grenoble each year and student teachers from colleges in New York State as part of their teaching practice.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The school has good procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare. The headteacher and all other staff know pupils well and provide a safe and caring environment. Parents commented positively on this aspect of the school's work. Health and safety issues are given a high priority, and all staff and governors are actively involved in ensuring the premises are safe and secure. The school is currently re-drafting its child protection policy to bring it into line with guidance from the county and formalise its arrangements. The newly appointed child protection officer has recently attended training and is due to share this with staff in the near future.

34. The school has very effective measures to promote good attendance and behaviour. Promotion of good attendance has a high profile in the regular communications the school has with its parents, and clear and vigorous procedures are in place to follow up absences. The school has good relationships with external agencies to support it in this aspect of its work. As a result, attendance has improved significantly over recent years; unauthorised absence has fallen and attendance is in line with the national average. The school has developed very high quality procedures for good behaviour. All staff are consistent in using these strategies and working successfully as a team to promote high standards. The headteacher visits classrooms each day, supervises at lunch and playtimes and is accessible to parents at the start and end of school. This investment of time is effective in enabling him to deal with any matters of concern promptly and effectively.

35. Pupils' personal development is monitored closely and very effectively through informal and formal measures. Instances of good work, attitudes and behaviour are noted in the "Gold Book". All classes have regular "circle time" in which they are encouraged to discuss their feelings and concerns in an open and secure environment. Both of these make a significant contribution to an ethos in which good behaviour and reasoned resolution of conflict are valued. Lunchtime

supervisors keep records of pupils' behaviour and these are discussed regularly with the headteacher. All staff working in the school maintain a regular dialogue with one another and this ensures that each pupil is known to several adults.

36. Procedures for monitoring academic progress and for managing end of key stage assessments are satisfactory. The school has improved its monitoring of pupils' progress since the last inspection. It has a good range of data on which to base judgements about attainment in English and mathematics. All pupils are assessed using a standardised baseline test on entry. At Key Stage 2, pupils are tested each year using non-statutory national tests and other objective tests. These results are analysed using new technology, and provide a very clear picture of attainment and progress for individuals. Results are reported to parents through the annual reports and form part of the basis for target setting with pupils. Analysis of these tests is used for setting in English and mathematics. Satisfactory use is made of assessment information to inform planning, but this needs to be further developed. For instance, some of the detailed analysis provided by test data identifies specific areas of strength and weakness. Further use of this analysis should be made to pinpoint areas for development, so as to continue to help standards to rise. Teachers maintain a variety of other curriculum records. These are not always consistent between classes or as helpful as they could be for identifying individual needs or for establishing agreed standards in the foundation subjects. For example, reading records in English are not sufficiently informative to accurately direct the teaching of reading, and portfolios of work in the foundation subjects do not identify standards and set expectations for attainment clearly enough.

37. Baseline assessments and a subsequent testing regime from Year 2 onwards help to identify pupils with special educational needs and to monitor their progress. However, more rigorous tracking of these pupils' progress over time is required. The school has plans to introduce a Year 1 screening test, to ensure that pupils with difficulties are not overlooked at that stage. Class teachers also identify and monitor these pupils effectively. Support assistants play a valuable role in closely monitoring the social, academic and physical needs of the pupils with whom they work closely.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. Parents are very supportive of the school and pleased that standards are improving. Since the current headteacher's appointment, they feel that they are more welcome in school and that their involvement is valued. This is an improvement since the last inspection, and links with parents are now a strength of the school. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents praised the teachers for their enthusiasm and commitment. The fact that the headteacher knows so many of the children and their parents by name was mentioned as an example of this. Responses to both the pre-inspection questionnaire and the school's own version have been very positive. The results of the school's annual survey are carefully analysed and taken into account when planning how links with parents can be improved even further. Parents clearly feel that they are now very much part of a developing partnership.

39. Several parents regularly help in class and in other practical ways. The very strong Friends of Briary School organises a wide range of social and fund-raising events, which enabled over £11,000 to be donated to the school last year to be used for such items as play equipment and improved hall lighting. The Friends also fund swimming lessons at a local pool. There is good support from parents for the Friday class assemblies.

40. Both the quality and quantity of information for parents are very good. Consultation evenings are held in the autumn and spring terms, with an opportunity to discuss the annual written reports in the summer term. The quality of the annual reports has improved since the last inspection. They clearly describe pupils' attainment and progress and include targets for future improvement. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are appropriately involved in the identification and regular review of statements and individual education plans. The attractive school folder

contains many additional leaflets as well as the main prospectus in which the new homework policy is clearly stated. The explanation of parents' expected role in supporting homework and the information available are an improvement since the last inspection. The weekly Briary Bulletin is a very effective means of keeping families and the local community up-to-date about news and events. There are plans to give parents more advance information about what their children are taught and to introduce a new home-school agreement that clearly outlines what is expected from the school, parents and children. There are also many opportunities for the informal exchange of information at the beginning and end of the day, when the headteacher or other staff are at the school gates. Parents also feel that their children's reading diaries are a useful means of communication.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41. The headteacher, who has been in post for four terms, is providing excellent leadership and giving clear direction for the school's improvement, which is understood and greatly appreciated by all. He is supported by an able, and very committed, deputy head. The headteacher has strongly held values that underpin his vision, to ensure that all are valued and feel successful, and that everyone's strengths are revealed and used appropriately. Additionally, he hopes that pupils understand their responsibilities and are proud of their school. The school's aims have been revised recently, after consultation with staff and governors. They refer to each pupil reaching the highest possible standard of achievement, and list eleven specific aims for pupils' development. They are successfully reflected in the day-to-day life of the school.

42. The headteacher delegates effectively and is empowering others. Newly agreed job descriptions clearly indicate responsibilities attached to management roles. For example, co-ordinators now have budgets to manage, allocated time away from their class responsibilities to develop and monitor their subject, and are required to draw up an annual action plan and provide a termly review. This is beginning to have an impact in some subject areas, but teachers would benefit from undertaking training in monitoring and evaluating progress in their subjects. The school has recently developed sound procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning but these are not yet fully implemented. The headteacher is clearly aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. He undertakes a variety of monitoring activities, such as weekly checks on random samples of pupils' books, followed up by feedback to pupils and to teachers. However, he recognises that the monitoring of teaching now needs to become more systematic and robust. One of the deputy headteacher's whole-school responsibilities is to analyse test results. She is effectively starting to evaluate the school's performance in order to address any perceived weaknesses. The Key Stage 2 co-ordinator is gradually taking more responsibility, but the school is without a Key Stage 1 co-ordinator at present to fulfil a similar role. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides very good leadership. She manages the support assistants effectively and ensures, with good support from an assistant, that the register for special educational needs is carefully and fully maintained. The organisation of special needs provision has improved considerably since the last inspection. The grants for this aspect of the school's work are being used very effectively.

43. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties to a very high standard. It is led by an excellent chair, who is industrious, knowledgeable and enjoys a very good relationship with the headteacher. The committee structure is well established, each with terms of reference. Very good induction is provided for new governors, and all are attached to a class and visit during the school day at least once a term. There is an agreed protocol for these visits and the class teacher and governor write a joint report after the visit, noting what has been seen and learnt. Governors discuss the school's test results in detail and ask searching questions to ensure the evidence is acted upon. They receive termly reports from the curriculum co-ordinators and have been involved in target setting, appropriately taking into account cohort differences. These activities enable the governors to have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Their monitoring role has developed greatly since the time of the previous inspection.

44. Governors have been proactive in shaping the direction of the school, initially in the appointment of a new headteacher, where they were very specific in their list of priorities for the new incumbent. They recognised the need for a special educational needs manager and worked with the headteacher to secure this. The school development plan committee comprises the senior management team and a governor representative from each committee. The results of parents' questionnaires and discussions with non-teaching staff all contribute to the identification of priorities for development. The committee considered an early draft of the plan, which has been revised in the light of feedback. The plan is comprehensive in identifying appropriate developments and initiatives over a three-year period. In addition to each co-ordinator's action plan, it shows developments under various headings, including personnel, welfare, environment, community and partnership with parents. Each development is related to a school aim and costings are identified, as are success criteria. In order to make the plan more easily accessible, the current term's priorities should be identified separately and success criteria need further development in some cases, to show the impact of the initiative on the pupils. It identifies which governors' committee will monitor each development, but does not include senior management team responsibilities here, nor does it indicate how the monitoring and evaluation will be undertaken.

45. Teachers are well qualified in the primary phase of education. Administrative and support staff are experienced and well briefed, and complement the work of the teaching staff well. The administrative staff use new technologies very competently to provide the school with financial and other information, for example comparing budget allocations with those of similar types of schools. Information from surveys of parents, attendance, pupils' test results and special educational needs data are all being analysed very effectively by senior staff using computer software. Training needs are clearly identified and co-ordinated by the deputy head. The appraisal procedure is in abeyance at present until new guidance is agreed, but individual staff development meetings are held. All staff have been well-trained in the literacy and numeracy strategies. The standard of the accommodation is very good. It is spacious, well maintained and bright with displays. Resources are well organised and plentiful, which is an improvement since the last inspection, when these were found to be unsatisfactory in most subjects. There is a good range of books, many newly purchased using special grants, to support literacy. Some new purchases of information technology hardware have been made and resource levels are satisfactory, but a considerable number of old systems in use are likely to require replacement in the near future.

46. The headteacher and governors have a three-year budget overview, closely related to the priorities of the school development plan. They compare their expenditure with that of other similar schools, analysing discrepancies. Each committee has identified an issue to consider in terms of value for money. For example, the personnel committee looks at the special educational needs staffing, while the finance committee considers spending on information and communications technology. Governors consult widely, undertaking self-audits as well as obtaining parents' views and acting on them. They have questioned the decision to teach French, which is not a statutory requirement for primary pupils, and ensured that it represents an appropriate use of finances and time. The systems for financial administration in the school are very effective, with an extremely efficient finance officer ensuring best value for money with any orders. The minor recommendations from the most recent audit report have been addressed successfully. The school has received several grants recently, including one for improvements to the accommodation, one for setting up an after school club, and one for fencing. All are being spent appropriately and the developments contribute successfully to the breadth of facilities for the pupils. The school applies principles of best value well, though the organisation of the school day and provision of teaching time in Key Stage 2 require improvement. The overall leadership and management of the school are very good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

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

- (1) bring all short-term planning, lesson evaluations and marking of work up to the quality of the best in the school, and monitor these features closely to ensure they contribute to improved teaching and learning;

Paragraphs (9,20,22,23,69,73,76)

- (2) improve assessment procedures further for all subjects, but particularly in aspects of English, mathematics and science;

Paragraphs (36,64,70,74,76,79,107)

- (3) improve the use of time at Key Stage 2 by:

- a) reviewing the length of the teaching week in consultation with parents;
- b) organising the school week more effectively to ensure a well balanced curriculum;

Paragraphs (21,24, 84)

- (4) ensure that religious education and geography are taught for an appropriate amount of time and to higher standards in Year 6, and that more challenging work is provided in mathematics for pupils in the upper set;

Paragraphs (6,8, 9, 29,65 67,68,84,103,106,107)

- (5) increase the rigour in monitoring and evaluating the school's work by:

- a) providing further training for subject co-ordinators;
- b) strengthening the emphasis on monitoring the quality of teaching, appraisal and performance management, by the senior managers.

Paragraph (42,76,79,82,98)

Points 2, 3, 4 and 5 are already in the school development plan. Point 5 was part of a key issue at the last inspection.

Other issues which should be considered by the school are to:

- establish more opportunities for independent study for older pupils; this was part of an issue at the last inspection.
Paragraphs (20, 84, 87)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	88
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	40

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	9	46	39	4	1	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		359
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		76

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		179

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	48
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	29	17	46

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	25	28
	Girls	15	14	16
	Total	40	39	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (66)	85 (87)	96 (90)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	28	29
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	42	44	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (82)	96 (88)	98 (77)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	29	33	62

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	19	23
	Girls	24	21	23
	Total	43	40	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (40)	65 (45)	74 (58)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	20	22
	Girls	21	22	21
	Total	36	42	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (66)	68 (73)	69 (82)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	308
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	293

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	2	1
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Financial information

Financial year	98/99
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	£
Total income	573885
Total expenditure	587620
Expenditure per pupil	1646
Balance brought forward from previous year	44663
Balance carried forward to next year	30928

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	359
Number of questionnaires returned	70

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	29	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	44	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	53	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	46	13	5	2
The teaching is good.	64	32	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	41	7	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	18	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	24	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	57	36	7	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	79	19	0	2	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	33	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54	37	4	2	3

Other issues raised by parents

None were raised.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

48. When children start in the reception classes, their attainment varies, but it is mainly below that expected at this age. Many children have limited skills in speaking and listening, and some lack the social maturity required for school. Children make sound progress in all six areas of learning. Children with special educational needs also make sound progress and achieve many of the targets set for them following baseline assessment. The majority of children are likely to attain all the desirable learning outcomes by the time they leave the reception classes, but a smaller proportion have attained all these targets at age five. This is an improvement on the standards noted at the last inspection when teaching was unsatisfactory, which restricted children's progress and attainment.

49. Links with parents are established well before children start school. Parents are involved in discussing children's performance for the baseline assessment and work with teachers to set targets accordingly. Teachers develop effective relationships with parents.

