

INSPECTION REPORT

CLIFFE WOODS COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Cliffe Woods, Rochester, Kent

LEA area: Medway

Unique reference number: 118527

Headteacher: Mrs A J Jones

Reporting inspector: Mr Douglas Hayward
21234

Dates of inspection: 6th – 10th March 2000

Inspection number: 191975

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

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: View Road
Cliffe Woods
Rochester
Kent

Postcode: ME3 8UJ

Telephone number: 01634 220822

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs C Gay

Date of previous inspection: February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr Douglas Hayward	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information technology Design and technology English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught?
Mr Peter Dannheisser	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs Sandra Brown	Team inspector	English Religious education Special educational needs	
Mrs Carolyn Maddox	Team inspector	Art Geography History Under-fives	How good are the curricular opportunities and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mrs Gail Robertson	Team inspector	Science Music Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Cliffe Woods County Primary School is a larger than average primary school for pupils from four to 11 years of age. It serves the village of Cliffe Woods, just outside Strood, in the new local authority of Medway. The majority of pupils live locally in the village, but an increasing number are choosing to travel from surrounding villages. Most of the houses in the village are privately owned, but a significant number are owned by housing associations.

The school is housed in a two-storey building dating from the 1960s, originally designed as a middle school for pupils between eight and 13 years. Currently there are 306 pupils on roll. Children join the school after their fourth birthday, either in September or January, depending on their date of birth. Tests are given to the children within a few weeks of starting school to help teachers find out what they can do in areas such as language, number and social skills. The tests at Cliffe Woods show that children have lower levels of attainment on entry than in many other schools in Medway, particularly in language and literacy, but also in numeracy. These results are lower than expected at this age nationally. The school has 76 pupils on its register of special educational needs, of whom five (one per cent) have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. This figure is in line with the national average. Twenty pupils (6.5 per cent) are entitled to free school meals, which is lower than the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school has many strengths and provides a good standard of education for its pupils.

What the school does well

- Pupils at both key stages achieve good standards in English and mathematics and make good progress.
- Teaching is never less than satisfactory. It is good or better in seven out of every ten lessons and very good in a quarter of lessons. Teachers are hardworking and give their pupils lots of help and encouragement.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and is very well supported by staff and governors.
- The school teaches a very wide and interesting range of subjects. It provides good opportunities for pupils to develop skills of problem solving in mathematics and investigations in science.
- The school helps pupils with special educational needs to make good progress. The more able pupils achieve high standards.
- Pupils have many opportunities to put their skills in reading and writing to good use in other subjects.
- There is an excellent range of lunchtime and after-school clubs for pupils to take part in. Teachers spend a great deal of time organising them.
- The school has good links with parents and has grown in popularity. Parents support the work of the school.
- It makes very good use of all the staff who work in school. Classroom assistants play a valuable role in pupils' learning.
- The school makes very good use of available funds to provide very good value for money.

What could be improved

- The school should extend its range of planned opportunities to help improve pupils' speaking skills.
- Teachers should, at the beginning of lessons, consistently share with their pupils what they intend them to learn. At the end of lessons more time should be allowed for discussion to find out what pupils have learned.
- Assemblies, collective worship and religious education should be more interesting and more carefully planned.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has successfully addressed all the key issues from the previous inspection. Standards of teaching are higher now than in 1997. Provision for children under five has improved. There is a wider range of practical activities more suited to children of this age. The methods the school uses to find out what progress pupils make over time have improved. Monitoring of curriculum plans is much better. Standards in English and mathematics at the end of both key stages are better than they were. The school has retained its broad curriculum and the management of the school is still very good.

STANDARDS

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

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

During the inspection, standards attained by pupils at the end of both key stages in English and mathematics were above the national average. In science, pupils attain standards in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and standards above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. These judgements are much higher than the results attained by seven and 11-year-old pupils in tests last year. The reason for this is the difference in ability between different groups of pupils. The school has also introduced a wider range of teaching sets for English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 2 and these are helping pupils to attain higher standards. In information technology pupils attain standards that are above average at the end of both key stages. Seven and 11-year-old pupils attain standards in religious education that are in line with the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress and reach the standards expected in geography, history, art, music and physical education. They make good progress and attain above average standards in design and technology. In Key Stage 2 they make satisfactory progress and reach the standards expected in music and physical education. They make good progress and attain above average standards in design and technology, geography, history and art.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are keen to come to school. They are interested in their work and join in well in lessons, answering questions and settling quickly to written work. Almost all pupils take part in at least one of the many lunchtime and after-school clubs.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Most pupils are polite to each other and to adults and are well behaved in lessons and around the school. Almost all parents think that the behaviour of pupils is good; for example, when they go out of school on trips and visits. There is a small minority of pupils, however, that does not consistently meet the school's expectations of good behaviour. In a few lessons they disturb other pupils and do not get on with their work as well as they should. The steps taken by the school to ensure good behaviour are largely effective.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are very happy to take responsibility for doing jobs around the school. The school's system of electing house captains and selecting monitors each term works very well. Pupils work well co-operatively in lessons in small and large groups; they organise themselves quickly and treat equipment and resources very well.
Attendance	Attendance is much better than the national average for primary schools. Punctuality is very good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Seventy lessons were observed. Teaching is never less than satisfactory. It is at least good in seven out of every ten lessons and very good in a quarter of all lessons. Good and very good lessons were observed throughout the school. These are high percentages of good-quality teaching. Teachers have high expectations and their teaching of basic skills in English and mathematics is good. They have good subject knowledge and are very supportive. Teachers make good provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those who attain high standards. The school's system of setting pupils in ability groups for English, mathematics and science provides pupils with high quality teaching that matches work carefully to pupils' needs. In some lessons teachers do not spend enough time at the beginning of lessons making clear what they intend pupils should learn; at the end of lessons there are not enough opportunities to find out what they have learned and can do.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum throughout the school is good. Pupils receive a good all-round education that covers a wide range of academic subjects, and pays appropriate attention to pupils' personal development. The curriculum for literacy and numeracy is good. The range of extra-curricular activities is excellent. Good links are made between the school and the community.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	A strength of the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Teachers provide good levels of help for them in classes. The way in which the school organises ability sets for English and mathematics makes a big difference to these pupils. The targets in their individual education plans are clear and help teachers to plan work that is suitable for them. Classroom assistants provide very good levels of help.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes good provision for the very few pupils with English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school clearly teaches pupils the difference between right and wrong and there is a good community spirit. It provides them with good opportunities to develop their responsibilities towards other pupils and adults.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school works closely in partnership with parents and provides good levels of care for its pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership. She has ensured that good standards identified in the previous inspection have been at least maintained, and often improved. There is clear educational direction for the work of the school. All staff provide very good support.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are knowledgeable, enthusiastic and hardworking. They support the school very well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is continually looking for ways to improve the quality of education it provides. It considers carefully how well pupils do in tests and how much they learn in their classes. It makes good use of the results of pupils' tests, and what progress their teachers think they are making, to provide the best arrangements it can for pupils to do well.

The strategic use of resources	The school uses its budget very well to provide very good staffing levels and resources for pupils to use. It makes sure that teachers are sufficiently well trained to take on their responsibilities. All these initiatives have a positive impact on the standards that pupils attain.
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PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel that their children like school and make good progress. • They feel that teaching is good. • They feel happy to approach the school with any questions or problems they might have and are confident that they will be listened to. • They feel the school is well managed and led. • They feel there is a good range of activities outside lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents have concerns about the amount of homework their children receive. Some parents think it is too much and others think there is not enough. • Some parents feel they are not well-enough informed about their children's progress.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. The school sets an increasing amount of homework as pupils move through the school. The amount set is in line with many other primary schools. In the opinion of the inspection team it is not excessive and supports the work that pupils do in school. Pupils' written reports are satisfactory, but do not always reflect teachers' good knowledge of the attainment of individual pupils.

Parent-teacher consultations are held termly and targets for improvement are agreed between the school, parents and pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. On entry into the reception classes, attainment for most children is slightly below that of many schools in Medway, and in schools nationally. Children have underdeveloped skills in language and literacy, and numeracy. For example, they have little experience of books and their ability to engage in conversations is limited because of their very basic vocabulary.
2. Children under five make good progress. All children benefit from the caring, supportive environment and the well thought-out structured learning opportunities that are provided. By the time they are five years old, attainment in all areas of learning, namely language and literacy, personal development, social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development is in line with that expected nationally at this age. Overall, children make satisfactory progress with their speaking and listening skills, although a significant number continue to have below average skills in speaking especially and do not reach the expected level by the time they are five. For many children attainment is higher than expected in physical development.
3. The results of the 1999 tests and assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 show that the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 or above was very high in science, above the national average in reading and writing, and in line with the national average in mathematics. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 was above the national average in reading, but below average in writing and science and well below average in mathematics. In comparison with all schools nationally, Cliffe Woods achieved results that were above average in reading, average in writing and below average in science. In comparison with similar schools the results were average in reading but, because of the low percentage of pupils attaining Level 3, they were well below the national average in writing and mathematics. Nevertheless, the school's results in the Key Stage 1 tests were well above the Medway average, except for spelling which was only just above. During the inspection standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were judged to be above average in English and mathematics, and average in science. The differences in judgements regarding attainment are because this is a different group of pupils. In the previous report standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were judged to be satisfactory in all three subjects.
4. Taking the four years 1996 to 1999 together, the performance of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading was in line with the national average. In writing it was above average and in mathematics it was slightly below average. Girls have generally performed better than boys in all three areas, but during the inspection there was no discernible difference between the performance or progress of boys and girls. During the four years 1996 to 1999 there has often been considerable variation between the results of one group of pupils and the next. For instance, in 1998 results in reading, writing and mathematics all fell sharply. The school had identified that year group as one containing a large number of pupils with special educational needs, and has tracked its progress as it moves through the school.

5. The results of the 1999 tests at the end of Key Stage 2 showed that the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 was in line with the national average in English, but below average in mathematics and science. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 was well below average in all three subjects. These results were much lower than those of pupils in 1998 that the school regarded quite rightly as a year group of exceptional ability. The school had already identified many pupils in the 1999 cohort as having significant learning difficulties. Almost 40 per cent of pupils were on the school's register of special educational needs, two of whom had Statements of Special Educational Needs. Eleven of the year group had joined the school only in Years 5 or Year 6, eight of whom were on the school's register of special educational needs. In 1999 only one pupil passed the '11 plus' test, whereas in 1998 11 pupils had passed. Nevertheless, the school's scores were well above the Medway average for English and science, but only just above for mathematics.
6. During the inspection standards were judged to be above average in English, mathematics and science. The differences in judgements on attainment are because of the differences in ability between different year groups. Already there are clear indications that the percentage of pupils working securely at Level 5 is significantly higher than in 1999, especially in mathematics and science. The school intends to enter pupils for the Level 6 tests in mathematics and the indications are that one or two pupils will attain that level.
7. The school has set in place various strategies to help improve pupils' results at the end of both key stages. They are also intended to increase the accuracy of its predicted targets for the percentage of pupils attaining results in line with, and higher than, the national average at seven and 11 years of age. To do this it has introduced a number of assessments to form a view of the ability of each year group and to monitor their progress as they move through the school. This is how the headteacher was able to forewarn the governors that pupils' results in 1999 would not be as impressive as they had been the previous year.
8. Some of the assessments, such as those carried out in the reception classes, are carried out under the auspices of the local authority and suggest indicators of future performance. Others, such as assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, non-verbal tests, reading tests, teacher assessments of written work and national tests during Key Stage 2 are school initiatives to note the progress pupils have made and their likely performance at the end of the key stage. The school uses this information well to set targets that are realistically challenging. The school uses a computerised system to track the progress of individual pupils and each pupil is re-assessed annually to ensure they are on target for the next set of tests. It also analyses the results of end-of-key-stage tests to focus on particular targets and trends. For instance, this year the school is concentrating on spelling throughout the school, and extension work in mathematics at Key Stage 1.
9. In this school the process of recording pupils' progress and predicting performance is made more difficult because of the effect of pupil mobility. The school has grown in recent years and pupils now come from much further afield than the immediate village. The school has also earned a deserved reputation for supporting pupils with special educational needs, sometimes those who have been excluded from other schools.
10. The school has considered its staffing structure very carefully to try to provide the most effective way of teaching English, mathematics and science. It has, like many

other schools, introduced a system of grouping pupils by ability and this year, by employing an additional teacher and reorganising responsibilities, it has increased the number of ability groups, thereby reducing the range of ability within each. Evidence from pupils' books and lesson observations suggest that the school's decisions have had a significant impact on pupils' standards of work in literacy and numeracy at both key stages.

