

INSPECTION REPORT

SANDLING PRIMARY SCHOOL

Maidstone

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118511

Headteacher: Mrs J A Foster

Reporting inspector: Mr R Sharman
1696

Dates of inspection: 25th – 29th June 2001

Inspection number: 192129

Full inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Y Lyons

Date of previous inspection: 10 February 1997

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1696	Mr R Sharman	Registered inspector	Art and design Religious education Equal opportunities	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
8986	Mr P Andrew	Lay inspector		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?
28170	Mr I Chearman	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Special educational needs	
21171	Ms S Handford	Team inspector	English Physical education English as an additional language	
23056	Ms T Manzi	Team inspector	Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Music Design and technology	
20645	Ms R Webber	Team inspector	Science Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a large primary school with 405 full-time pupils. There are eight per cent more boys than girls. Few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and most of them are fluent in speaking English. Only three pupils are at an early stage in learning to speak English as an additional language. When children start in the reception class their attainment is broadly in line with the average for Kent, but there is a significant minority whose attainment is above that found typically. Seventy-one pupils have special educational needs, a proportion which is below average. Six pupils have a statement of special educational need. There is little mobility in the school population. Four per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, a figure well below average. The school serves the local area where many pupils come from supportive homes and where there is little social disadvantage.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Sandling Primary School is a good school. Pupils' achievement is good and standards are high. The standards attained by the eleven-year-olds in English and mathematics are well above average. Teaching is good. Teachers hold high expectations for their pupils, who in turn work hard and speak well of their school. Relationships and pupils' personal development are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and works closely with the very effective governing body. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection and continues to give very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The standards attained by the eleven-year-olds in English and mathematics are well above average, and are above average in music, geography, history, religious education and information and communication technology (ICT).
- The teaching is good and has led to the high standards.
- Teachers' planning provides useful links between subjects and this makes learning more interesting for the pupils.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership, the school is well managed and the governors are very effective. This has made a considerable contribution to the good improvement since the last inspection.
- The care the school provides is very good and this gives pupils confidence to learn.
- Parental support is good and this makes a significant contribution to the standards pupils attain.

What could be improved

- The information gained from the assessment of pupils is not used consistently to plan their long-term work.
- The pupils, approximately five per cent, who have been identified as being very able and reach standards higher than those expected for their age, are not given sufficient opportunities to learn in different ways and their thinking is not always challenged enough.
- The marking of pupils' work is not consistent in giving pupils advice on how to improve their work.
- The length of the school day in Key Stage 2 does not meet the national recommendations.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1997. Overall, its strengths have been maintained. The ethos is positive. Consequently pupils' attitudes and personal development are good.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The teaching in Key Stage 1 has improved considerably. Previously a quarter of teaching was unsatisfactory; this has been eradicated and seventy-two per cent of the teaching is now satisfactory or better, with almost a quarter being very good. The good teaching has enhanced pupils' learning. Across the school, standards in English and mathematics have been maintained. Standards in science dropped in 1999 and 2000, but effective action has been taken and they have risen. The standards attained by the eleven-year-olds have risen in music and ICT, but have fallen back a little in physical education. Overall, the management of the subject co-ordinators is good and is reflected in the quality of the teaching and the successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The school improvement plan is closely linked to the school's finances and clear targets for improvement have been set. This has contributed significantly to the good improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	A	A	A	B	well above A average above B average
mathematics	A	B	A	B	average C below average D well below average E
science	B	C	C	E	

The standards seen in science during the inspection show an improvement. The unconfirmed national test results for 2001 show that just over a third of the pupils have reached standards higher than those expected for eleven-year-olds. Over the past three years the school has maintained the high standards in English and mathematics. The targets set in 2000 were met. In mathematics, the proportion of eleven-year-olds who reach standards higher than those expected for pupils of this age is well above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. The proportion in English is also well above the national average and is above average compared with similar schools.

The standards attained by the seven-year-olds in the 2000 national tests were above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The standards were average in comparison with similar schools. The proportion that reached higher standards was well above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. When compared with

similar schools, the proportion was above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. In science, the teacher assessments showed that standards were above average but no pupils reached higher standards. The unconfirmed test results and teacher assessments for 2001 show similar standards in reading and mathematics, an improvement in writing and a considerable improvement in science with a third of pupils reaching the higher standards. The work seen across the school during the inspection reflects these test results and assessments.