50. Teaching is generally satisfactory. Four well taught lessons were observed and one was very well taught. A good range of activities is provided, and lessons are carefully planned and well-organised. Resources are used imaginatively to promote progress. Teachers assess carefully, using baseline information to set targets, and evaluate the progress children make in different activities. In the good teaching observed, the consistently high quality class management was a strength, which ensured an orderly and calm learning environment in which children learned to listen and follow instructions. In a few lessons, the management of pupils was less secure as the teacher used too few strategies to promote good behaviour. Nevertheless, relationships are always caring and positive. In all lessons, there is an appropriate focus on social skills and developing children's speaking and listening. Use of support assistants generally promotes learning and helps lower attaining children to cope with tasks. Support assistants play a vital role in the care and social training provided in the reception classes.

Personal and social development

51. Children develop satisfactorily in both confidence and independence. The great majority are independent in such activities as dressing for physical education or using the toilets. They are capable of following rules and taking part in a wide range of activities, and the majority develop the ability to sustain concentration. For example, they enjoy shared reading and join in appropriately. Teachers create a secure, positive and calm learning environment, but some children find it hard to conform to the behavioural expectations of school. Children learn to tidy up after activities. Most treat each other and the resources of the classroom with care. They interact happily with each other and with adults. Encouraging good social skills is an appropriately high priority for staff, and children make sound and sometimes better progress in this area. Occasionally opportunities are missed to encourage children to make choices, for instance at snack time, or sustain concentration in play through effective interventions.

Language and literacy

52. Many children have limited vocabularies when they start school and find it hard to express themselves. They make sound progress because teachers and other adults provide a good range of opportunities for speaking and listening, such as role-play, use of stories and songs, and

discussion in both large and small groups. They listen and respond well to stories. However, some find it hard to ask questions appropriately. They enjoy books and know that print has meaning. They are beginning to associate sounds with letters, and teachers place appropriate emphasis on developing phonic knowledge. Children recognise their own names and many can write them. Many children can sequence the words in a simple sentence correctly. A few higher attaining children can write a brief sentence independently. The majority are learning to form letters correctly. Progress in literacy is satisfactory, and most children will achieve the expected learning outcomes by the time they start Key Stage 1.

Mathematics

53. Children are learning the names of common two-dimensional shapes. They are familiar with number rhymes and the majority can recognise numbers to 10. Many opportunities are taken to encourage accurate counting with one to one correspondence, and the majority manage this. Children can add 1 to a number but are less secure when taking 1 away. Recorded work shows that children are developing basic mathematical vocabulary, such as more or less, and bigger and smaller. They can make very simple repeating patterns. Most children will achieve the expected learning outcomes by the end of the reception year.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

54. Teachers ensure that children experience a wide range of activities that extend their learning in this area, and children are likely to reach the expected learning outcomes by the time they move in to Key Stage 1. They are able to make simple models with a range of construction materials. They also learn about structures through block-play. They develop good mouse control and learn to draw using the computer. Topic work focused on pets has helped children learn how to look after animals and to consider characteristics of living things. Observation of the weather has led children to consider the melting of ice and phenomena such as rainbows. They were fascinated by a rainbow seen from the classroom, knew its colours and could explain simply how it occurred. In the context of work on weather, they have learnt what a map is, and about the effect of climate on plants and animals. They also learn to record observations on a simple chart. Play with sand and magnets gives children a sense of wonder regarding materials and the physical world. All these experiences also contribute to developing vocabulary and encouraging purposeful talk.

Creative development

55. A wide range of activities promotes sound and sometimes good learning in this area. Children are encouraged to draw freely, using felt-tipped pens, pastels and chalks. They are able to use paint with brushes and sponges and learn simple printing techniques. They choose colours for effect and the majority know the names of colours. They use scissors and glue to create effective model kites. They make simple but attractive models in play dough and other malleable materials. The potential for extending learning is not realised in some activities, for instance through the use of a wider range of media and more focused skill teaching. Children enjoy role-play, for example in the pet shop, and respond well to the interesting area created for them. Children enjoy singing nursery rhymes, and learn to maintain a steady rhythmic pulse. They are able to explore the sounds made by a range of musical instruments, and can control the volume and pace of their playing. They make good progress in musical activities, where they benefit from well-organised teaching and very good management.

Physical development

56. Children's physical skills are developed well through dance lessons and they are close to achieving the expected learning outcomes. They learn to use space and to respond to music in movement. Children are able to hop, to stamp in time to music and stop and start their actions appropriately. They learn to control their actions and move increasingly confidently. There is, as

yet, no dedicated external area for physical play to extend gross motor skills through climbing and balancing equipment and use of large wheeled toys. However, the school has plans to create such a space in the near future. Children's fine motor control is developing well through exercises to improve pencil control, use of scissors, painting, and modelling and construction activities.

ENGLISH

57. The Key Stage 2 results in the 1999 national assessments were close to the national average, and above average when compared with those similar schools. These results were a substantial improvement on the previous year. Girls' results were higher than those of boys, but the difference was similar to the national trend. In the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999, pupils' results in both reading and writing were close to the national average. Compared with standards in similar schools, the results in reading were well above and those in writing were above average, which shows an improvement since the previous inspection. Girls' reading results were considerably higher than those of boys at Key Stage 1, and the school has taken appropriate action to address this, for example by introducing more books to appeal to boys. The overall improvement is due to a number of factors, including a strong reading support programme, the successful introduction of the literacy strategy, greatly improved resources for reading, and good leadership and management of the subject.

58. The overall attainment of pupils currently in Year 2 is in line with the national average. However, that of pupils in Year 6 is below average, reflecting the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the cohort. Current attainment of pupils in lower Key Stage 2 is close to the national average.

59. Pupils listen attentively in lessons, showing average attainment. However, the range of speaking skills varies, with higher attaining pupils enjoying a wide vocabulary, while the less able have a limited vocabulary and are sometimes more reticent to speak in class. Standards of speaking overall are below average. Many opportunities are now provided to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills, with all classes engaging in discussion at the beginning and end of literacy lessons. Technical vocabulary is well taught in all subjects. Opportunities in other subjects are valuable, such as listening attentively in music lessons in order to repeat a clapped rhythm and listening to words and phrases in French and repeating them.

60. Pupils enjoy reading. Standards are average at the end of Key Stage 1 and just below average at the end of Key Stage 2. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 read quite fluently, with expression, while less fluent readers are supported individually each day by a reading support programme, which is helping these pupils make good progress. The literacy strategy is proving beneficial in emphasising the development of phonic skills and spelling. However, a small number of pupils through the school do not have enough phonic knowledge to break unknown words into syllables. Home support with hearing their children read has a positive impact on standards. Two thirds of the pupils heard to read through the school identified Roald Dahl as their favourite author, and it was evident that some pupils do not experience a wide range of reading. Very few pupils were able to indicate why they enjoyed particular books or authors, even though some older pupils are reading quite challenging texts well.