11. The standards attained in literacy by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are above average. The school's strategies for implementing the National Literacy Strategy have been very effective. Considering many pupils' low attainment in language and literacy when they enter school they have made good progress, although their poor speaking skills are still evident in many cases. Pupils have many opportunities to undertake a wide range of written work and the school provides them with a very broad range of reading material. The shared planning that teachers have undertaken since the implementation of the literacy hour has been complemented by observations and monitoring of colleagues. Work is carefully matched to pupils' abilities and lessons develop pupils' literacy skills well.
12. The contribution of literacy to pupils' work in other subjects is very good. Pupils' literacy skills are clearly apparent in their skills in reading for pleasure and for information, and in the written work they do, which often overlaps two or three different curriculum areas. For example, in history pupils study life in Tudor times. As part of their design and technology work they design pomanders and in their literacy lessons they compare different authors' use of historical language, and then write their own critiques using the word-processor. One pupil wrote, *"The author has used a particular style of language which is Tudor language. I liked the phrase which read, 'a murmur of anticipation went up in the English fleet as their ships swung towards the French'."*
13. Standards in numeracy are above average. Pupils' work in using and applying mathematics is particularly well developed at both key stages. They have rapid recall of number facts and use them well to solve problems. They use a range of different strategies to work things out in their heads and their understanding of mathematical processes is very good. Their understanding and use of mathematical vocabulary are very good and they are good at spotting mathematical patterns. Their skills in numeracy are transferred very well to other subjects; for example, in Key Stage 1 pupils develop good habits of recording accurately what they see and measure in experiments, using bar charts. At Key Stage 2 pupils record their findings with progressively greater accuracy in straight line graphs. In geography they measure and record daily temperatures and air pressure.
14. In science standards are in line with the national average at Key Stage 1 and above at Key Stage 2. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have good opportunities to develop their speaking skills through developing their scientific vocabulary. They describe the criteria for fair testing and describe any unfair aspects of their investigations. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have a good knowledge of different types of electrical circuits and effectively use this knowledge in their design and technology work. Pupils have well-developed scientific skills. They repeat findings for reliability and they take account of identified patterns when drawing conclusions. They record the results of their investigations in a neat, clear format.
15. Standards in information technology are above national expectations at the end of both key stages. Pupils make good progress in all aspects of information technology and it makes a significant contribution to other subjects. Pupils in both

key stages have good word-processing skills and use a range of software well. Many pupils in Key Stage 1 can save and retrieve their work unaided and can print their results. Pupils in Key Stage 2 use advanced word-processing skills well and share their knowledge effectively with other pupils. Pupils use information technology imaginatively to complement other subjects, such as design and technology, science, history and English. In geography they make good use of Internet links to find out information about other countries.

16. By the end of both key stages pupils' attainment in religious education is in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The syllabus has been very recently revised and the school has not yet had the opportunity to draw up a scheme of work to reflect new requirements. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are familiar with the stories of Jesus and others, such as Moses, and they know about some religious celebrations of Christians, Jews and Hindus. At the end of Key Stage 2 many pupils know that the stories contained in both the Old and the New Testaments are important to Christians and they develop a knowledge of the religious beliefs of others.
17. In the foundation subjects pupils in both key stages make good progress in design and technology. In music and physical education they make sound progress in both key stages. In history, geography and art they make sound progress at Key Stage 1 and good progress at Key Stage 2.
18. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good across the school. Pupils benefit from detailed education plans, which set clear targets for their development. These targets are regularly reviewed and all staff provide suitable levels of work to challenge them. The school provides a relevant, comprehensive programme of work for these pupils, within classes, ability groups and, whenever needed, in withdrawal groups. The very few pupils with English as an additional language also make good progress and attain standards in line with those achieved by other pupils in their respective key stages. None of these pupils requires support in English in addition to that already provided by the school within its usual organisation.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

19. Ninety five per cent of parents agreed in their pre-inspection questionnaires that their children enjoy coming to school. Attendance levels have remained high since the last inspection. They are now well above average for this type of school. Punctuality is also very good.
20. Almost all pupils are involved in activities, clubs and visits outside their regular lessons, and this adds to pupils' enthusiasm about coming to school. All the pupils who spoke to inspectors were very happy to be at the school and this included those who had had experience of other schools.
21. Pupils' behaviour in class is generally good and sometimes very good. In many lessons there is a calm and purposeful working atmosphere. This is the case throughout the school and it is reflected in the behaviour around school, at play, and during lunch. However there is a small minority of pupils who are not able to stay on task and can become over excited or distracted. The steps taken by staff to minimise disruption and to encourage good behaviour are generally effective. For example, when some pupils failed to listen and take appropriate care in a physical

education lesson, they were asked to take time out at the edge of the gym until they were ready to take part properly.

22. Pupils get on well with each other, and there were occasions during the inspection when pupils were seen supporting others experiencing difficulties and working well in collaboration with one another. In a science lesson on thermometers, pupils worked well in groups planning their experiments together. Behaviour in the playground and in the corridors of the school is satisfactory.
23. In assemblies pupils are attentive. They listen and participate well. The whole school gathers on Fridays, and there is only just enough room for everyone. Despite this, the behaviour was exemplary during a special presentation by a representative of *'Help the Aged'*.
24. Pupils say that they like their teachers and know to whom they should go if there is a problem. Relationships between pupils and between adults and pupils are satisfactory. Pupils are friendly to visitors, help them find their way around the school and volunteer to help at lunchtime.
25. Pupils are given responsibilities around the school. Older pupils are elected to be house captains and selected to be prefects for a term. They help the school in many ways; for example, looking after the doors, the library, the music room, and registers. Some older pupils make books for younger ones and help them to read them. They also help younger pupils in their playground. In class, pupils show responsibility in the way in which they organise themselves quickly and without fuss, and handle equipment; for example, when they were asked to undertake several experiments with sound.
26. Pupils understand and support the school's rewards and sanctions. They also know what they should do when there is conflict. They value the rewards for good work and behaviour and they understand and fully endorse sanctions, such as 'time out' at break times. People and property are respected. Pupils' attitudes and values remain very much as they were in the previous inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

27. The quality of teaching promotes good and frequently very good standards. In 100 per cent of lessons the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory. In fact, in almost seven out of every ten lessons teaching is good and in just over a quarter of lessons it is very good. This is high quality teaching that is found throughout the school.
28. Teaching strengths identified in the previous inspection, such as good subject knowledge and providing work well matched to pupils' abilities, are still apparent. Nevertheless, in the previous inspection only four out of every ten lessons were identified as good teaching and unsatisfactory teaching was identified in 20 per cent of lessons, mainly at Key Stage 1. Areas of weakness identified in the previous report include low expectations, a lack of challenge to work and a lack of clarity about what they expected pupils to get from lessons. These shortcomings have been successfully addressed. The marked improvements in teaching are due to some changes in staffing, the development of a shared approach to planning between teams and an increase in the monitoring of teaching by the headteacher.

29. One of the most apparent strengths during this inspection was the way in which teachers' high expectations were made clear to pupils of all abilities. Work was very well matched to the needs of pupils. In many lessons pupils were often grouped according to ability and slightly different work was set for them. In others, such as literacy and numeracy, separate groups were organised according to ability and taught by different teachers at the same time. This does not mean that work presented to lower attaining pupils was easy. Work was suitably challenging, but at the same time content was modified sufficiently to be realistically achievable for them.
30. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, so lesson introductions are usually orderly, there is no calling out and teachers can start the actual process of instruction knowing that pupils will pay attention and be receptive to what they are saying. There are high expectations that pupils will work quietly together. This is especially important during the literacy and numeracy lessons when pupils often have to work for extended periods without direct teacher supervision. In almost all lessons at both key stages pupils responded well to these expectations. On the rare occasions where they did not, pupils identified by the school as capable of posing challenging behaviour, and already on the school's register of special educational needs, disturbed whole-class introductions or annoyed other pupils working nearby. It is a credit to the teachers that on these rare occasions they dealt with instances of challenging behaviour in a non-confrontational way and prevented difficult behaviour from becoming unacceptable.
31. Teachers also have high expectations of the standard of work that pupils will achieve. They insist on good routines, such as pupils dating their work and laying out mathematics work in a specified format; neat, legible handwriting is also a clear expectation. Many of these high expectations depend on the relationships between teachers and pupils, which are invariably good. Pupils trust their teachers and want to fulfil the expectations that are set. They appreciate the support that teachers provide during lessons, the way in which they take time to explain and their sense of humour. One of the most notable benefits from this relationship is the way in which pupils know that their efforts will be appreciated by teachers and not thought any less of if they are not 'right'. It is clearly apparent that good and very good teaching produces pupils who are confident in lessons and who enjoy learning. Their good attitudes to learning are clearly apparent in the effort they put into their work, the concentration they show when they are working and the amount of work they manage to finish within the time limits set for completion.
32. Although teachers' daily plans differ slightly in content and format, their medium-term planning gives them clear guidelines for what they should be teaching. There is no doubt that the process of shared discussion during the implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies has helped teachers to have a shared focus which, in turn, has helped to improve standards in those areas. A common thread to many good and very good lessons in all subjects was the consistency of approach in lessons. This is due to the shared planning between members of the various year and phase teams and within the whole staff. Between groups of pupils, even with different teachers, there was remarkable consistency of delivery that ensured equal provision across the upper and lower juniors and infants.
33. Another aspect of teaching that this staff does really well is to ensure that their plans include very good links between subjects to ensure wide coverage of the foundation subjects. This is the main reason why there is such obvious overlap

between the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and others such as history and information technology. For example, the 'Tudor' topic has provided many good opportunities for pupils to learn historical facts and to develop their sense of cause and effect in history. It has also provided planned opportunities to link design and technology when making 'Tudor' pomanders, with mathematics through drawing nets of cuboids to build houses, and with English in a range of writing for different purposes using pens and word-processors. Pupils understand these links are important and they take pleasure in pointing out how the different aspects of their work develop through different subjects, but still relate to the main theme.