The five-year-olds have exceeded the targets that have been set nationally at the end of the reception year in language, communication and literacy, in numeracy, in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their creative, physical, personal, social and emotional development. The standards attained by the seven-year-olds are well above average in history, above average in art and design, geography and ICT and average in music and religious education. The eleven-year-olds attain above average standards in geography, history, ICT, music and religious education. Their standards in art and design are average. Standards at the end of both key stages are average in design and technology and physical education.

Overall, the achievement of pupils in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stages 1 and 2 is good. The achievement of those pupils who have been identified by the school as being very able is satisfactory rather than good. Although these pupils do have extension tasks in lessons they rarely have opportunities to learn in more challenging ways. The good support for pupils with special educational needs enables them to make good progress. The progress of the few pupils from minority ethnic origins is similar to that of the majority of the pupils.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils are keen to learn and do well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good.
Personal development and relationships	Good.
Attendance	Good.

Pupils speak well of their school. They feel that their teachers want them to do well. Pupils are encouraged to take pride in their achievements and those of others. Pupils, including the few from minority ethnic origins, work and play well together. Punctuality at the start of the day is good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 6 years	aged 6-7 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.

Teaching is good across the school. It was good or better in almost eight out of ten lessons seen. In 24 per cent of the lessons the teaching was very good. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Only one per cent of the lessons were unsatisfactory. This was in Key Stage 2, where the pace of teaching and learning in a lesson were too slow. Teachers work hard and hold high expectations of their pupils who respond well to the good teaching and their learning is good. Care is taken to ensure that more able pupils do well in English, mathematics and science. However, few opportunities are provided for the very able pupils to learn in different and more challenging ways so that their progress is satisfactory rather than good. The successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is reflected in the good and very good teaching. Pupils' work is marked regularly, but pupils are not given enough written advice as to how to improve their work. The effective support from teachers and teaching assistants for pupils with special educational needs enables them to make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good. A particular strength is the links teachers provide between subjects that make learning more interesting for the pupils. There is a good level of extra-curricular activities. Timetabling arrangements in Key Stage 1 for specialist music teaching (Kindermusik) mean that pupils have to miss parts of some lessons on a regular basis.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Good teamwork between the special educational needs co-ordinator, the teachers and the teaching assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good support is provided for the few pupils at an early stage in learning to speak English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and contributes well to pupils' good personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides very good care for its pupils.

The school has a good partnership with parents who are supportive of their children's learning. Pupils are taught about the dangers of the misuse of drugs and a sex education policy is satisfactorily implemented. Whilst the arrangements for the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress are good, insufficient use is made of the information to plan work. Staff know their pupils well.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher is very good, commendably supported by the acting deputy headteacher and acting Key Stage 1 co-ordinator. The management of the school is good. The respective roles and responsibilities in the Foundation Stage are not clearly defined and need fine tuning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very effective. They work closely with the headteacher and also with subject co-ordinators, to set a clear educational direction for the school. Finances are prudently managed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher and senior staff have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and use this information effectively to plan the school's development.
The strategic use of resources	Good.

There are sufficient teachers to meet the requirements of the school's curriculum. A good number of teaching assistants are employed who provide good support for pupils' learning, especially those with special educational needs. The accommodation is satisfactory. There is a satisfactory provision of learning resources. The role of the subject co-ordinator has been developed successfully. Arrangements to induct new members of staff are very good. Satisfactory attention is paid to the principles of obtaining best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are expected to work hard and make good progress • Teaching is good • Children like school • The management of the school • The partnership with parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking arrangements outside the school at the start and end of the day • Consistency of homework