61. Key Stage 2 pupils use the well-resourced library for research confidently, understanding the classification system in use. This library has been improved greatly and a parent helper's regular support is much appreciated. The two smaller Key Stage 1 libraries are well organised, with many new books, particularly non-fiction. In addition, sets of books for group reading and big books for class work have been acquired, and book provision generally has been greatly enhanced since the previous inspection. Class book areas are developing, but some classes have insufficient emphasis on displaying books to interest the pupils. Older and younger pupils share books each week, benefiting both ages. Regular book weeks help to raise the profile of reading, with such activities as visiting poets, theatre groups and book fairs.

62. Standards in writing at seven are average. They are below average for the present Year 6, in spite of good provision, because of the high level of special educational needs in the year group. There is a good range of writing undertaken through the school, including imaginative stories, poems, instructions, letters and reports. The youngest pupils make good progress as they learn to write conventional print in sentences. Writing in other subjects develops pupils' literacy skills well. For example, pupils in Year 2 have written number rhymes, Year 4 are writing information leaflets about Herne Bay in connection with their geography studies, while Year 5 pupils have written Tudor newspaper articles. Older more able pupils learn to write in different styles, for example, formally in a letter as though to the workhouse guardian in Victorian times, informally as diary entries by one of the children in *The Railway Children*, or in poetic style. Some of Year 5's Remembrance Day poems are of good quality, with evocative language. Some older pupils do not yet use language imaginatively or sustain a story line, relating to their lack of vocabulary and insufficient breadth of reading. Regular handwriting practice helps pupils make good progress in developing a neat, cursive style. The development of pupils' knowledge of punctuation and grammar is good, often supported by appropriate individual targets.

63. The overall quality of teaching is good at both key stages, with some very good teaching in both. Although there remains a little unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 2, there has been an improvement since the last inspection. Key Stage 1 pupils make very good gains in their understanding of rhyme and poetry because of lively, fun teaching. Very good questioning, good pace and high expectations enabled Year 2 pupils to learn about alphabetical order in a dictionary and the definitions of words. Year 3 pupils were studying traditional tales and the teacher acted as the wolf from *Little Red Riding Hood*, which the class enjoyed greatly. Excellent teaching in Year 5 demonstrated high expectations of less able pupils as they discussed a fable. There was very good deployment of learning support assistants, who worked effectively with the pupils during their group reading. When the teaching is weak, opportunities are missed, some activities are inappropriate, time is not well managed, pupils are unsure about what they are doing and not all are fully involved. Most teachers provide many helpful displays in their classrooms, supporting literacy work.

64. Pupils enjoy their literacy lessons and their behaviour is good overall, often very good. Most are keen to be involved in discussions and settle to independent work well, taking pride in their work. The school has identified the need to update the policy, with particular attention to speaking and listening. Similarly, assessment of the subject is an identified area for development. Currently there is little formal assessment of pupils' progress in speaking and listening and the recording of pupils' reading progress varies. There is no portfolio of moderated written work. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinators have undertaken some monitoring of teaching and learning, which has led to improvements in practice. They have led literacy strategy training and organised the many new resources very well.

MATHEMATICS

65. National assessments in 1999 showed standards at Key Stage 1 to be above the national average, and well above average when compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (level 3) was close to the national average, but above average when compared with similar schools. Standards in the 1999 Key Stage 2 national tests were broadly in line with the national average, and above average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (level 5) was above the national average, and well above average when compared with similar schools. Results over a four-year period to 1999 show improvements in attainment, exceeding the national trends, at both key stages. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that standards of attainment are average at the end of Key Stage 1, but below average at the end of Key Stage 2. This is a different picture from that found at the last inspection when standards were average at Key Stage 2. One reason for the lower standards this year is the

very high proportion of Year 6 pupils who have special educational needs. Additionally though the pupils in the upper set are under-achieving as not enough is being demanded of them.

66. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that nearly all pupils in the current Year 2 will reach the expected standard by the end of the year. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils work confidently with number and can carry out a simple range of calculations. They are developing their understanding of large numbers and show a sound appreciation of the value of digits. Pupils develop good mental strategies, and have quick and accurate recall of number bonds to 10. They can add 3 digits together and explain the strategies they use. Most pupils make sums of money, using different coins, and calculate their change from 50 pence. They describe the properties of two-dimensional shapes according to sides, corners and angles. Their skills in using and applying mathematics are sound. Pupils make good progress during the key stage. Those with special educational needs make good progress as a result of effective support from classroom assistants and teachers.

67. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are below average. Pupils in Year 6 show below average mathematical understanding in number. Their mental recall of number facts is weak, and fails to support work effectively in other areas of mathematics. Pupils carry out calculations with numbers to 10,000, but many cannot express numbers to the nearest 100 and 1,000 accurately and with confidence. More able pupils can simplify fractions, but have little experience of working with mixed numbers and percentages. They have covered a sound range of mathematical investigations that involve number, shape and space, and data handling, but they require support to effectively apply different methods when making calculations. Pupils achieved a good or very good rate of learning in half of the lessons observed, but progress slows at the end of the key stage because the teaching is less challenging, with insufficient demands made on higher attaining pupils in particular. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and make good progress in mathematics lessons.

68. Pupils show interest and enthusiasm and listen carefully to explanations. They are keen to participate in question and answer sessions, and to offer their own ideas and methods. When working independently, pupils seek assistance when necessary and present their work with care. When required to work together, they do so in a supportive and co-operative manner. In most of the lessons observed, pupils were well behaved and sustained concentration well. However, in one upper Key Stage 2 lesson, some of the pupils lost interest and concentration, and this resulted in some minor disruption and inappropriate behaviour.

69. The quality of teaching was good or better in half the lessons seen, with the best teaching in the middle of Key Stage 2. Teaching was poor in one lesson. Where teaching is good, expectations are high, with a good balance of time spent in whole-class work, practical activities and written tasks. For example, in one Key Stage 2 lesson, lower attaining pupils were all expected to respond quickly to some challenging questions in the mental maths activity, which was well linked to the main lesson. They were all made aware of the aims of the lesson, and each given a clock face so that the teacher could check their understanding of the 12 hour clock. The pupils then worked on telling time using many different clock displays in two different ways. Pupils with special educational needs received very good support, and all pupils made good progress during the lesson. In the lesson where teaching was poor, the tasks were not well matched to pupils' prior knowledge of shape and symmetry, a lot of time was given over to very basic revision tasks, and the pupils made poor progress. Teachers have not all adopted a common planning format, so the quality of planning varies. In the best examples, a detailed plan for the whole week's activities clearly sets out the learning objectives for each lesson, takes account of the needs of different ability groups within the set, and details the use of vocabulary, resources and assessments in lessons. Where planning is set out in little detail, the quality of learning is affected. Some good displays extend pupils' learning, with mathematical terms, signs, number patterns and shapes displayed prominently in some classrooms. The use of computers is still

developing, and further links could be made to information technology in teachers' plans. The provision for homework is satisfactory, and is applied consistently in Key Stage 2.