34. Although teachers have clear objectives for lessons, not all of them consistently make the '*intended learning objectives*' explicit to pupils by writing them down and referring to them during the course of, or at the end of a lesson. Where this did occur it helped to focus the main points of the lesson for pupils to understand and to establish what resources would be needed.
35. Lessons invariably start with a brisk question and answer session in which teachers pose searching questions about '*how*' and '*why*' and '*when*'. The skilled way in which teachers use questioning is another strength of their teaching. It helps them to revise the content of the previous lesson before moving on to new aspects. Lively lesson introductions set the tone for the remainder of the lesson. In the best lessons teachers rarely give a direct answer to a question. Usually a pupils' question will be followed by a teacher's supplementary question that sets the pupil thinking. For example, in a very good mathematics lesson the pupils had to try to work out the answer to a long multiplication sum in their heads. By questioning over and over again, the teacher managed to elicit five different ways of completing the same sum, all with the correct answer. Pupils know their answers will be valued and are keen to respond to teachers' questions.
36. Teachers' very good use of questions forms an important part of their short-term assessments. As well as finding out at the beginning and end of lessons what pupils know, teachers are skilled at assessing during the course of the lesson itself. They know their pupils very well and what they discover invariably influences successive lessons as well as the course of the current lesson itself. There are occasions when opportunities to add to their assessment information are not fully exploited. The final parts of some lessons, or plenary sessions, are sometimes rushed. Then they do not include an element of reflection and self-evaluation on the part of the pupils and teacher and are not linked to the lesson objectives. When they are successfully planned they contain an element of challenge and move the pupils forward, as well as pointing the way ahead to the next step of learning. Day-to-day assessments in lessons are particularly effective when teachers plan assessment into the lesson. For instance, in one lesson pupils used self-evaluation sheets to assess the effectiveness of their 'fact files'. Marking is of a good standard throughout the school. In the Key Stage 1 classes there are often detailed comments about achievement, and marking at Key Stage 2 gives a clear indication of how improvements can be made.
37. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and sometimes very good. Teachers are aware of the individual needs of pupils experiencing learning difficulties. They provide well-matched learning activities and a very good level of support. Their support is overseen and co-ordinated very well by the special educational needs co-ordinator. Pupils who have special educational needs benefit

from good teaching in occasional withdrawal situations and work is well targeted to their needs. In literacy lessons teachers take account of the pupils' abilities and plan work accordingly, providing well-matched learning activities and a very good level of support. They manage the pupils with behavioural difficulties well, in accordance with agreed policy. As a result of the strengths in teaching, pupils make good progress. Support assistants make a significant impact on pupils' attainment and progress. They are very well trained and deployed and very effectively assist pupils in class to concentrate and succeed. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good. Their work follows the pattern of work for the great majority of pupils as no pupil is at the stage of requiring additional support from specialist teachers.

38. Teachers set homework that clearly supports the work that pupils of all ages have done in school and that provides good preparation for work to be carried out in future. In their pre-inspection questionnaires 17 per cent of parents disagreed with the amount of homework set by the school. Some felt it was too much and other parents considered it too little. However, the school provides very good information about the homework that it sets and the role parents are expected to play in supporting their children.

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

39. The previous inspection report noted that the school provided a lively curriculum that was broad and generally well balanced. The exceptions were some areas of learning in the curriculum for the children under five, the need to develop more creative and practical work across the curriculum and insufficient time allocated to science. The school has taken appropriate steps to improve all these areas.
40. Despite the increasing attention to numeracy and literacy teaching, the school is still successfully offering a full and rich curriculum, including the teaching of French to older pupils. The breadth of the curriculum is a strength of the school. The work on classroom walls and discussions with pupils reveal that they really enjoy other subjects and have a good knowledge of them. There are very good links between subjects and English and information technology play a major role in the ways in which pupils record their work.
41. Since the last inspection the school has continued to review policy documents and refine or develop schemes of work in all subjects. The schemes ensure pupils build upon skills systematically, and that there is equal opportunity for all pupils across the classes. Activities and resources are thoughtfully selected to reflect cultural diversity and gender. The school makes very good use of the literacy and numeracy strategies and subject guidelines provided by the government to support the teaching of the National Curriculum. The school recognises that all its current schemes of work and planning will need to be reviewed before the new curriculum and the locally agreed religious education syllabus are introduced in September 2000. It has already taken steps to ensure that correct planning will be in place by then. The school continues to make good arrangements for the teaching of mathematics and English. In Key Stage 2, pupils of different abilities are taught in sets and have good opportunities to extend their skills or receive additional support.
42. The school provides regular teaching of personal, social and health education. This includes a suitable programme for sex education and an awareness of drug abuse.

Road safety skills are taught well throughout the school and older pupils receive training in cycling skills and safety training. Although planning takes appropriate account of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education, the teaching of the subject and of acts of collective worship are not always planned for in the same lively, interesting way as other subjects.

43. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities that enhance the curriculum for all age groups. The provision is a strength of the school. Activities include music, art, sport, literacy and technology. Over 300 pupils and all teaching staff take part in these lunchtime and after-school activities. A lunchtime club in the art room offers pupils the opportunity to draw and play games. Pupils continue to participate fully in local competitive sports against other primary schools. Musical enrichment is provided by the local secondary school and the school has taken part in a Jazz Day with other local primary schools. Pupils have the opportunity to work alongside artists in school and listen to charity representatives in assembly. The school organises visits to museums, galleries and concerts. Pupils in Year 6 enjoy a residential visit. The school has appropriate links with other schools. The early years' teacher visits the local playgroup regularly to meet staff and children. Teachers from the local secondary school come into school to see lessons in Years 5 and 6, and effective use is made of the secondary school facilities when required.
44. The provision of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Throughout the school, teachers and other adults consistently promote high standards of consideration for others.
45. The school is a secure, supportive and happy community in which every one is valued. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to explore their feelings and how they value others in 'circle-time'. Assemblies and acts of collective worship take place daily and meet statutory requirements, although they lack the vitality of many other lessons. Representatives from local churches contribute weekly and these links help develop sound spiritual awareness. Pupils say grace at lunchtime and relevant opportunities are provided for them to develop their spiritual awareness, for example in art, religious education and music. During the week of inspection pupils in Years 3 and 4 handled different instruments and blew, strummed and plucked, particularly marvelling at the sounds emanating from the guitar and the saxophone. A display of work on different faiths and pupils' written poetry on '*My Future*' shows developing spiritual awareness.
46. Provision for moral development is good. Pupils are clearly taught the difference of right from wrong and most show a good awareness of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The school's policy approach to behaviour, discipline and bullying provide a sound framework within which pupils can develop. Provision is strengthened by the consistent and open approach adopted by the staff. Adults treat pupils with respect and expect similar in return. Pupils are encouraged to consider the effects of their actions on themselves and others as they arise. There are a variety of rewards for good behaviour and efforts in lessons including a house-points system.
47. Provision for pupils' social development continues to be good. School and class rules are displayed and understood well by pupils. There is good social interaction between teachers, other adults and pupils. The teachers respect the opinions of their pupils and praise them in their work and actions. Whilst play at break times is

lively, pupils in both playgrounds have good social relationships, inviting others to join them and generally following the rules of playground games. The many opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively in subjects such as maths, science and music and to compete in different sports such as netball and football are a great help to pupils in developing social skills. Carefully planned residential visits, such as that to Carrotty Wood, also contribute positively to pupils' social development. Pupils begin to gain an understanding of citizenship and to appreciate their own work by helping with the daily routines of school life.

48. The school's provision for cultural development is good. The teaching of English, history and religious education emphasises the development of pupils' awareness of the diversity of cultures throughout the world. Good provision is made for visitors to come to the school, such as music groups, historical re-enactment groups, authors and representatives from local religious communities. The school also takes the opportunity to involve visitors from non-western cultures, such as the visit by the Ghanaian mother who worked with the youngest children during the inspection week and the televised performance of a Hindu dancer. These visits contribute effectively to pupils' cultural development. Pupils show a good appreciation of the natural world. This is enhanced by the surroundings of the school, with its courtyard of daffodils in full bloom and the environmental area.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

49. The staff and governing body help to make Cliffe Woods a caring school in which the personal needs of the pupils are met. The school has fully addressed the key issue of the last inspection regarding the development of a comprehensive system of assessing pupils' attainment. The academic progress of all pupils is being well assessed and recorded in a systematic manner.
50. The previous inspection noted that the school had identified the need to develop a manageable and thorough system to monitor pupils' progress and attainment in all subjects, using the National Curriculum attainment levels. The school has worked hard to achieve this and there are now effective procedures in place to ensure pupils' academic skills are regularly reviewed and that pupils' personal development is monitored.
51. The school has a good assessment policy and the introduction of a computerised system means that detailed data relating to individual pupil's academic progress can be accessed very quickly. Teachers in the early years make very good use of assessments on entry to plan work suited to children's needs. Throughout the school, teachers make good use of standardised tests to check pupils' reading as well as using national assessment tests throughout Key Stage 2. The analysis of these results ensures pupils are given appropriate work and teachers can provide pupils with individual targets. The system is also highly beneficial in providing the school with information relating to long-term planning; for instance, deciding the school's published targets and the organisation of teaching sets.
52. Record cards which detail individual pupil's academic achievement, and their attitudes and behaviour are updated each year. Teachers have good knowledge of individual pupils in their classes and use these records and assessments well to ensure there is an appropriate progression of skills as children move up the school. The school meets the statutory requirements for assessing pupils for evidence of special educational needs. Pupils with individual education plans have regular

assessments that ensure they have specific targets well matched to their individual needs.

53. The headteacher and senior management team regularly monitor teaching plans and pupils' books and subject co-ordinators are beginning to do this in their own subjects. Staff are given suitable guidance and training in assessing the standards the pupils have reached in the core subjects. This often takes the form of a staff meeting where samples of work are assessed and given an agreed National Curriculum level. This, in turn, helps teachers to plan work for pupils at the correct level.
54. There is a positive atmosphere and the teachers know their pupils well. Parents and pupils say that all the staff are kind and supportive. Pupils with special educational needs are identified and are given good support by teaching staff and learning assistants and also staff from the local education authority's support services.
55. The school monitors attendance and punctuality well. The school reminds parents of the importance of good attendance and has achieved above average levels. Punctuality is also very good and registers are well kept and conform to requirements. The educational welfare service works closely with the school whenever necessary.
56. The school maintains good standards of behaviour, and there are many opportunities for pupils to have regular structured opportunities to discuss feelings, attitudes and behaviour with each other. The work is being done through the use of regular 'circle time'. Pupils sit in a circle and talk with each other and their teacher about a wide range of social issues. This encourages positive interaction and enhanced self-esteem. The school works hard to ensure that bullying is not a problem.
57. Behaviour standards are good and during the inspection the inevitable minor incidents, such as calling out in class, were dealt with firmly but in a gentle way. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are required to spend some of their lunchtime at the 'time out club'. This succeeds in providing pupils with a wide range of activities and an opportunity to refocus their energies and attitudes. Some pupils are asked to use the time to complete a simple questionnaire that asks what they had done to break the rules, and to explain why and what they want to do about the situation. They are also asked to discuss their answers with their teacher. Many pupils volunteer to come to the club – so much so that attendance for them has to be rationed! Child protection arrangements are satisfactory. Staff have been informed about whom to consult and how to take appropriate measures should they feel concerned.
58. The provision for special educational needs is very good. Individual education plans are well recorded and well focussed. Targets are appropriate to the needs of all identified pupils. Procedures conform to the Code of Practice and reviews with parents are regular and informative. The school responds to the whole range of needs effectively through well-planned targeted support and careful, thorough planning. The provision for pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs is very good. The high quality of the support provided by the classroom assistants enhances the learning and care these pupils receive.