Parents are supportive of the school. The inspection findings confirm parents' positive comments. Homework is set regularly, but there are differences between year groups in the way it is set. The difficulties in the parking arrangements are considerable. The school is working with the parents, the local residents and the appropriate authorities to improve the situation.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Overall, the pupils' achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stages 1 and 2. The standards they attain are high in over half the subjects taught. This is due in no small measure to the good teaching and the commitment of the school to ensuring that pupils do well. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. The progress made by a small number of pupils, five per cent, identified by the school as being very able, is satisfactory rather than good as they have few opportunities to learn in different and challenging ways. The few pupils from minority ethnic origins achieve similarly to the majority of pupils.
2. The standards attained in English and mathematics by the eleven-year-olds in the national tests in 2000 were well above average. These are broadly in line with the results over the previous two years. In comparison with similar schools, the standards in 2000 were above average in English and mathematics. Standards in science were not as good. The standards attained by the eleven-year-olds in 2000 were average, but were well below average in comparison with similar schools. Improving standards in science has been a priority during the past year. The unconfirmed results of the national tests in 2001 indicate that standards have improved with 96 per cent of pupils reaching the required level and just over a third attaining higher standards. Inspection findings show a similar improvement.
3. The proportion of eleven-year-olds who reach standards higher than those expected for pupils of their age was well above average in English and mathematics but below average in science. In comparison with similar schools, the proportion was above average in English, well above average in mathematics and well below average in science. The attainments of boys and girls are similar. The targets set by the school in 2000 were met.
4. The national test results in 2000 showed that the seven-year-olds attained standards in reading, writing and mathematics that were above average. In comparison with similar schools, the standards in these subjects were average. The proportion that reached standards above those expected nationally for pupils of this age was well above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. When compared with similar schools, the proportion that attained higher standards was above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. In science, the teacher assessments in 2000 showed standards above the national average and average in comparison with similar schools. In 2000, no pupils reached standards higher than those expected for seven-year-olds. Detailed analysis of these results by the school showed that this was due to the planning of science. This has been rectified and the teacher assessments for 2001 show a marked improvement with a third of pupils now reaching these higher standards. The unconfirmed results for 2001 show a marked improvement in writing and a noticeable improvement in reading and mathematics. Inspection evidence reflects these improving standards. The attainment of boys and girls is broadly similar with girls doing marginally better in reading.
5. These results show that the school has maintained the high standards in English and mathematics since the last inspection. Standards in science have dropped back but are now improving. They are not as high as they were at the time of the last

inspection. In Key Stage 2, extra support is given effectively in Year 5 to improving pupils' writing, making good use of a local initiative, and to raising standards in mathematics using a national programme – Springboard. Good use is made in Year 6 of 'Booster' classes. Teaching has improved, especially in Key Stage 1, and this has contributed to the improving standards. The information from assessment is not consistently used to plan pupils' work in the long term to check if pupils are meeting the targets set and if so to establish more challenging ones.

6. The standards reached by the eleven-year-olds in speaking and listening are well above average and those of the seven-year-olds are above average. Teachers help pupils to build on the skills they bring from home and they place considerable emphasis in getting them to explain their thinking and their reasons for the answers they give. Pupils across the school read well and achieve above average standards. They enjoy reading and teaching is systematic with good attention paid to the teaching of phonics. The sound home-school reading arrangements make a significant contribution to the standards of reading. Standards in writing are above average but are not as high as those in reading. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their writing in other subjects. Pupils' handwriting is well formed and work is usually presented neatly. Standards of numeracy are good.
7. Children's attainment on entry to the reception classes is broadly typically of that found in Kent. There is a significant minority whose attainment is above that. Many children show good skills in speaking and listening. They enjoy books and are keen to read. Most have exceeded the standards set for children at the end of the reception year in communication, language and literacy, in their mathematical development, in their knowledge and understanding of the world, and in their physical, creative, personal, social and emotional development. Children have made a good start in learning to read words by sight and by using the sounds letters make (phonics). They count correctly, and accurately order numbers to ten.
8. The standards attained by the eleven-year-olds in history are above average and those of the seven-year-olds are well above average. At the end of both key stages the standards attained in geography are above average. These high standards are largely due to the good planning where links are made between subjects, teachers' expertise and interest, and the good use made of educational visits. The seven- and eleven-year-olds attain above average standards in ICT as teachers are confident and are becoming increasingly knowledgeable, and good use is made of the well-resourced ICT suite. These standards reflect an improvement since the last inspection.
9. The standards attained at the end of Key Stage 1 in music are average. The eleven-year-olds reach above average standards in music, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The subject co-ordinator has good expertise and this, along with the considerable extra-curricular provision, leads to the high standards. There is a considerable input from the local education authority's music service to the benefit of the pupils, although it does cause some disruption, as pupils regularly have to miss parts of lessons in other subjects including English and mathematics. In art and design, the seven-year-olds attain above average standards as their teachers make good use of their subject expertise and interest. Standards are average at the end of Key Stage 2, as not all teachers have such good knowledge of the subject.
10. Standards at the end of both key stages are average in design and technology as they were in the last inspection. In physical education, the standards attained are