70. The school has successfully adopted the new National Numeracy Strategy, having used its methods and materials during a trial year, and this is helping to raise standards in the subject. Resources have improved considerably and support the teaching of mental mathematics very effectively. The school is still developing planned opportunities to promote numeracy in other subjects of the curriculum, but some good links are in place in science and design technology. The grouping of pupils in ability sets at Key Stage 2 has a beneficial effect overall, and enables pupils of all abilities to make more progress during lessons. A full programme of formal assessments is in place throughout Key Stage 2, but results are not yet analysed sufficiently to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching, or to inform individual target setting. The co-ordinator has begun to monitor teaching throughout the school and give teachers helpful feedback on their lessons and standards of attainment. This process now needs to address weaknesses in planning and teaching. Since the last inspection, the school has improved its results in national assessments, developed its assessment procedures and resources further, and begun to monitor the quality of teaching and learning more rigorously.

SCIENCE

71. The 1999 teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 judged that pupils' attainment was above that found nationally. In the 1999 statutory tests at the end of Key Stage 2, standards were below the national average (four per cent lower). Nevertheless, this is a substantial improvement on the previous year when they were well below average (eleven per cent below). Inspection evidence shows standards to be broadly average at the end of both key stages, with some good achievement in a number of Key Stage 2 classes. This is a better picture than at the last inspection where progress was found to be unsatisfactory at both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, and in some lessons at both key stages their learning is good. Where pupils' learning is good, this is linked to effective management of pupils, good subject knowledge and science teaching that is characterised by an investigative, practical approach.

72. At Key Stage 1, pupils understand that an electric circuit must be complete to light a bulb. They are able to sort materials and identify their properties. Pupils in Year 2 learn the importance of a fair test when carrying out an investigation and can explain simply what this means. They make observations of the weather and the apparent movement of the sun and record their findings in simple charts. At Key Stage 2, pupils carry out tests to discover the effects of heating, cooling and separating materials. They learn to control variables in the course of these tests and record their findings in a methodical way. Throughout the key stage, they are encouraged to make predictions, and some classes in Years 4 and 6 are able to give reasons for their predictions: they are learning to hypothesise. Pupils in Year 5 learn about the nature of forces such as gravity and friction, and effective teacher exposition and well-organised practical work leads to well developed understanding of the topic. Pupils also learn that repetition of a test is necessary to ensure reliability. Most pupils in Year 6 can explain what a micro-organism is and many can say in what ways it can be beneficial or harmful. They are able to explain how to carry out an investigation to promote the growth of a micro-organism, although not all pupils are able to link this with their understanding of the conditions generally necessary for life. Pupils are able to use relevant technical terms, such as evaporation, condensation, filtration, dissolve and solution.

73. Pupils' attitudes to learning science are generally good. They are well motivated by the practical, investigative work and in some cases by a lively, varied approach. They enjoy asking questions and finding out about topics such as space and gravity. They co-operate well when involved in carrying out tests, for instance sharing equipment or discussing sensibly. They carry on a practical activity without direct supervision, for an extended period in many cases. In most classes at Key Stage 2, they record work with care and use a methodical approach to writing up

experiments. However, there is too much variation in the quality of work in parallel classes in Year 6. Pupils show curiosity and are learning respect for evidence in the course of their science work. A minority of boys in Year 6 find it hard to behave appropriately during practical activities and this affects the quality of their work.

74. Teaching is mainly good. Positive features include a good grasp of the subject, particularly the investigative approach necessary for science. Teachers use time and resources to good effect, including other staff, who support pupils with special educational needs well. Teaching methods are varied and well organised. Teachers pay good attention to ensuring that pupils are systematically taught relevant technical vocabulary. Lessons often have good pace that ensures pupils concentrate. Pupils are supported by useful science textbooks, which explain key scientific vocabulary and reinforce concepts. Generally, teachers' expectations are high, so that, in the best lessons, pupils' assumptions are challenged. Teachers' planning is generally satisfactory and lessons build on previous work effectively. However, assessment is used inconsistently to ensure that learning is monitored and planning adapted. For instance, marking has little distinctive scientific focus. In some cases, tasks are not adapted to meet the needs of lower or higher attaining pupils.

75. Since the last inspection, a great deal of work has gone into improving the medium term plans for the subject. These now provide a balanced programme and ensure that statutory requirements are met. The science curriculum is broad, and a particularly positive feature is the strength of the investigative work. However, the use of a topic approach at Key Stage 1 does not readily promote the teaching of scientific skills and knowledge. A good number of other curricular opportunities are used to enrich science work, including a science club, visits from a science theatre group, visiting speakers, and a science week.

76. Resources have been improved considerably since the last inspection and are well organised. The co-ordinator provides conscientious leadership and has worked hard to improve the subject's profile and results. The monitoring of teaching and learning in science remains to be fully implemented, although it is underway. Assessment procedures that effectively inform curriculum planning are lacking. For example, analysis of test results is insufficiently rigorous, and short-term planning in the subject is not properly underpinned by teachers' evaluations of pupils' learning.

ART

77. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactory standards, which are in line with those expected for their ages in both key stages. Scrutiny of work indicates that pupils use a wide range of artists' media, including paint, pastel, fabric and three-dimensional materials for modelling. At both key stages, they use the work of artists from other cultures and periods successfully as starting points for their work. For example, at Key Stage 1 pupils study the work of the Japanese artist Ando Hiroshige as part of their topic work on Japan. At Key Stage 2, a number of 19th and 20th century artists are studied and this results in a wide range of pastiche work using similar styles. For example, in Year 6 pupils have produced colourful and well-crafted work in the style of Kandinsky and Klee, and some good repeat design work based on the style of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement. A little use is made of information technology to complete artistic work, but opportunities are not provided for pupils to access the work of other artists through the Internet. At both key stages, pupils' skills when using the range of media improve at a satisfactory rate as they move through the school. For example, pencil sketching of a crushed food container in Year 6 was accurately observed, utilising light, shade and form effectively. However, there are few examples of work of a high standard indicating that teaching needs to be more challenging to produce a more creative response.

78. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is good. Planning is clear, with precise objectives that are shared with pupils, enabling them to understand what is required. Teachers have sufficient subject knowledge and give good guidance on the technical skills of art. Teachers and other adults supporting in class work together well, which enables all pupils to learn effectively. Learning support assistants work skilfully with pupils with special educational needs. As a result, these pupils produce work well in line with their abilities and they remain well motivated and interested. Little art teaching was seen at Key Stage 1, but planning and scrutiny of samples suggest that this is at least satisfactory. In Year 1, the teacher made a good link between art and a science study of wood; pupils observed and discussed the texture of a large piece of partially burnt driftwood, and then drew with charcoal to interpret what they saw, with some effective results. In all the observed lessons, pupils had good attitudes to their learning, used resources carefully, and were enthusiastic about their achievements.

79. Considerable improvement has been made in the teaching of art since the last inspection, when progress across the school was found to be unsatisfactory. The subject is well led by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator. She has written a detailed scheme of work and policy for the subject, and has ensured that resources for the full range of the art curriculum are available for all classes. She has been given time to monitor the quality of work in the subject and has developed a portfolio of work that illustrates the range of art undertaken in the school. Discussion between staff now needs to take place, based on this portfolio and her direct observation of teaching, to agree on current standards and to raise expectations further across the school. This approach will provide a better basis for staff to assess the achievement of their pupils and to set targets for improvement. Work in art makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development and supports work in other areas of the curriculum, particularly geography and design and technology.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

80. At both key stages, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactory standards in design and technology in line with those expected for their ages. It was not possible to see any lessons during the inspection, so evidence comes from scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils. At the last inspection, standards and progress at Key Stage 1 were found to be unsatisfactory. This is no longer the case. Now these pupils use a range of materials to construct models of their own designs. They have the opportunity to evaluate foods from different cultures; for example, they taste food from India and Japan and say what they like and dislike. Pupils model with a range of materials including paper, recycled materials, fabric and prepared wood. They make successful musical instruments in a range of recycled materials, identifying some of the main methods of making controlled sounds by striking diaphragms and plucking strings. Pupils' designs of their work are simple but identify the key features for construction.

81. At Key Stage 2, pupils widen their knowledge of construction and operating systems. In Year 4, they use simple pneumatic and hydraulic devices to operate a paper mechanism. Pupils know the key differences between pneumatic and hydraulic methods of transmitting force, and can identify how the amount of movement and force can be varied in a system. This work could have been improved further if the mechanisms to be operated had been made in a more resistant material giving better rigidity in the models. This would also have allowed for a greater range of making skills by learning to cut and shape harder materials. Some work of a challenging nature takes place at the end of the key stage, when pupils use a commercial construction kit to create working models to be controlled by the computer. This provides a good opportunity for pupils to apply their computer programming skills and combine these with what they have learned earlier about mechanisms.

82. The quality of design work at Key Stage 2 varies too widely. At its best, pupils draw their ideas carefully and add suitable constructional notes, but more typically ideas are drawn without

adequate care or detail. Where design work is clear and detailed the standards of construction are also high. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection and the subject is well co-ordinated. Suitable schemes of work have been put in place and the necessary resources have been reorganised. Monitoring of teaching and pupils' work is not yet sufficiently focused to raise teachers' expectations and ensure that they agree on standards. The range of resources is generally adequate, but more resistant materials are needed at Key Stage 2. Work in design and technology makes a sound contribution to pupils' social and cultural understanding, especially when they consider the food and artefacts of other cultures.

GEOGRAPHY

83. At the last inspection, standards were below national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 and similar to national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. On this inspection no lessons were observed at Key Stage 1, but interviews with pupils and teachers and the scrutiny of work show that achievements in Year 2 are appropriate for the age of the pupils, and that standards have improved since the last inspection. Year 1 and 2 pupils investigate the locality of Greenhill to draw simple plans carefully and learn basic mapping skills. They plot their own routes to school, and conduct a simple traffic survey to help understand how the new main road has affected traffic flow. They study distant countries, including India and Japan, and learn to compare and contrast life in these countries with their own. They look at weather patterns, farming and food, and illustrate some physical and human features affecting people's lives. Pupils enjoy talking about these studies, and make good progress learning geographical skills during the key stage.

84. At Key Stage 2, geography does not take place every term and there are inconsistencies in the depth and quality of the work recorded by pupils in each year group. Year 4 pupils extend their map-work skills soundly in local studies. They conduct more detailed shopping and traffic surveys, making good use of geographical terms and skills, and numeracy skills. For example, they compare their train journey to Northiam with a coach journey to Tenterden. These activities build on pupils' previous knowledge and skills, and are effectively linked to work in other subjects. This good progress is not maintained in Years 5 and 6, where pupils' recorded work lacks detail and does not reflect the full programme in teachers' plans. Work scrutinised on rivers and settlement in Year 5 lacked appropriate depth, and did not extend more able pupils. One observed lesson was interrupted for the weekly French lesson, which meant a re-cap on the introductory video was required and so little recorded work was achieved. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils looking at the distribution of rainforests around the world showed a very limited knowledge of world maps and atlas skills for their age and abilities. They have been given insufficient opportunities to develop independent research skills. Overall, pupils make unsatisfactory progress across Key Stage 2 and this is a less positive picture than at the last inspection.

85. Resources are adequate, but links with information technology are not strong enough at Key Stage 2. There has been no systematic monitoring of geography work to check for a progression of skills or the development of an enquiry approach throughout the school; this could have picked up the weaknesses noted above.

HISTORY

86. At the last inspection, standards were below national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 and pupils made unsatisfactory progress. No teaching was observed at Key Stage 1 in the present inspection, but discussions with pupils and examples of recorded work show they now make satisfactory progress by the end of Year 2 and reach appropriate standards for their age. Pupils talk confidently about the passage of time in relation to their own family tree, but record a limited amount of work. They have interviewed a parent and a grandparent about their school days, to make some comparisons and contrasts with school today and to learn about traditional playground

games. They learn to draw and use simple time lines, and are able to make comparisons between the near and distant past and the present.

87. At the end of Key Stage 2, the sound standards noted at the last inspection have been maintained and pupils' achieve satisfactorily. Pupils in Year 3 study the Ancient Egyptians, and make sound progress in using different sources of evidence to discover information from the past. Trips to different museums in Canterbury help to broaden their studies, and provide a good introduction to the topic on Roman Britain. Year 4 pupils also use local visits to learn from first-hand experience. Pupils develop a good understanding of why Herne Bay developed as a seaside resort, and how local buildings give clear clues to its history. They develop some good enquiry skills on visits, which are followed up appropriately in a variety of written assignments. For example, pupils worked enthusiastically to make their own high-quality tourist leaflets to attract people to come to Herne Bay and use the bathing machines. The activity supported pupils' literacy development well and pupils made good progress. Pupils in Year 5 are encouraged to organise their own topic files on completion of their topic on the Tudors, but they are given limited opportunities to conduct their own studies and assess their own work. Pupils in Year 6 cover a good range of topics in their Victorian study, and use different styles of writing effectively. They show sound knowledge and understanding of relevant issues when writing the diary of a child worker and letters of complaint to the board of governors of a workhouse. Again, opportunities for personal study are very limited, and recorded work is often brief, reflecting the limited time periods available in lessons.

88. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and a good feature is the use teachers make of interesting activities to bring the subject to life. For example, in Year 3, where pupils were studying Roman houses, modern day estate agents advertisements were used as a model for pupils to write their own adverts for Roman houses. This linked well with the development of factual writing in literacy. However, pupils were slow to get down to the work and few completed the activity easily as they needed more reference material. Resources are satisfactory, but limited use is made of computer software for personal study. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that is well linked to a programme of visits. A review is needed of the opportunities for pupils to record more of their learning in Key Stage 1, and to extend independent study skills towards the end of Key Stage 2.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

89. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactory standards in relation to their abilities. Overall standards are in line with those expected for this age group, and this is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be below average. At Key Stage 2, standards by the end of the key stage are better than for pupils of similar ages. This is also an improvement on the previous inspection findings. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have good knowledge and control of computer devices, such as the keyboard and mouse. They can open familiar software programs with help, and can save and print their work. Many pupils know how to use simple formats when writing to make their work clearer. They are able to control robot toys and write directional instructions for drawing simple objects such as squares. Pupils use simple data handling software to enter information gathered from the class, for example when producing graphs about their favourite pets. They are also beginning to use information from CD ROMs, for instance to help them to spell or find the definitions of words.

90. At Key Stage 2, many of these early skills are built on successfully and progress is good. Pupils' communication skills develop quickly, and they use the computer to write at some length. This work is well presented and, in some instances, contains pictures and illustrations from a range of sources including the Internet. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils program successfully

using logo, and draw simple and complex shapes. These pupils use the computer to control models made from kits and successfully use numerical data-handling packages to analyse simple statistical data. The school has limited access to the Internet. This is beginning to be used, but wider access is required so that pupils have more opportunities to find materials, such as art images, to enhance curriculum work.

91. No direct teaching was seen at Key Stage 1. Teaching at Key Stage 2 was mainly good and included one very well taught session. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use appropriate organisation when teaching groups of pupils. Planning is clear and objectives for learning are identified and shared with the pupils. Teachers effectively ensure that information technology supports work in other subjects. Good use is made of time. As a result, learning and progress are good. Pupils respond well to this teaching and are confident when using the equipment, even when they encounter difficulties. Relationships between the teachers and pupils are good. Pupils are keen to use the computers and co-operate well in pairs during the lesson. Usually pairs of pupils of the same gender work together, which encourages them to share resources equitably. Girls and boys make equal progress.

92. The leadership of information technology is good and much has been achieved since the last inspection. Resources have been significantly improved, although the school recognises that more needs to be done. A scheme of work is in place and sufficient training has taken place to enable staff to feel confident in using the new equipment. Excellent use has been made of older equipment for teaching parts of the curriculum, although it is coming close to the end of its useful life. For example, work on logo programming and software to support the development of co-ordinates in mathematics is carried out using relevant software on aged computers. Progress, especially at Key Stage 1, is held back by pupils having to use equipment of different vintages with widely varying versions of software.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

93. The school provides some French teaching for pupils at Key Stage 2. Just one lesson was observed, taken by the specialist teacher who works with several classes on one afternoon a week. This lesson, with the youngest pupils in the key stage, was well taught. In just a few months of learning French pupils are capable of using some basic phrases to introduce themselves to others. They are reasonably confident at speaking out to the class. Most were eager to speak either individually or in a whole class response. A strength is the way this subject is helping to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills; for example when new words or phrases are spoken to them they repeat these with good accuracy. There are no national curriculum benchmarks for French at Key Stage 2 but these young pupils are achieving well in the early stages of basic spoken French. The lesson observed was lively, amusing and fast paced. Suitable visual aids were used to encourage pupils to learn new vocabulary linked to food for a picnic; by the end of the session most pupils were matching several new words to pictures correctly.

94. The subject was judged to be a good feature in the curriculum at the last inspection and this remains the case. The deputy head is co-ordinator and has a detailed action plan and strategy to ensure the teaching is well organised and a productive use of time. She liaises closely with the part-time teacher on the subject's development, and on wider matters such as visits to France and links with a twinned town. Older pupils have pen friends at a French school and there are regular exchanges of letters. French has a high profile around the school and in classes, with notices in French and new vocabulary and phrases for the week displayed. Assemblies are introduced in French and pupils respond readily. The subject is making a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

MUSIC

95. Standards in music are appropriate for pupils' ages through the school, with a particular strength in singing. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection. At Key Stage 1, pupils sing action songs from memory with great enjoyment and achieve well. At Key Stage 2, good singing progress continues and pupils show awareness of the mood of the music. They sing tunefully, with gusto when appropriate, and confidently sustain their part when singing a round in two parts.

96. Year 1 pupils know the names of some percussion instruments, and most clap the rhythm of their names correctly. Pupils in Year 3 copy increasingly challenging rhythm patterns. Year 4 pupils work successfully in groups to create sea effects, while older pupils compose fanfares. Good links with other subjects are evident. For example, linking with their geography studies, Year 6 pupils heard South American music and began to use instruments to create sounds depicting rainforest creatures. There was no evidence of pupils using graphic scores to record their compositions, though this is clearly planned for. Pupils listen to a range of music in lessons and during hymn practice times.

97. The quality of teaching is mainly good, which is an improvement since the previous inspection; however one unsatisfactory lesson was seen. In a good lesson at Key Stage 1, the teacher's high expectations and lively approach ensured effective learning as pupils listened carefully to determine which of three instruments was not being played. Teacher expertise and enthusiasm were evident in a very good Key Stage 1 hymn practice, where pupils learnt about Beethoven and sang tunefully and confidently. At Key Stage 2, two lessons were well taught, but teaching was unsatisfactory in one lesson. Very good teacher expertise was clearly demonstrated in the hymn practice when three teachers accompanied the pupils on the piano, drums and guitar. Features of the good teaching include sustaining a lively pace, using appropriate vocabulary such as stave, syncopation and crescendo, and generating great enthusiasm and enjoyment. Where the teaching is weak, opportunities are missed to encourage pupils to evaluate their compositions or discuss the instruments in the music they are listening to. Also time management is weak, so pupils do not have enough opportunity to develop their compositions.