59. The premises provide a clean and pleasant environment. There are members of staff who are qualified in first aid and others are experienced and aware of requirements. The staff and governors' monitoring of health, safety and security issues through risk assessments and regular audits contribute to a school, in which it is safe for adults and pupils to work and play. The school is aware that the fire signs need to be improved and this is planned.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

60. The school forms good links with parents. Most parents agree that the school actively encourages them to contribute. They have opportunities to visit class assemblies to see their children take part and they are encouraged to take an active part in school. Parents' contribution to their children's learning is good. A few are able to help in class, in the library, and on school trips. They feel well briefed and appreciated by the staff. During the inspection parents, and a great grandparent, were involved in hearing pupils read and one parent gave pupils in the reception class a wonderful introduction to the foods, dress and customs of the country she was born in.
61. Parents who have children with special educational needs are kept well informed of their progress at consultation evenings and on other occasions as necessary. They are well informed about annual reviews and their views are carefully considered. Most parents feel well informed about their children's progress. There is a lively parent-teacher association with a large committee, which organises events such as discos, summer and Christmas fetes. This raises useful funds used to purchase items such as a camera and play equipment. The association contributes greatly to the spirit of the community. The school tries to encourage more parents to come to meetings, with considerable success, despite the fact that many parents have considerable family and work commitments and are not able to take part as much as they would wish.
62. The quality of information for parents is good. Reading record books give an opportunity for parents and staff to track pupils' progress. In addition the school's '*contact book*' is very well used by teachers and parents as a means of sharing a wide range of information, from concerns about progress to delight at achievements and explanations regarding absences. Parents are sent a considerable amount of information about school activities through newsletters and some separate information about the planned curriculum is given to parents. The parent-teacher association also sends out regular information.
63. The main annual reports for parents cover all subjects, although the information on individual progress and targets is rather brief in the current report format. However the reports are supplemented by detailed discussion about short and long-term targets between teachers, parents and pupils at the consultation evenings and these are recorded on a standardised form.
64. There are three consultation meetings each year at which parents can look at their children's progress. In addition there are occasional curriculum meetings; for example, on literacy and information technology. Some of these meetings are attended by a very large number of interested parents; over 150 attended the literacy meeting.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

65. The leadership and management of the school are very good and are strengths of the school. There is clear educational direction, which has resulted in improving standards. The headteacher provides very good, strong and effective leadership. She has a very good idea of the improvements that are achievable and is working well with the staff to make that a shared vision. Consequently, there is a strong team ethos. The headteacher aims to achieve high quality of education for all children in the school. All staff and governors share this aim. Ninety five per cent of parents in their pre-inspection questionnaires quite rightly recognised the leadership and management of the school as being very good.
66. The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher with whom she works closely and who plays a significant part in the work of the school. Some of the other senior managers are relatively new to the school and to their positions. These senior members of staff, together with those who are more established, provide good support to the headteacher and fulfil their roles well. Policies and procedures are the result of widespread consultation. There is an established programme for monitoring classroom practice. It is rigorous, objective and effective. Targets for individual teachers' development are identified and progress is well checked. The school has an effective well-established appraisal system in place.
67. The governors are most supportive of the school, the headteacher and all the staff. The chair of governors provides very effective leadership and ensures that the strengths and interests of other governors are used well to support the school. The governing body understands its role fully and fulfils its legal responsibilities effectively. They provide advice of the highest quality to the headteacher. Statutory requirements are met. There are appropriate policies in place on most aspects of the life and work of the school. The governing body has a well-established and appropriate committee structure with clear terms of reference. Meetings are well structured with agendas and minutes.
68. There is a nominated governor for special educational needs. A very competent co-ordinator for special educational needs manages the arrangements for all pupils with special educational needs efficiently. Classroom assistants are well trained, extremely capable, and have a very significant impact on provision. Special educational needs staff are deployed appropriately, with the result that pupils make good progress. All school staff contribute towards the school's sympathetic ethos for pupils with special educational needs, which assists in maintaining their self esteem and confidence.
69. The school's strategic planning is a strength. The improvement plan gives a detailed overview of the next three years in the school's development. All items are costed fully and have criteria for judging success. There is a clear cycle of evaluation and review and the improvement plan underpins the work of the school.
70. The school is continually looking for ways to improve the quality of education it provides. It keeps a thorough check on standards of attainment in the national and other tests and uses the information from these to effectively plan curriculum and staffing developments. In response to national test results the school has employed additional teaching staff to implement very effective setting arrangements in Years 5 and 6 in English, mathematics and science. The provision of extra classroom support in Key Stage 1 is a direct result of carefully considering the needs of young

pupils. It has successfully helped younger pupils to settle quickly and has provided good quality support from an early stage for pupils with special educational needs.

71. The school has a commitment to improve that is shared by everyone who works there. The school has maintained the strong leadership found in the previous report and has addressed the key issue of monitoring the agreed curriculum plans. Subject co-ordinators and the headteacher now carefully examine all plans on a regular basis. All the National Curriculum requirements are fully met and pupils are challenged in exciting, interesting and stimulating lessons across the curriculum.
72. The school is making the best possible use of all available resources to achieve good standards of work and good provision. The unit cost of educating pupils is low, compared with the national average. The budget is planned initially by the headteacher and the finance officer according to the educational priorities identified in the school's development plans. The headteacher presents the governing body with different patterns of spending that are fully considered by the finance committee and the entire governing body. The school budgets for new and clearly focused expenditure, rather than relying on previous spending patterns. Prudent financial management has produced a sensible financial reserve that has been identified to improve the information technology facilities for the pupils. Financial planning is well linked to long-term priorities and to school improvement in the short term. Target dates are set and success criteria identified to judge cost effectiveness.
73. The governing body receives up-to-date financial information from the school's computerised systems each month which places them in a strong position to consider alternative spending possibilities. The school administrator and financial officer are excellent first contacts for visitors. They are efficient and operate clear and effective systems and daily routines that are understood and followed by adults and pupils. There is thorough and very efficient administration of the school's finances. There has been no recent external audit of the school's finances. Funds from alternative sources such as the parent-teacher association are greatly appreciated and used effectively.
74. The school is generously staffed and teachers have appropriate qualifications to teach in a primary school. They are part of a team that offers mutual support. A number of teachers do not have a class responsibility, but work in a supporting role. Subject co-ordinators play a significant part in raising attainment in school. The arrangements for the induction of new staff are good. The support offered to newly qualified teachers is very good and provides a programme of monitoring and non-contact time for professional development. The school ensures the allocation of additional funding to support pupils with special educational needs is spent well and enables these pupils to make good progress. Staff are deployed effectively with clear defined roles and delegated responsibilities. The accommodation and resources are used to the best possible effect throughout the school during the whole school day, and after, by the excellent range of extra-curricular clubs.
75. The school occupies a very large and pleasant site. The accommodation is very generous for the number of pupils it serves and is very well maintained by the caretaker and team of cleaners. Classroom space is used very well to provide sufficient areas for learning. The two halls are used effectively for physical education, acts of collective worship and concerts. The outside playground area is very large and there is ample grassed area for pupils to use in dry weather. The

quality and range of resources are good. The libraries contain a sufficient number of books and are well used. The school plans to site its new computer hardware in a separate suite.

76. Taking into consideration the children's attainment on entry to school, the quality of teaching provided, the attainment of pupils by the ages of five, seven and 11 years, the breadth and balance of the curriculum, the quality of leadership and the low cost of education per pupil, the school provides very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

77. In order to maintain the high quality of pupils' learning and the standards they attain, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- (1) ensure that pupils' speaking skills are improved, by:
(paragraphs 2, 11, 84, 94, 95)
 - a. increasing the number of planned opportunities that pupils have to practise, develop and improve their vocabulary and ability to talk in a range of contexts;
 - (2) ensure that teachers improve their existing high standards, by:
(paragraphs 34, 36, 114, 139, 143)
 - a. sharing with pupils at the start of lessons, and during the course of lessons whenever necessary, what they intend pupils should learn;
 - b. making sufficient time available at the end of lessons to focus with all pupils on what has been learnt, and prepare for the next stage of learning;
 - (3) ensure that assemblies, acts of collective worship and religious education are consistently planned to maintain the stimulating and imaginative links that already exist between subjects.
(paragraphs 42, 163)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	70
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	27	42	31			

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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	306
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	20
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	76
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	46
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	23	23	46

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	20	20
	Girls	22	22	22
	Total	41	42	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89	91	91
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	19	23
	Girls	22	22	23
	Total	41	41	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89	89	100
	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	26	22	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	14	21
	Girls	18	16	16
	Total	36	30	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75	63	77
	National	70 (65)	68 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	21	23
	Girls	19	18	20
	Total	38	39	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79	81	90
	National	68 (66)	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	
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	
Indian	1
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	258
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	4	
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.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR-- Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR - Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	250

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998 / 99
	£
Total income	462,600
Total expenditure	468,877
Expenditure per pupil	1,563
Balance brought forward from previous year	20,283
Balance carried forward to next year	14,006

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	305
Number of questionnaires returned	125

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	42	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	42	46	8	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	28	61	6	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	46	15	2	6
The teaching is good.	45	51	3	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	49	20	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	38	7	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	42	5	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	32	50	14	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	55	40	1	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	54	2	1	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	41	2	2	5

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

78. The quality of education for the children under five is good and provides them with a secure foundation for the next stage of their education. At the time of the inspection there were 43 children attending full time and one part time. Children are taught in two classes. Over half the children in the reception classes had not yet reached their fifth birthday.
79. Children have a wide range of abilities on entry and a detailed assessment is carried out in the first few weeks of term to find out what they can do. These results show that overall, the vast majority of children start school with literacy skills that are below average in comparison with those found in other schools in Medway and throughout the country. Numeracy skills are also below average in comparison with both local and national results and this is particularly true for boys. However, personal and social skills on entry are broadly in line with those found nationally and better in comparison with those in other Medway schools. The results of the assessments are used effectively to plan work that caters for the needs of all children. All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and benefit from a caring and supportive environment. This enables them to develop essential skills in all areas of learning and prepare them very well for the National Curriculum. By the time the children are five years of age almost all attain nationally expected levels in all areas of learning, with the exception of their speaking skills. In physical development the majority attain above the level expected nationally.

Personal and social skills

80. The majority of children have appropriate personal and social skills. Children play and work well together and are polite to adults. They are able to work on tasks in pairs, for example in dance, and show good attitudes to their work. This is particularly true when introductions to activities are interesting, when resources are well organised in advance and when children have the benefit of additional adult help. They concentrate for extended periods; for instance, when they are involved in a class music lesson. Children listen for the signal to use their percussion instrument and stop when the child acting as conductor requests. They are able to work independently on the computer, taking turns and explaining the keyboard's functions to each other. They show very good attitudes when engaged in practical tasks, such as large and small apparatus in physical education, role-play in the shop and model making with scrap materials.
81. There is, however, a significant minority of children who demonstrate immature responses and attitudes. They call out during class sessions and make silly or unkind comments to both adult and children. Some children also show a reluctance to join in class singing or role-play and are not able to sustain the teacher's request for a quiet moment during circle time. The good management of these children by staff, and the clear expectations they set for good behaviour, ensure that inappropriate behaviour is kept to a minimum and does not significantly affect children's learning. Children are well aware of the reasons why they should wash their hands before lunch and tidy away their belongings. They walk quietly through the school so they do not disturb others and know the routines for lunch and going home. They show great interest in the African objects and food brought in by a

parent. The children are able to talk about their feelings when excited by the arrival of letters from the post office and express pleasure when they succeed. For example, one child was delighted when he managed to find a way to stick a see-through visor onto his robot model and children are eager to talk about how '*Pink Pig*' feels when he goes home to different houses.