lower than those reported at the last inspection. The standards in religious education at the end of Key Stage 2 are above those expected in the Kent Agreed Syllabus for religious education as pupils have a good understanding about the distinctive features of religious traditions. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with those expected and are in line with those reported in the last inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. The enthusiasm, positive attitudes, good behaviour and interpersonal relationships of the pupils are a strength of the school. The friendly and welcoming atmosphere of the whole school provides an environment that underpins the attainment, progress and development of the pupils.
12. Pupils speak well of their school and enjoy being there. Children in the Foundation Stage have made a good start with their personal, social and emotional development. They are settled, try hard with their work and work well on their own. This was evident as they 'sailed in the pirate ship' carefully recording the journey in the ship's log.
13. The pupils have a positive attitude to learning and like to come to school. In lessons they work well together, listen carefully to the teachers and are eager to answer questions and maintain their concentration. This positive attitude to school and to learning is enhanced by their support for the many after-school activities and clubs. The pupils are keen to represent their school through the choir, orchestra, team games and athletics.
14. Pupils' behaviour across the school is good in lessons, assemblies, around the school and in the playground. The comments from the parents' meeting and questionnaires show that most parents believe behaviour is good. There have been three temporary exclusions during the past year, relating to one pupil. Pupils know the rules, feel that they are fair and know how to behave appropriately. Generally they have good manners, are polite and show respect for the feelings of others.
15. The pupils with special educational needs are positive in their attitudes to learning and make good progress. They relate well to other pupils, teachers and learning assistants. They participate fully in school activities. The good support given to a pupil with physical disabilities by the teacher and other pupils during a physical education lesson illustrates the very positive attitudes of all in the school.
16. There are good relationships between the pupils and the adults, and amongst the pupils themselves and these contribute to pupils' learning in many lessons. All pupils play and work together well. There is no hint of racist behaviour or language. This is confirmed by older pupils' firm condemnation of racism.
17. Pupils' personal development is good. Tasks, such as returning registers or setting up and tidying equipment and resources, are undertaken in a keen and responsible manner. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the extra-curricular activities. The emphasis on teamwork is evident in the school's orchestra, choir and in the sports teams. The pupils are keen, particularly in Year 5 and Year 6, to accept responsibility and help in the running of the school. However the opportunities for them to develop their initiative are somewhat limited.