98. The school has a music room with a good supply of instruments, though few are from different ethnic origins to support studies of world music. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and has provided useful guidance for colleagues. She has not yet undertaken any lesson observations to monitor pupils' learning and curriculum progression, but she is aware that the policy needs revision. There are no extra-curricular activities at present, but a large choir meets regularly in the autumn and summer terms. Music enjoys a high profile, and there are many valuable opportunities for pupils to perform in school productions, in local festivals and to elderly residents. It supports pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development well.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

99. Standards, at the last inspection, were as expected of pupils at the ends of both key stages. This inspection confirms these findings in the elements of the subject that were observed, namely dance and gymnastics at Key Stage 1, and dance, gymnastics and indoor games at Key Stage 2. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving at a satisfactory rate. In dance, Year 2 pupils show they are capable of moving with control and improving their performance. For example, they make and hold various shapes with their bodies in order to interpret the theme of 'toys', and then link their actions in a simple performance. These pupils are starting to explain what they can do well and what they might do better. In gymnastics in lower Key Stage 2, pupils concentrated hard to hold bridge positions, and higher-attaining pupils extended this work independently into backbends, building on their expertise. The close support of a learning assistant enabled a pupil with special educational needs to work soundly in

partnership with another pupil. Pupils develop their hitting and returning skills with bats and tennis balls at an appropriate standard. Year 5 pupils enjoy the high-quality coaching in table tennis, and most are making good progress to become proficient in sustaining short rallies. In Year 6, pupils practise and improve their gymnastic performance, and learn to improve their balance and agility effectively. Pupils are taught swimming in Years 2, 3 and 4, and the school confirms that most pupils reach the expected standard.

100. Pupils respond sensibly to instructions and work safely. They are enthusiastic and co-operative, for instance working well in pairs in a games lesson or supporting one another in dance. Where the behaviour of the oldest pupils is less satisfactory, they do not listen consistently and a few lack pride in performance.

101. Teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory overall at Key Stage 2. Teachers show good subject knowledge and encourage pupils to evaluate and improve their work. Lessons have good pace, which keeps pupils motivated and involved. Effective use is made of resources, such as audio-tapes in dance. Teachers demonstrate activities well and use questions to encourage pupils to develop their skills. The best lessons included purposeful warm up activities and reflective cooling down periods.

102. There is enthusiastic and enterprising management of the subject. A very good range of opportunities is made available to pupils, particularly in extra-curricular activities, which include volleyball, football, netball, short tennis, rugby and cricket. Where initiatives offer curriculum enrichment, such as in table tennis, these are adopted effectively.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

103. The previous inspection report found that pupils at Key Stage 1 did not reach the standards expected in the Kent Agreed Syllabus, but that at the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment was at the expected standard. Since then standards have improved at the end of Key Stage 1, and pupils' learning about religious customs and peoples' lives in different religious traditions is developing satisfactorily. However, there is a less positive picture at the end of Key Stage 2. Here standards have dipped for the oldest pupils for three reasons: the time allocated to the subject is less than that laid down in the school's long-term plans; teachers are not challenging pupils to reflect in depth on the topics being studied; there is a substantial difference in the range and quality of written work between the parallel classes, and in one class it is poor. Consequently pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. Elsewhere in Key Stage 2, pupils follow the locally agreed syllabus appropriately. They acquire a suitable amount of knowledge about Christian and Jewish traditions and Sikhism, and explore the links between religion, social convention and morality. The pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 are achieving satisfactorily.

104. At Key Stage 1, religious education is successfully blended into a topic framework, and key stage assemblies are used well to strengthen religious education. For example, one on using sign language was enhanced when a teacher told the Bible story of Zachariah. Several older pupils capably played the various roles, which brought the story to life for the youngest pupils who watched with rapt attention. As part of work on Festivals of Light, pupils learn about other faiths, and start to understand the significance of associated festivals, such as Hanukah. Teachers bring these topics to life and stimulate pupils' interest through attractive displays and opportunities for practical activities, such as making Diwali sweets, shadow puppets and ragoli patterns. Pupils have used their literacy skills and art skills well to produce some good quality writing and paintings based on the story of Noah. In a well-taught lesson, pupils were encouraged to recall what they knew of this story, and the teacher skilfully linked it to a new theme of 'specialness'. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' understanding of several key Bible stories is sound, and it is accompanied by a basic knowledge about two other world religions.

105. This sound knowledge of Christianity is extended satisfactorily through Years 3-5 of Key Stage 2, together with further studies of Judaism. The moral and social dimensions develop, and by Year 5 pupils show good awareness of what contributes to the making of a community. For instance, in a discussion they understood the notion of inter-dependence and the importance of teamwork. Pupils built well on the understanding they had gained from interviewing members of the staff team about their roles. High-quality teaching, for example, using a pupil's analogy of community members being like 'bricks in a wall' captured pupils' interest; this led to good progress in the lesson. By contrast, the activity in Year 6 to develop pupils' knowledge of the Parables was taught in a superficial way. It failed to deepen pupils' thinking because the questioning and activity were more suited to a younger age group, and pupils learned very little more than they already knew.

106. The quality of teaching is mainly satisfactory. Three well-taught lessons were observed, but teaching in one lesson was unsatisfactory due to inadequate planning and low expectations of pupils' capabilities. Lessons are usually well structured, and teachers question pupils thoroughly to tease out what they know. This is an important feature that links well to improving oracy in English, as many of the pupils do not find it easy to explain their ideas or opinions. Consequently, sometimes the discussions are slow to develop and pupils are too passive. Pupils generally listen attentively to the views of others, and show some independence in pursuing the ideas explored in lessons. For instance, a group of Year 5 pupils wrote a script linked to the theme of community and practised it during the lunch hour so that they can perform it in an assembly. A group of older boys with special educational needs were also keen to do further work on acting out the story of the Good Samaritan. Teachers plan soundly in the medium term, and most have focused, worthwhile objectives for each lesson, which reflect the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The effective teaching supports pupils developing literacy skills appropriately.

107. There has been little co-ordination of the subject in recent months, but recently a member of staff has volunteered to oversee this, and her enthusiasm and knowledge will be an asset to developing it further. Several of the problems identified in this paragraph could have been rectified if a co-ordinator had been monitoring teachers' short-term planning and pupils' work. For instance, the amount and quality of written work varies too widely between parallel classes at Key Stage 2. In some, pupils are being encouraged to record work using their own writing and styles of presentation, while in others similar work is limited to filling in photocopied activity sheets. Pupils' work is usually marked, but some teachers over-praise work that is of inferior quality. There are no formal procedures for assessment in religious education. This makes it difficult to establish how well pupils are progressing at different stages in their education, and this was also a criticism at the last inspection. Despite these weaker features, religious education contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral and social education.