Language and literacy

82. By the age of five the majority of children's attainment in language and literacy is average for their age. Overall, children make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening skills, although a significant number continue to have below average skills in speaking especially and do not reach the expected level by the time they are five. They listen well when the teacher introduces the teaching session and during story time. However children do not always listen carefully to instructions at the end of sessions, particularly when insufficient time is given to tidying away resources or bringing the children together to discuss what they have learned. Good teaching is evident when children join in with alphabet rhymes, accompany a sound story, and count on '*one more spider*' during mathematics. Approximately half the children are able to talk confidently about their experiences and the teachers use their time effectively to encourage those who are less confident to express their opinions and feelings at every opportunity.
83. Teachers provide a wide range of practical and purposeful activities that encourage children to express their ideas and observations. For example, children look closely at patterns on pieces of Ghanaian fabric and describe how the yam tastes and feels. They take part in role-play, going to the shop and dressing up as kings and queens. They discuss with the support assistant how they are going to plan and make butterflies and robots. The good range of well-planned and imaginative activities helps children to widen their vocabulary, practise speaking in sentences and gain confidence in speaking in a group. Children make good progress in reading and writing, especially considering these are areas in which children perform less well than other schools on entry. Many children are able to read familiar books with a good level of understanding by the age of five. They are able to describe their favourite stories and have a very good understanding of the school routines for selecting library books. The quality of teaching of literacy skills is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and introduce the teaching of sounds and common words in a systematic way that ensures the children have learned a good range of strategies and skills by the age of five. Children accurately trace over and copy sentences and write their own names. Proper emphasis is placed on ensuring children practise correct letter formation, although the pencil grip of some children is not always corrected. Good opportunities are given for children to write independently; for example, children write '*Thank You*' cards to the post office. By the age of five many children confidently write short sentences unaided.

Mathematics

84. Children's attainment in mathematics is at least average for their age when they begin the National Curriculum and for some it is above. Boys and girls make good progress, particularly in number skills. Almost all can count and make sets confidently to ten. The majority can count to 20 and a few well beyond. The children are able to match words and numerals during a class game session and are given appropriate opportunities to form numerals correctly on the blackboard and in books. The quality of mathematical teaching is good. Teachers have good

understanding of the needs of young children and provide appropriate mathematical experiences which ensure children practise the essential skills of counting, pattern making, measuring and exploration of shape. Good examples include the use of real money to recognise coins up to one pound, the use of the water tray for emphasising essential mathematical vocabulary such as *'full'*, and *'half empty'* and creating repeated patterns in paint and on iced biscuits. The strong emphasis on the use of correct mathematical vocabulary ensures that children can apply this knowledge well in other situations. A child asks for a *'cuboid'* to create a robot and another describes how she has made a repeated pattern on a sock using *'circle, square, circle'*. Teachers use assessments of individuals well to plan work carefully to match their different abilities.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

85. By the time they are five, children's attainment in knowledge and understanding is at least average for their age and the quality of teaching is good. Children are encouraged to observe, explore and describe the world around them through well-planned topics. Teachers provide a wide range of interesting and different challenges throughout the week and this encourages the children to be alert and eager to find out something new. They use information technology confidently in small groups and in pairs to practise pattern making and number games. They recognise the names of the different parts of the computer such as *'keyboard and mouse'* and are able to use these effectively. They show an understanding of where they live by creating local shops and advertising and selling houses in the estate agents. They talk about and draw pictures of the clothes they wear in different weather and learn to recognise and label different parts of the body. They have good opportunities to explore the outside environment, using the tricycles to practise road safety on the playground and visiting the post office as part of their topic. Children enjoy observing and talking about the shells, fruits and objects from other places that are displayed on the interest table. Teachers provide good opportunities for children to talk with adults and observe carefully. Evidence of this is found in work such as painted self-portraits, in which eye and hair colour is accurately recorded and details such as pupils and eyelashes are carefully observed. The well-resourced art area ensures children have good opportunities to select materials to make models. Very good adult support from the classroom assistants ensures children's cutting and joining skills progress well.

Physical development

86. The vast majority of children's physical skills are above average for their age by the time they are five, and the quality of teaching is good. There is an excellent selection of large apparatus in the gym and a wide range of small apparatus such as tunnels, slides, ramps, wheeled toys and a target board. These are well used and teachers provide interesting and challenging activities that ensure children make very good progress. In the hall children behave very well. They show very good awareness of safety and rules and are eager to practise balancing, climbing and skipping. Outside they use the purpose built play area very well. The good supervision and range of apparatus and challenges set by adults ensures the children make best use of these facilities and they clearly enjoy the lessons. Many make good progress in the development of manipulative skills. They handle crayons, brushes and scissors safely and carefully and the vast majority are able to use a pencil correctly.

Creative development

87. Children's attainment is at least in line with expectations by the age of five, and in music and dance it is above. Overall the quality of teaching is good, although it is less effective when the activities and resources are unsuitable for the age group. An example of this happened during a whole-class painting activity. Children make little progress because there is insufficient time to explain the lesson and at the end of the lesson the class do not come together to find out what has been achieved. The children's progress is hampered because they are inexperienced at selecting and mixing colours and the staff are not directly involved in teaching these skills. Children make the best progress and achieve better results when they work in small groups and are well supported by an adult. Good examples of this are in their work on colour mixing charts and a castle made with different painting techniques such as bubble printing and splatter painting. Children mix colours accurately to produce different coloured greens for a leaf, and over-paint dots on a strawberry when making food for *'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'*. Teachers use art well in other areas of the curriculum; for example, in mathematics when creating patterns on scarves and teddy bears. Children clearly enjoy singing and playing musical instruments. They achieve very high standards and behave very well when creating repeating patterns using their bodies and sounds and are confident to conduct the class. Almost all children show an ability to repeat a rhythm and join in on a given signal and accompany songs such as, *'The Music Man'*, using a variety of percussion instruments. During dance lessons they show an increasing ability to listen and perform in ring games and work in pairs, moving to songs such as, *'Row, row, row the boat'*.
88. Since the previous inspection the quality of teaching and the provision made for the children under five have improved. There are now many opportunities for imaginative, investigative and practical work. Children are provided with activities that allow them to make choices. Recorded work is well matched to children's abilities and age, as well as providing sufficient challenge. The school has provided more resources for outside physical development and created a purpose built covered area for children to play safely outside the classroom. The accommodation for children under five is excellent and resources to support learning are very good. A well-planned programme of activities ensures that the curriculum for children under five is taught in full. Teachers ensure that there is fun and excitement in lessons and all staff offer the right amount of support, praise and challenge to help the children get the most out of their time in school. Planning is thorough, but is not consistent across both classes. The use made of assessment on entry to plan work for the children is effective, work is marked well and assessments of children's reading are good.

ENGLISH

89. Standards of attainment in English are above average at the end of both key stages and pupils make good progress.
90. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, standards in reading and writing were above the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 in reading was also above average and in writing it was in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 in 1999 was higher than in the previous year in reading, but remained unchanged for writing. Standards in reading at Cliffe Woods were above average compared with those in

all schools and in writing they were average. In comparison with those in similar schools standards were average in reading and below average in writing.

91. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 was in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 was below average. In comparison with results in similar schools they were well below average. The year group contained a larger proportion of pupils with special educational needs than is usual for the school. Differences in judgements made on standards during the inspection and those attained by pupils in end of key stage tests in 1999 are because these are different groups of pupils and there are differences in their ability.
92. Since the last inspection standards in English have improved from average to above the national average. This is because of improved teaching as a result of additional training, good use of the National Literacy Strategy, the improved quality and range of the resources and more rigorous monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and subject co-ordinator.
93. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' listening skills are average overall. Throughout the key stage they are taught to listen carefully and this has a beneficial effect on their learning and behaviour. Teachers speak very clearly to pupils and listen carefully to them. They expect good levels of concentration. A small, but significant, number of pupils do not concentrate fully when listening to their teachers' explanations in class groups and in smaller groups they sometimes find it difficult to listen for sustained periods; for example, during the first part of the literacy hour. In Key Stage 1 pupils are keen to share their news and talk about their work but standards in speaking for a significant number of pupils are below average. This is partly because less emphasis is placed on the systematic development of this aspect of language, and sometimes because pupils have a lack of basic vocabulary and do not use a range of spoken responses. Teachers provide good opportunities for questions and answers, but too few opportunities to enable pupils to express themselves in a more sustained way.
94. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' speaking and listening skills are average overall. They listen attentively to stories and poems read by adults and some share what they have written with their classmates. As they progress through the key stage pupils listen to sophisticated poetry and prose and through their responses most demonstrate good understanding. In Year 6 many pupils give their views confidently in the first part of the literacy hour. They give varied answers to questions such as, *'What are the main features of an historical text?'* but a significant minority are not confident speakers and do not speak clearly or concisely. Teachers give pupils the opportunity to practise items for a performance, giving ideas for improvement before evaluating their final performance. This was particularly effective in Year 5 when a group of pupils were working on a poetry performance. As a result of the teacher's intervention pupils learnt how to evaluate and appreciate others' points of view. They begin to justify and give evidence for their own views when describing characters in stories. There are, however, too few planned opportunities when pupils can develop their speaking skills in a wide range of contexts.
95. Standards in reading are above average at the end of both key stages. The school attaches great importance to the development of pupils' reading skills and pupils learn these skills methodically. At the end of Key Stage 1 they enjoy reading,

- whatever their ability level, and most have a positive attitude to reading whether individually or in groups. Pupils read their scheme books accurately, but lower attaining pupils continue to need help with unfamiliar words. They are introduced to a core of basic words that enable them to manage simple text with a measure of independence. More able pupils usually correct their own reading, although pupils of all abilities use a full range of phonetic, pictorial, graphic and contextual clues to establish meaning. Pupils understand the different parts of a book, know how to use content pages and understand terms such as *'illustrator'* and *'glossary'*. Higher and average attaining pupils use indexes to find information. Pupils use alphabetical order to find meanings and some spellings in simple dictionaries. They use work sheets, read information books and follow directions on computer screens.
96. At the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils read fluently and accurately, both aloud and silently, with good comprehension. They tackle new words confidently, using many of the strategies taught in the literacy hour. They compare similar texts by different authors and elicit answers about the book through inference and deduction. They use their ability in skimming and scanning to read for a specific purpose and this complements their work in other subjects, such as science and history. There are very purposeful links between their reading and other subjects. They know how to locate non-fiction books using alphabetical order and can use a range of books and a CD-ROM effectively to find out information for topics. They are less secure in using the Dewey index system to locate the books themselves.
97. All pupils read regularly at home for enjoyment, and to find out more information about school topics and interest. A written dialogue, relating specifically to reading, is maintained between school and home. Pupils also keep a reading journal that is regarded as an important part of their reading routine by parents and teachers.
98. Standards in writing are above average in both key stages. The contribution that writing makes to other areas of the curriculum is very good. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils shape and space their letters accurately and write in sentences. They spell most words as they sound. There is an appropriate range of projects. Pupils write stories and accounts of experiences, for example of holidays and Christmas, poems and lists of rules. Pupils know how to use capital letters and full stops. Standards of spelling are satisfactory and are maintained through regular spelling tests.
99. At the end of Key Stage 2, the development of good writing skills continues. There is clear progression in content and presentation through the key stage. Pupils write for a range of purposes, many with a clear, legible hand. Work throughout the key stage builds progressively on what they have already learned. Pupils learn, understand and use the correct technical terms, such as *'prepositions'*, *'adjective'*, *'adverb'* and *'conditional clauses'*. They know how to control sentences well and how to use paragraphs and speech marks. Pupils write to achieve particular effects, choosing descriptive words and action words carefully, and changing the length of sentences; for example, the Macbeth spells in Year 6 read,

*'Double, double toil and trouble,
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.
Rattle of the rattlesnake,
In the cauldron it shall bake.
Poisoned flower from a muddy wood,
Pass the cat's eye if you could.'*