18. Attendance is good and is above the national average with unauthorised absence well below the national average. Very few pupils are late and lessons start promptly at the start of the school day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. The teaching is good. Teachers are hard working and conscientious. Teaching was very good in 24 per cent of the lessons, and almost eight lessons in ten were good or better. Teaching is equally good in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stages 1 and 2, and learning is good. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and ensure that the pupils know that they want them to do well. In lessons, teachers and pupils work hard and have a good relationship. Pupils speak well of their teachers and are appreciative of the way they are helped when they have difficulties and are 'stuck'.
20. A considerable improvement since the last inspection is the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1. Here 78 per cent of the lessons seen were good or better and 21 per cent were very good. No teaching was unsatisfactory. Planning is much better. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn and make this clear at the start of lessons, which move at a brisk pace. Consequently pupils learn well and this is reflected in the improving standards. Teaching has also improved in Key Stage 2. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory - the pace of the teaching and learning was too slow. A quarter of lessons seen were very good and pupils learn well across the key stage.
21. The teaching is enthusiastic and often makes effective links between subjects, and with pupils' everyday experiences. This approach captures pupils' interest and they are keen to learn. For example, in a science lesson in Year 6, pupils analysed the information they had gained from their investigation of pollution levels in school, from further afield, from their residential visit, and from a visit to the nearby construction of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. They questioned their results, especially when they came up with an unexpected answer. The teacher's planning was detailed and thorough and drew heavily on pupils' experiences. The learning was very good as pupils developed their skills in science and numeracy but also discussed important aspects of pollution and the dangers this presents. They were enthralled. Teachers in the Foundation Stage imaginatively created a pirate ship for pupils' role play to tie in with the proposed Year 5 and 6 performance of 'Pirates'.
22. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is generally good. Where the teaching is very good, it is enthusiastic and learning is made fun. Teachers have good relationships with the children and with their parents. Teaching assistants and teachers work well together to the benefit of the children. Planning is detailed and thorough with good links made between the areas of learning which effectively reinforce the children's learning. Adults know the children well.
23. Throughout the school, teachers' planning is detailed and thorough, and builds on what pupils have already learnt. For most pupils, work is appropriately matched to their learning needs and this helps them to learn well and make good progress. Extension work is usually provided in English and mathematics, less frequently in other subjects. This work usually challenges the above average pupils. These tasks do not regularly provide the very able pupils with challenging opportunities to think in different ways and this slows their progress.
24. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils with special educational needs have well-constructed individual education plans and make good progress in their learning. Teachers take due account of these plans when setting work. Assessment is used well to determine these pupils' success against their individual targets and to plan the next steps. Pupils with a statement of special

educational needs receive a high level of individual input, supported frequently by a teaching assistant. Other teaching assistants provide good input for others, skilfully working within groups of pupils to give the greatest benefit to all learners needing extra support, and integrating those with special educational needs well.

25. Lessons are well organised and proceed at a brisk pace, often with a target time set. 'Would ten to three be a reasonable time to finish this?' asked a teacher in one lesson in Key Stage 2. This practice ensures that pupils work hard and concentrate on the task in hand. Good emphasis is placed on developing pupils' skills and understanding. The methods teachers use in lessons are usually very appropriate. Collaboration with the teaching assistants is good and they support pupils well, especially in the group and independent activities. There are times in the literacy hour and in the daily mathematics lesson when the teacher is working with the class as a whole where the teaching assistant is not used as purposefully. Good use is made of parental volunteers, particularly in ICT. For example, two parents worked well with the teacher in the ICT suite to help pupils learn about the features of a CD-Rom. Good and effective use is made of the structure for lessons provided by the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Good emphasis is placed in reading on the teaching of phonics. In mathematics, pupils are encouraged to work out answers in their heads and to recall quickly number facts they have learnt. Teachers insist that pupils use the correct vocabulary in each subject. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good and is reflected in the standards pupils attain.
26. Teachers show good skills in questioning. They use questions effectively to consolidate what pupils have learnt, as well as to probe their understanding. In a very good literacy hour in Year 2, the teacher's very good questioning and infectious encouragement enabled pupils to use an index to answer questions about the use of chlorophyll in plants. In science, questions such as 'tell me the problem' and 'what made you think that?' consolidate learning and also make pupils think hard. In mathematics, pupils are regularly asked to explain their thinking. At the start of most lessons, teachers ask quick-fire questions to challenge their pupils who respond well being determined to get all the answers right.
27. A strength in the good teaching is the care teachers take to show or 'model' learning. For example, in a daily mathematics lesson in Year 3 the teacher carefully recorded pupils' solutions to number puzzles saying 'I'll be your Carol Vorderman' (referring to a popular television game). This enhanced their learning considerably, as the pupils could see clearly which methods worked best and where they had made mistakes. In literacy hours, teachers write with the pupils providing them with helpful models. At the end of a daily mathematics lesson in Year 6, the teacher showed pupils the strategies they had used to solve the questions set and to consolidate their learning and asked, 'Do I need to panic?'
28. Teachers generally have a good command of the subjects they teach, with the exception of art and design and religious education. In both these subjects, the teachers' expertise varies, but not to the point where it leads to unsatisfactory teaching. In art and design, teachers generally do not help pupils to evaluate their own work and are not always confident to demonstrate techniques. In religious education, teachers are not always confident enough to enable pupils to discuss what they have learnt from their studies of religions and why religion is important to believers. Consequently, standards in these subjects are not consistently high across the school.

29. Teachers regularly mark pupils' work. Often praise and encouragement are given. Little written advice is provided to let pupils know how to improve their work. The implementation of the school's marking policy is inconsistent. Parents report that they find the arrangements for homework to be inconsistent across the school. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have homework diaries in which they record the homework set. Pupils are encouraged to read at home. Different arrangements are in place in Years 3 and 4 and in Key Stage 1. Emphasis is mainly on consolidating work in English and mathematics. Opportunities are provided for personal research, for example in Years 3 and 4 to research a famous person. Where homework is set and completed regularly, pupils benefit.

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

30. The curriculum is good. The school provides its pupils with a wide-ranging, broad curriculum which meets the legal requirements of the National Curriculum, the Foundation Stage and the Kent Agreed Syllabus for religious education. In addition, the school also offers its pupils the opportunity to learn French and German.
31. There has been significant improvement in curriculum planning since the last inspection. With the exception of physical education, all subject policies and schemes of work have been updated to take into account the revised National Curriculum and all subjects have good quality guidelines in place to support teachers' planning. Planning in physical education does not yet fully take into account the revised National Curriculum and this is partly why standards are not above those found nationally.
32. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy are good across the school. Another effective feature of the planning of the curriculum is the good links teachers make between subjects in order to enable pupils to develop further skills they have acquired in one subject and use and apply them in another. This enhances their learning. For example, in design and technology, pupils in Year 2 use their knowledge and understanding of how to light up a light bulb learnt in science in order to make a working model of a lighthouse.
33. The curriculum is considerably enhanced through well-planned visits to various places of interest within the local area and further afield and through visitors to the school such as historical theatre groups. This contributes significantly to pupils' learning and achievement, particularly in geography, history and science. The balance of the curriculum has improved since the last inspection with appropriate time now being given to the foundation subjects. However, the timetabling of music does not give equal access to all pupils. For example, those pupils who attend specialist teaching lessons receive more music curriculum time than the majority of pupils across the school. The length of the school day in Key Stage 2 is too short and does not meet national recommendations. With the exception of the timetabling of music the school effectively promotes equal opportunities and is careful to include all pupils in all areas of the curriculum. For example, all pupils regardless of their gender or ability are encouraged to join the school orchestra, choir or take part in extra-curricular sporting activities.
34. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. It is well planned and children make good progress. Planning takes due account of the Foundation

Stage and the subsequent National Curriculum requirements. The quality of the outside play area limits children's opportunities for outside play, but the teachers compensate for this in their planning for the use of the school hall for pupils' physical development.

35. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and these pupils make good progress. Procedures for identifying pupils are now good, as recent changes in the school's policy ensure early and effective intervention and consequent improvement in their learning. A few parents expressed concern in the past about the early identification of pupils with special educational needs. The Code of Practice is fully established and pupils registered are well provided for, with effective individual education plans in place to support their learning. At times, pupils are withdrawn from lessons to receive extra support, but care is taken to minimise any disruption to their learning. Contacts with external agencies working with the school are good.
36. The governors are well informed about the curriculum through the curriculum committee and the useful links between individual governors and subject co-ordinators. Curriculum policies are discussed and approved. The governors have approved a policy for sex education. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory and appropriate attention is given within the curriculum to the dangers of the misuse of drugs.
37. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Physical education and music particularly are enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities such as netball, cricket, dance, basketball, rugby, choir, orchestra, brass tuition and recorder club. The lunchtime club for pupils with special educational needs is particularly effective in developing pupils' self-esteem and confidence. The debating society effectively develops pupils' ability to argue a point and speak confidently in front of an audience. Flower arranging and a Christian based club also effectively contribute to the range of extra-curricular activities the school offers its pupils, along with the school's involvement in the London based Music for Youth festival.
38. The school has established good links with the community which benefit pupils' learning and personal development. For example, liaison with the local army base has resulted in static benches and a shelter being erected in order to enhance the playground. In physical education, pupils benefit from specialist coaching from members of the Kent County Cricket and Rugby Teams and through visits to the Gillingham Football Club. The school has strong links with the local Member of the European Parliament, who has come into school to talk to and debate with pupils about European issues. Local clergy are regular visitors to the school and often lead assemblies and acts of worship.
39. Links with partner institutions are good. Visits from teachers from local secondary schools to talk to pupils, parents and teachers and well-planned induction days for pupils in Year 6 effectively support the pupils' transition to their next stage of education. Teachers visit and liaise well with the local nursery establishments in order to ensure a smooth transition for children entering the school from a nursery environment. The school has strong links with Christ Church University and Mid-Kent College and has established itself as an effective training school for student teachers.
40. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Opportunities to provide spiritual development are good. The acts of collective worship are well planned and thoughtfully conducted. Pupils are helped to gain