100. The application of pupils' good writing skills is apparent throughout the school; for example the work of pupils in Key Stage 1 to write their design and technology plans and the descriptive writing that pupils in Year 6 completed for their Tudor topic. At both key stages pupils use the word-processor and change font and style according to the content of their writing. Pupils use an effective style to write up their experiments in science and mathematical investigations are written down in detail. Pupils' ability to increase the length, content and detail of their writing is evident as they move through the school, with a corresponding improvement in the presentation of their work.
101. In Key Stage 1 teaching is always at least satisfactory and in one third of the lessons it is good. In Key Stage 2, a half of the lessons are very good, a quarter of them good and the rest are satisfactory. Teachers at both key stages have good knowledge and understanding of literature for children and the stages in their language development. They make effective use of all the National Literacy Strategy techniques and they teach basic skills well. They have high expectations of pupils' concentration and make effective use of support staff and resources in well paced lessons. Good relationships are the foundation for their management of classes. As a result, pupils make good gains in their knowledge, understanding and use of language in almost all lessons. For example, pupils in Year 6 quickly learned to identify differences between an historical text and modern descriptions. The teacher maintained a brisk pace, modelled the text in such a way as to build up the suspense and posed challenging points such as, '*Comment on the length of the sentences*'. This enabled pupils to contribute well to the ensuing discussion and spurred them on to listening attentively.
102. Teachers ensure good quality learning for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils benefit from carefully devised work that develops their individual programmes and from skilled and dedicated work from teachers and classroom assistants. Teachers also sensitively involve these pupils well in whole set and all class activities. The pupils make good progress because of the support provided and the sensible match between their tasks and their previous learning.
103. Pupils' attitudes to English are usually good. They concentrate well and are keen to produce good work. They respond well to teachers' questions and they work well by themselves on their group reading and writing tasks. At both key stages pupils are confident and industrious learners. They help one another and are keen to answer questions and give opinions, reasons and examples. Pupils' enthusiastic attitudes have a positive impact on their standards of attainment.

MATHEMATICS

104. Standards of attainment are above the national average at the end of both key stages. The inspection findings are higher than the school's results in mathematics in the 1999 tests for seven and 11 year olds, when pupils' attainment was below the national average. One reason for the contrast in results is the difference in ability between two different sets of pupils. An additional reason for the difference between the 1999 test results and the inspection judgements at Key Stage 2 is the way in which pupils are taught in ability groups, allowing them to work to full capacity. Standards in mathematics are higher in both key stages than in the previous inspection.

105. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 (91 per cent) was in line with the national average (87 per cent). The percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 was well below the national average. These results were very similar to the previous year. In comparison with those in similar schools the 1999 Key Stage 1 results in mathematics were well below average. The 1999 tests at the end of Key Stage 2 showed that the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 (62 per cent) was below the national average (69 per cent). The percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 was well below the national average. Taking the four years 1996 to 1999 together, pupils' performance at Key Stage 1 is rather erratic, but generally the trend is slightly below the national average. At Key Stage 2 the trend is also rather erratic from year to year. Taking the four years 1996 to 1999 together, the trend in pupils' performance is very slightly above the national average. Girls have performed better than boys in tests at both key stages, although the evidence from the inspection shows that there is no discernible difference between the performance of girls and boys in lessons.
106. The school's implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is helping to improve attainment. At Key Stage 2 the school successfully uses the results of pupils' assessments in mathematics to place them in teaching groups according to their abilities. This has a positive impact. The additional emphasis given to 'quick-fire' mental arithmetic activities at the start of each lesson plays a large part in effectively developing pupils' understanding and use of multiplication tables and their rapid mental recall of subtraction and addition facts. The structure of the numeracy sessions has also had a clear impact on pupils' confidence to try to solve increasingly difficult problems. It is accepted that all pupils' answers reflect a willingness to 'have a try' and that the mathematical approach they use to solve problems is more important than whether the answer is 'right' or 'wrong'. This is one of the strengths of the school's work in mathematics.
107. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have covered a wide range of mathematical work in all the attainment targets. They have a secure understanding of the value of digits and arrange numbers in appropriate order. They successfully recall numbers in their heads to carry out addition, subtraction, multiplication and division sums. They can name three-dimensional shapes and their properties, round numbers up and down, tell the time in words and numbers and use block graphs to show the results of their data handling work. They work out problems practically involving length and weight.
108. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' work shows the same wide range of coverage as it does in Key Stage 1. As well as regular practice with the four rules of number, pupils carry out work on percentages, fractions and decimals. They measure and draw acute and obtuse angles accurately, work out the diameter and circumference of circles, draw nets of three-dimensional shapes and calculate the area and perimeter of shapes. Pupils become increasingly adept at thinking up different ways to tackle the same problem. For example, in a lesson with Year 4 pupils, they had to work out the answer to the multiplication sum 48×5 in their heads. No fewer than five separate ways were suggested by pupils, involving doubling, halving, rounding and partitioning, all of which were correct.
109. Work at both key stages is well linked to other areas of the curriculum, so pupils understand that mathematics has a practical application in everyday life. For example, pupils carry out daily weather recording, using maximum and minimum thermometers to measure temperature and a barometer to measure air pressure.

At Key Stage 1, pupils using a programmable robot understand that they have to turn 90 degrees to make a right angle.

110. Progress for all pupils is good at both key stages. It is well supported by teachers making accurate assessments of the understanding of the work that pupils carry out and by carefully matching work that is well suited to pupils' abilities. Great care is taken to link new work to lessons previously taught. There is clear evidence from pupils' books at Key Stage 1 that pupils have made good progress since the beginning of the school year. The amount of work they currently complete has increased, the range of work they have covered is wide, the presentation of their work has improved and their answers have become much more accurate.
111. At Key Stage 2 pupils' work displays the same signs of improvement. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in their ability to tackle increasingly difficult work with consistent accuracy. In lessons, pupils are grouped by ability and are clear about what they have to do. They find their tasks demanding and make clear gains with their learning. They steadily develop the ability to explain what mathematical steps they have taken to solve a problem. The school's system of grouping has had a positive impact on the progress on pupils with special educational needs. They find their work interesting, have no fears about mathematics and, increasingly, choose to spend time at lunchtimes completing work from lessons. Higher attaining pupils make good progress. They tackle very challenging mathematical activities thoughtfully and logically. Several pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are already working securely at least at Level 5 and are to be entered for national tests at Level 6.
112. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good overall and often very good. They are interested and enthusiastic learners. They listen well and respond to questions quickly and enthusiastically. They quickly settle down to their tasks and work hard to complete them. They show good levels of understanding and concentration, working independently, co-operatively and collaboratively as required. A good range of opportunities is provided for them to work together; for example, when handling data and solving problems. The overall impression these pupils give is one of enthusiasm and confidence. They are willing to 'have a go' at any mathematics problem.
113. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and almost half is very good. Teachers very carefully plan lessons to meet their pupils' needs. The resources they use, including extension activities, challenge pupils very well and aid progress. There is a good mix of whole-class, group and individual work across the school. Planning is detailed and clearly shows what is to be taught and learned. Teachers do not always share the intended learning outcomes of the lesson with their pupils, or check to see if they have been achieved at the end of lessons. Teachers have a very good mathematics subject knowledge, have high expectations of all abilities and use a range of resources well. The successful implementation of the numeracy strategy contributes significantly to the high quality of teaching and the standards pupils attain.

SCIENCE

114. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils attain standards that are in line with the national average and they make satisfactory progress. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils attain standards that are above the national average and they make good progress.

These findings apply to pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs. In the 1999 teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 the percentage of pupils who attained Level 2 and above was very high in comparison with those in similar schools and all schools nationally. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 was below the national average. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the percentage of pupils attaining Levels 4 and 5 was well below the national average and in comparison with similar schools. The difference between the pupils' results in 1999 and the judgements reached during the inspection can be attributed to the difference in ability between the groups of pupils.

115. There has been good improvement in attainment in Key Stage 2 science since the previous inspection. The setting of the pupils in Years 5 and 6 into ability groups has had a positive impact on their progress and attainment. Pupils are assessed regularly and are provided with good opportunities to understand the importance of key scientific vocabulary; for example, '*condense*', '*vibrate*', '*saturate*'. The pupils learn what is a scientifically acceptable or unacceptable answer, and the reasons why, in test conditions.
116. The focus of the science curriculum is on the experimental and investigative aspects of science. Throughout the school pupils make good progress in developing these skills. They are able to identify criteria for fair testing with growing sophistication and conduct experiments using a range of equipment. Pupils record their work well. The younger pupils use pictures and simple bar graphs, whilst the older pupils use a standard format, then observe the results and finally draw conclusions, nearly always using appropriate scientific language. Some pupils are able to suggest how they could extend their work further or apply their conclusions to other experiments. Some pupils in Years 5 and 6 are predicting the results, then confirming that prediction. They make good progress in thinking scientifically.
117. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils of all levels make satisfactory progress in all areas of science. Pupils in Year 1 describe the characteristics of wood and metal. They use an appropriate vocabulary such as '*hard*', '*soft*', '*shiny*', '*smooth*', '*warm*', and '*cold*'. They sort different materials into categories, justifying the reasons for their choice. Pupils in Year 2 sort materials on the basis of their properties and clearly explain the criteria. They understand that seeds need certain conditions before they grow successfully. They label correctly parts of plants and also the parts of plants that we can eat. They sort fruits into those that have seeds and those that have stones. They make very careful observational drawings of the fruits in chalks and pastels. Pupils are making good progress in developing an appropriate vocabulary as well as in understanding. The teachers' thorough and detailed questioning skills contribute well to the progress. By the end of the key stage pupils attain appropriate levels and make sound progress across all areas of the science curriculum. Evidence from samples of work for life and living processes, such as the growth of plants, show satisfactory attainment and progress. In work on materials and forces progress is at least satisfactory.
118. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils attain above average standards and make good progress through the key stage. They cover all the required elements of the National Curriculum. The planning of the work in teams, the time spent on each aspect and the depth at which it is covered ensures that pupils experience a wide range of approaches that improve their skills of observation, prediction, testing and recording. The development of scientific understanding, vocabulary and knowledge is carefully monitored. The two-year 'rolling programme' ensures that topics are

covered and repeated, presenting older pupils with a greater challenge. For instance, pupils in Years 3 and 4 study the differences between solids, liquids and gases. They know about reversible and irreversible changes and develop well their skills of prediction when they separate a mixture of rice, paperclips, lentils and salt. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 develop this work further, looking at saturation points and designing a fair test to find out which factors affect evaporation. The concept of change is developed well throughout the key stage. Pupils in Year 6 mix materials to create a chemical change. One pupil wrote as a prediction: 'When we mix vinegar and bicarbonate of soda it will froth because the particles will break down and form a gas'. He concludes his experiment, 'If we mix materials that create a chemical change it is not reversible'.

119. Pupils link their work very well to other subjects. For example, they are able to record their findings as bar graphs, line graphs or tables. They use information technology well to record their findings and to make their results easier to interpret. In recording their findings they use a standard format, with a clear description of the experiment. These records are generally of good quality and neatly presented.
120. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are good at both key stages. They enjoy science and take their experimental work seriously. Pupils are able to apply fair test criteria carefully, work hard and stay on task. They work well with others to solve problems. They reach conclusions and suggest other experiments that would confirm their findings or use the results of their work to develop further. Pupils generally listen attentively and respond positively to teachers' questions, concentrate hard on their work, and are proud of their achievements. They are fully aware of the potential hazards of some equipment and handle resources with care.
121. The quality of teaching across both key stages is good overall. Teachers have secure knowledge of the curriculum as well as good knowledge of which stage pupils are at in their development of skills. They use accurate and detailed scientific vocabulary and expect the pupils to do the same. They hold high expectations that by the end of each lesson the pupils know more and are more skilful than before the lesson. They insist on clear scientific principles such as precision and accuracy. They plan work that is appropriate for pupils' ages and abilities but do not always make the intended learning outcomes of each lesson clear at the outset. Teachers have good organisational skills, the resources needed are to hand and lessons are well paced. They make science interesting and exciting.
122. Since the last inspection teachers make sure pupils' curiosity is stimulated and the lesson content is well matched to their experiences. The main emphasis of the curriculum offered is based on well conceived practical work to ensure even the youngest pupil understands new ideas.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

ART

123. All pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress and in Key Stage 2 they make good progress. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress and many make good progress, particularly those in Key Stage 2.

124. Since the last inspection a substantial amount of money has been allocated to ensure there are improved resources to teach a wider range of skills. Many opportunities are now given for pupils to appreciate the work of others. There are good examples of the work of famous and local artists displayed on the walls and examples of three-dimensional sculptures made by artists in residence. The work of artists from the past and different cultures remains limited. The planning has been improved to ensure skills are taught in a systematic way and there are more opportunities for first-hand observation. In Key Stage 2 teachers give an appropriate balance of direction and skill support, allowing pupils opportunities to express themselves imaginatively within a well designed structure. However in Key Stage 1, half of the work remains over directed by adults and provides limited challenge for pupils. When pupils in Key Stage 1 do have the opportunity to explore materials independently, they are able to produce some sensitive work. For example, observational drawings of fruit and vegetables using paint and pastels. There are now good examples of three-dimensional work around the school, such as the insect tiles in the courtyard, photographs of the willow sculpture and salt dough food in the infant play area.
125. In Key Stage 1 pupils' artwork includes sketching, observational drawing, printing, weaving and collage. They use their imagination well when drawing a secret garden through a key hole and when making resist patterns for a candle base. However, pupils are far less creative when the activity requires less challenge; for instance, when sponging a printed background. Good links are made in Key Stage 1 between art and other subjects. Younger pupils decorate the body of *'pop-up puppets'* and *'desk tidies'* using fabric and paper. *'Money spider'* pictures link art to maths work, the computer is used well to 'paint pictures' and pupils create colourful posters for World Book Day. In Key Stage 2, pupils experiment with various media and techniques. They learn how to use flour paste to create an attractive resist tapestry, and use observational drawings as a starting block for building up tissue paper in relief. This produces very effective representations of natural objects such as shells and wood. Pupils gain good technical skills and produce well-executed drawings in perspective and create pictures in the *'pointillist'* style. The work carried out in their sketchbooks is limited. In Years 5 and 6 pupils use sketch books well to develop their work, but younger pupils do not always see the need to refer back to their initial ideas.
126. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and at least good in Key Stage 2, with some particular strengths. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is most effective when the activities planned have a clear focus and both children and adults recognise the skills which are being practised. In effective lessons resources are identified in advance, but pupils have the opportunity to make choices for themselves. In these lessons, pupils are well supported by an adult, but they are encouraged to think for themselves and see the task through. For example, pupils create attractive weaving patterns out of paper. Teaching is less effective when pupils are not fully aware of the purpose of the task or if it is mundane. In Key Stage 2 teachers use the art room very well to prepare the lessons in advance. The pace of lessons is brisk with clear purpose. They use past examples to demonstrate standards. The activities are organised effectively to ensure teachers can circulate during the lesson, offering skill support or extension as required, without lessening the pupils' opportunity for individuality. Praise is used well to encourage pupils and work is celebrated at the end. Pupils clearly enjoy these lessons and are really proud of their results.

127. Throughout the school pupils behave well in lessons and talk with enthusiasm about their work. They remember different techniques and are able to explain what they have done. They work purposefully and collaboratively and tidy away equipment sensibly.
128. The school makes good use of the local community to support the subject. Work of pupils at the Hundred of Hoo school has been exhibited at Cliffe Woods School. The secondary school's kiln has been used for firing pottery and in the future the school plans to use the school's facilities for additional art activities such as screen printing. Pupils have visited local art exhibitions and there are many examples of local artists working in school. The recent introduction of a photography club encourages pupils to learn a new skill and enrich their creative experiences. The school has excellent accommodation and very good resources to support the teaching of art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

129. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Throughout both key stages pupils refine and extend their practical skills. Attention to detail and the quality of finish are good. Pupils make good progress in drawing sketches of intended designs and joining and assembling materials in different ways. Their work benefits from a realistic estimation of what they can achieve based on a gradual development in their ability to design and make, and their understanding of the potential uses of different materials.
130. In Key Stage 1 pupils make puppets from different materials that closely follow the sketches in their original designs, and the range of suggested materials they have identified. To reinforce this link between the design drawing and the finished product, work displayed on classroom walls is labelled with questions such as, *"Which design do you think made this puppet?"* Pupils also design and make a 'desk tidy' using card and paper. Pupils constantly refer to their designs during the making process to check that their finished items bear close resemblance to them. The quality of their 'desk tidies' reflects the originality of their designs and the care they have taken to make them. Basic skills, such as cutting accurately and learning to use the right amount of glue to stick materials together, are clearly developed as pupils move through the key stage.
131. Pupils in Key Stage 2 progressively develop the skills that have been learned at a younger age. Design drawings become neater and more detailed, with a wider choice of materials and design techniques identified on their plans. Design and technology is often successfully linked to other subjects, such as science, geography, history and mathematics. For example, their attempts to build a bridge using newspaper and sellotape were closely linked to their science work on structures and forces. They realised that, *"a centre support for the bridge worked well and the side ramps meant that we could drive a car across our bridge."* They linked their work on river studies well to making an embroidered map of Kent. Their designs were first done on squared paper and there were on-going evaluations of details, such as border designs and the best colour thread to use. Evaluation sheets that pupils completed about their work included questions such as, *"Does it look like you expected? What skills did you improve? What would you change?"* Design and technology also provides opportunities to work co-operatively on large-scale projects. For example, when studying the habitats of minibeasts, pupils

decided to design and make a large wall tile, one metre square and made up of 14 individual tiles, to decorate the courtyard. Pupils clearly realised that the quality of the finished product is important when they wrote in their evaluations, *“Three classes each made a panel, but we had to put them together to make one panel, which is why they don’t quite fit!”*

132. Pupils greatly enjoy their design and technology work. They are enthusiastic, show considerable pride in their finished items and are keen to talk about what they have done. By Year 6 they have developed the ability to criticise their own work and take constructive criticism from other pupils. Pupils work very effectively alone and in groups, sharing their ideas and expertise with each other. They are very quick to offer help. They listen carefully to teachers’ instructions and follow them well. Pupils work safely, with persistence and accuracy. During their design and technology after-school club pupils used potentially dangerous items, such as hot glue guns, very carefully.
133. The quality of teaching is at least good and occasionally very good. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and plan an interesting and broad range of activities. The main reasons why progress is so good are the teachers’ enthusiasm for the subject, the opportunities they take to link it to other subjects and the ways in which they plan work to become more challenging and demanding as pupils get older. Very good use is made of a wide range of resources. Teachers use questions well to try to make pupils think carefully about what needs to be done, such as *“Why do you think they wore those?”* or *“Do you think that is the best place for that light switch?”* Teachers rarely give a direct answer. Their questions prepare the way for pupils to use their own ideas or to find out answers for themselves.

GEOGRAPHY

134. Only one geography lesson was timetabled in Key Stage 1 during the inspection. However, a scrutiny of teachers’ planning, pupils’ work and displays, indicate that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress in geography and some make good progress. Since the last inspection all pupils have maintained suitable standards of work and at least satisfactory progress. Pupils make plans of the class and parts of the school. They begin to draw bird’s eye plans of Lego models, draw their routes to school and identify the countries in the British Isles. More able pupils place keys on their treasure maps and locate Kent and London. Children plan a route for *‘Roamer’* and their routes are tested with varying success. They use the computer appropriately to design townscapes using the mouse control to drag and click features in place. Pupils in Year 2 identify simple differences between the town and country and use diagrams and flow charts to explain the *‘journey of a lettuce from a field, via lorry to Asda’*. Pupils show an understanding of their local environment through investigations on holes and covers, such as manholes and drain covers, around school. The work of the vast majority of children is neat and well executed.
135. Pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to improve their early map work and make good progress. They are able to draw plans from side views, top views and above and apply this knowledge in design and technology lessons when planning alarms for their houses. Pupils’ knowledge of countries expands. They are able to identify different continents with a key and when describing European cities, they are able to identify principal facts such as currency, capital city, rivers and landmarks. Pupils are able to produce a flag on the computer to be used as the cover for their

research work. They show good progression in their understanding of the local environment. They represent their journeys to school in a variety of ways using block graphs and pictograms. Pupils identify the dangers on the way to school and offer solutions for safer ways to travel, using posters to get their message across.

136. The weather is monitored daily by pupils in Years 3 and 4. This includes taking the temperature, wind direction and describing the type of weather. Very good progress is made in Years 5 and 6 when pupils are able to use a weather station to record weather patterns, using a hygrometer, barometer and a maximum and minimum thermometer. Geography lessons for pupils in Years 5 and 6 were not on the timetable during the inspection, but a scrutiny of pupils' work shows the majority make good progress and the more able pupils make very good progress. The standard of presentation and content of work in books is very good. Pupils recognise many different ways in which rivers are used. They describe and use diagrams well to explain how a waterfall is formed, use technical vocabulary such as '*erosion*' and '*meander*', and are beginning to use six figure co-ordinates in map work.
137. Pupils show good involvement in lessons and are particularly interested in aspects of geography which relate to their everyday experiences. For example, in Year 2 they are eager to identify the locations of the mystery holes which the teacher shows in photographs. In Years 3 and 4 pupils are keen to show visitors their route to school on a map. They respond well when asked to suggest ways of improving safety on the way to school and share their ideas about their plans for a safety poster with other pupils on their table.
138. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. In both key stages there is a good range of work, although standards achieved in Key Stage 1 are not consistent throughout all classes and age groups. In Key Stage 2, the planning is well organised and consistent between classes. This provides good opportunities for the pupils to build on map making skills and data collection in a very systematic way. The subject knowledge, challenge for all pupils and high expectations for quality work is particularly evident in pupils' books in Years 5 and 6. This enables many pupils to achieve above average standards by the end of Key Stage 2. Teachers do not always finish the lessons in good time and this means they do not always check what pupils have learned.

HISTORY

139. Since the last inspection all pupils have maintained suitable standards of work and satisfactory progress. In Key Stage 2, pupils' ability to select and retrieve relevant information and teachers' very good subject knowledge remain strengths. Further improvements are the good links made with other subjects. For example, sound effects used in music to create a Tudor builder's yard, links to health education and literacy during a parent assembly about the discovery of tobacco and the work of Shakespeare.
140. It was not possible to observe history lessons in Key Stage 1 during the inspection, but a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' plans and discussions with pupils show that pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress. In Key Stage 2 evidence from lessons, teachers' plans and work scrutiny indicates that pupils make good progress. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is at least

satisfactory throughout the school. Able pupils in Years 5 and 6 make very good progress.

141. In Key Stage 1 pupils have many opportunities to chart the passage of time on simple time lines. They place famous bears in order on a washing line beginning with *'Teddy Bear'* and ending with *'Super Ted'*. Pupils compare three bears, putting them in order the eldest to the youngest. Pupils in Year 2 give an account of how the first bear was named and are able to give a simple account of their own life on a time line from 1993 to the present day. They are able to retell the story of Boudicca and appropriate links are made with art when pupils create old fashioned toys for the *Antique Toy Shop*. In Key Stage 2 pupils learn about the differences between Roman and Anglo-Saxon settlements. They clearly demonstrate good levels of factual knowledge, the ability to use historical sources and an awareness of chronology. In Years 5 and 6 pupils show a good understanding of the relationship between the Catholic Church and Henry VIII. Pupils use their time lines to explain major events at the time and express their opinions about archaeology and the fate of Sir Thomas More. The vast majority are beginning to make good links between why people acted as they did, why events happened and what resulted.
142. No teaching was observed at Key Stage 1. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is good overall and very good in Years 5 and 6. There are many strengths in the teaching of history in Key Stage 2. They include good questioning skills; for example, *'Why did the Romans choose to live in larger settlements than the Anglo Saxons?'* There is good lesson pace and teachers have very good subject knowledge. Lessons which are taught very well involve the teacher sharing what the children are going to learn at the beginning and finish in good time, so the teacher can summarise the main points of the lesson and assess what pupils had learned. This enables teachers to plan effectively for the next lesson. Literacy contributes well to lessons in history as pupils make notes, summarise using bullet points, scan texts and write thank you letters to *'Tempus Fugit'* for the Roman Day.
143. Pupils clearly enjoy the subject and co-operate happily with each other. For example, pupils work in pairs using a magnifier and map to find settlements. There is an element of competition and pupils' active involvement means they remain absorbed in the activity. The school plans well for history and pupils build upon previously acquired knowledge in a structured way. The school successfully brings history alive with opportunities for children to dress up as Victorians, take part in historical role-play with visitors such as *'Tempus Fugit'* and during parent assemblies. Pupils have made visits to the British Museum and are able to examine artefacts such as Tudor style clothes, pottery and ironwork. Objects relating to the topics are attractively displayed in the spacious work areas outside the classrooms. The school has a comprehensive range of good quality resources which effectively extend the children's learning.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

144. Attainment is above national expectations at the end of both key stages. The school has invested considerable resources in the development of pupils' skills and understanding in information technology, with considerable success. It has plans to install more computers in a separate suite in the very near future. Pupils develop a range of skills in all the desired elements of the National Curriculum in a logical progression. They have regular access to computers and well-planned links between information technology and other subjects are clearly evident in much of

the pupils' work and in displays around the school. The work of the subject manager in establishing information technology as a priority, the determination of the governing body to maintain this position, and the hard work of teachers to implement technology in their planning are all major contributory factors in the standards achieved. Pupils' standards at both key stages, and the ways in which they incorporate computers into other work, are much better than during the previous inspection.

145. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils use keyboard and mouse controls confidently and accurately. When using a word-processing program they correctly use the 'shift' key to change from lower to upper case letters and use the 'icons' to change the size and the colour of letter fonts. Most can save, retrieve and print their work with a little help. They successfully identify a range of instructions to move a programmable robot in different directions and use computers for art and mathematics activities. They use tape recorders to tape their own stories about character descriptions and listen carefully to taped stories in groups, using the listening stations. Pupils in Year 6 use the word-processor confidently. They can amend information, cut and paste and print their results. They are able to issue instructions to a screen robot to make repeating patterns in mathematics and to draw nets of shapes.
146. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. The most notable feature of information technology at both key stages is the way in which pupils regard it as an integral part of learning in other subjects. For example, pupils in Key Stage 1 use a mathematics program to reinforce and revise skills, such as addition and subtraction of tens and units and work on intersecting sets. In topic work they use a program that maps their journeys to school, and in English they use the word-processor well to write personal profiles. In Key Stage 2 pupils use a programmable robot to draw nets of shapes that they use to make their 'Tudor houses' that they have designed in design and technology lessons. Using the Internet they develop their formal letter writing skills well to request information from tourist offices for their geography topic. There is a very clear progression in the way in which pupils' develop skills in information technology. Good use is made of pupils' existing skills that have been developed at home. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and have equal access to all the programs in use. Some are designed specifically to improve their skills in literacy and numeracy; for instance, talking books make a positive contribution to their reading development.
147. Pupils' attitudes to information technology are very good. They learn quickly and enthusiastically. They work very well individually or in pairs, sharing tasks, taking turns and discussing their work sensibly. These tasks are often carried out without direct teacher supervision. Pupils listen attentively to instructions, concentrate well and handle resources with care. Because they are used to working with computers they regard them in a very 'matter-of-fact way' and do not waste the time available.
148. Only limited direct teaching was seen but where it was observed it was at least good, with very good teaching occasionally observed. The high quality of direct teaching is a major factor in pupils' high standards of attainment. Teachers are confident of their ability to teach pupils about new programs; they are able to answer pupils' questions and queries and solve any minor technical problems. Their levels of competence are in marked contrast to those in many schools. They provide very good levels of support and, in the best lessons, they inspire pupils to

achievement that is beyond that attained by many primary school pupils. They give immediate feedback, praise and suggestions for further action. The teachers have worked very hard to use computers to their full potential.

MUSIC

149. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Pupils in Year 1 learn to repeat a rhythm clapped by the teacher, starting and stopping together on the teacher's signal. By the end of the key stage they can clap a rhythm while the teacher keeps the beat.
150. At Key Stage 2 in Years 3 and 4 pupils could correctly identify instruments such as the violin, flute and recorder. They marvelled at the way they are made and the sounds produced when played. All the pupils had wonderful first-hand opportunities to feel, look at and even play the instruments. This first-hand experience helped pupils learn about the different instruments pupils are learning to play at the school. Several pupils receive high quality tuition on orchestral instruments from the education authority's music staff and they make good progress.
151. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 sing clearly and tunefully. They demonstrate a good appreciation of rhythm. They are quick in learning new songs for the end of term performance, *'The King's Magic Cloak'*. They are introduced to the work of classical composers, such as Holst. They compose, using symbols, a simple piece to accompany Rudyard Kipling's poem, *'Way Through The Woods.'* Pupils in Years 5 and 6 listen to a variety of music for timbre; for example, *Bohemian Rhapsody* and Aaron Copland's *'Fanfare For The Common Man'*, describing the quality of it as soft, piercing and 'echoey'. They combine learning in music with that in science and explain the different sounds made by a guitar when the strings are plucked. They understand many musical terms, such as *'texture'*, *'dynamics'* and *'tempo'*. They perform accurately and confidently when singing together their favourite songs from *'The Rocky Monster Show'*.
152. Pupils enjoy their music lessons and work with energy and good concentration generally. They particularly enjoy playing the instruments, which they control well and handle with the greatest of care. They listen carefully to their teachers and respond enthusiastically. Pupils appreciate others' performances, often with spontaneous applause. They work very well in groups, discussing the various features of musical instruments and the difficulty they had in handling and playing an instrument.
153. Teaching is good overall. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are satisfactory and their planning is generally sound. A good feature of lessons is the concentration on developing pupils' skills; for example, in rhythm. Lessons are well balanced with a variety of activities to hold pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Teachers make good use of pupils' expertise and knowledge, particularly those who are learning instruments. Some teachers lack confidence and the lessons are not as creative and pupils make less progress.
154. The previous inspection report found the standard of music to be average. This remains the case. Concerts and musical productions of a good standard are regularly presented. These are greatly appreciated by all pupils, parents and governors.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

155. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress overall by the end of both key stages. There are some examples of good progress in Key Stage 2 in team game skills. There has been no significant change since the last inspection.
156. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory gains in the acquisition of skills and knowledge and understanding in physical education. They learn to control their bodies and to be aware of space. In their gymnastic work they develop sound skills and good body co-ordination. Pupils move into spaces and perform ways of travelling using their hands and feet alternatively. They create imaginative ways to put together a sequence of movements. They move around the gymnasium in different directions and at different speeds without bumping into each other. They are quick to identify large and small body parts to balance on and make sound progress in linking these together into a sequence of balance movements. In dance they make more limited progress. They are not creative or imaginative in their movements, and do not consistently listen to the music to respond to the tempo and rhythm.
157. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make sound progress as they move through the key stage. They develop a good range of ball skills. For instance, they can bounce a ball with alternate hands and display sound shooting and passing skills in basketball. They are generally able to throw a ball accurately to a team member using a chest or overhead throw. They make good progress as a direct result of teacher's expertise in imparting skills and games techniques. When playing a mini game they play with due regard to the official rules and a display of sportsmanship and fair play. They know how to win and how to lose. In their work in the gymnasium pupils work on balancing and stretching, their progress is satisfactory. Pupils show controlled landing when coming off the apparatus and develop a sequence of movements involving stretching and then a balance on a different level. Pupils know how to exercise parts of their body that need muscle strengthening to perform these movements. Safety is a good feature of gym lessons. At all times pupils move safely on the apparatus and teachers praise pupils for their sensible movements. No dance lessons were observed.
158. Pupils respond well overall to their lessons although in some classes there are pupils who do not listen carefully enough to the teacher. Most are involved and follow the instructions very carefully at all times. They show that they enjoy the work and have fun developing their skills with vim and vigour. They are keen and enthusiastic and put a lot of effort into their work concentrating hard. When practising skills pupils persevere and confidently know when they have succeeded. In playing team games they understand the need to co-operate and work well together and demonstrate a good team spirit.
159. The teaching in both key stages is at least satisfactory and occasionally good. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and a clear understanding of how to present work to appeal to pupils, develop skills and ensure understanding of games such as basketball, football and netball. Teachers hold high expectations that by the end of the lesson confident pupils will be using ball skills appropriately. Their planning is clear and is drawn from assessments of previous work and well matched to the scheme of work and policy. All teachers are aware of health and safety, rules and routines. Pupils take part in a comprehensive programme that covers all the required aspects of the National Curriculum. A range of outdoor activities takes

place during residential visits while the policy and scheme of work provides an effective curriculum for the development of skills within school. An excellent range of extra-curricular sporting activities support and build upon the start given to the pupils in physical educational lesson and team are successful in local competitions. The school has made links with the Gillingham football club which has agreed to provide coaching. A local firm has presented the school's football team with a smart new football kit.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

160. Attainment in religious education at the end of both key stages is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The new locally agreed syllabus for Medway is to be launched shortly. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are familiar with the stories of Jesus and others such as Moses. They know about some religious celebrations of Christians, Jews and Hindus. They are aware of the need for rules and can give reasons for their importance and they have a clear understanding that all people are of value. At the end of Key Stage 2 many pupils know that the stories contained in both the Old and the New Testaments are important to Christians and they develop a knowledge of the religious beliefs of others. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn of the values, symbols and objects of different religions such as those found in the Jewish and Christian religions. In Years 5 and 6 they are learning about Holy Books associated with major religions and the links between religions.
161. Evidence from displays, work in books and discussions with pupils, as well as from the lessons observed, show that all pupils, in both key stages, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Their progress is enhanced by the way that the subject is linked with other subjects in the curriculum such as history, geography and English, and by relating it to their own experiences.
162. Attitudes to learning are satisfactory at both key stages. Most pupils listen carefully to their teachers and contribute to class discussions. A good level of involvement takes place in circle time when pupils in Years 1 and 2 share their feelings with their teacher. Older pupils show genuine interest in extending their knowledge of Judaism and work hard to complete tasks set and, when asked, discuss issues in a mature and responsive way.
163. Teaching and learning are satisfactory at both key stages. Teachers have satisfactory knowledge and planning makes links with other areas of the curriculum, such as spiritual and cultural development. As a result, pupils' knowledge of the Christian religion and that of other faiths increases satisfactorily. However the teaching of the subject and of acts of collective worship are not always planned for in the same lively, interesting way as other subjects. Much of the work is learnt through discussion. This results in good practice in speaking and listening and effectively supports pupils, including those with special educational needs. Learning resources are adequate and easily accessible for the teaching of the subject.