knowledge and insights into their own and other people's values and beliefs. This was well illustrated when pupils were introduced to the Hindu celebration of Raksha Bandan in which sisters and brothers show their love and gratitude for each other. This theme was effectively picked up later in the week when a 'gratitude leaf' was added to the 'Family Tree' on display in the school hall. Music adds an additional spiritual dimension to these collective occasions, especially when the music is provided by pupils from the recorder group or school choir or school orchestra. Moments of quietness give pupils the opportunity to reflect on the prayer. On other occasions, pupils are provided with interesting and exciting experiences, such as the moment of wonder when young pupils observe the root system of a mature plant as part of their science lesson. Opportunities are provided in group sessions for pupils to reflect on different issues which affect them. In one session on how to get along with people, pupils show they understand 'not to put people down'. In a series of lessons on the environmental implications of development, one pupil writes a poem that expresses, 'there is nothing I can do to help, so I'm feeling sad'.

41. Provision for moral development is good. The headteacher and staff, as well as providing good role models themselves, regularly remind pupils of the correct forms of behaviour and give reasons for them. Pupils are encouraged to develop a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Pupils are polite and courteous to visitors and treat staff and each other with respect. They make up their own class rules, which are displayed in every classroom. This encourages them to be responsible and behave well towards each other. Pupils are given the opportunity to consider a variety of issues in their personal, emotional and social development lessons. They think about how it will feel to be grown-up and what worries they have about it. Topics chosen for lessons often involve discussion of moral issues; during the inspection there were some good debates on the environmental impact of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, which is being built nearby. This showed a good understanding of the dilemmas, such as reduced journey time as opposed to the destruction of the countryside. Ideas of citizenship are developed through the debating club, where moral and contentious issues are discussed. The club held a 'general election' in which members formed political parties and wrote manifestos. Candidates were chosen, gave their speeches during Key Stage 2 assemblies, and were voted on by the pupils.
42. The school makes good provision for pupils' social development. Pupils are encouraged to form good relationships with each other. They work well together in their lessons, helping each other and sharing resources. Older pupils undertake a range of tasks around the school, such as clearing up litter, collecting up balls and other games after playtimes, assisting in the school office, and helping with the overhead projector and tape recorder during assemblies. The social development of pupils is further enhanced by involvement in extra-curricular activities, taking part in residential visits in Years 5 and 6, and being involved in fundraising. However, older pupils are given no responsibility to care for younger pupils, except to help supervise them during wet playtimes. There is no provision for pupils to have a greater voice in the school, for example through a school council, although this was an issue that came up at the 'election'.
43. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils are taught about aspects of British culture in such subjects as English and history. A suitable emphasis is put on the knowledge and understanding of other cultures and beliefs in assemblies and during lessons in religious education and geography. This is developed effectively through the school's support for schools in Gambia that involves deciding on what will

be the most suitable items to send, and regular contact with a child in Pakistan who is supported by the pupils. There are good links with ministers from local church groups and from time-to-time visits are arranged to a mosque and a Gudwhara. Visits and visitors enhance pupils' knowledge. There are visits to the Museum of London and to The British Museum, a farm visit for younger pupils and a visit to Gillingham Football Club. There has been a recent visit to France to support the teaching of French. The school choir will participate next week in the National Music for Youth Festival. There is adequate provision to develop pupils' understanding of life in the diverse and multi-ethnic society in which we live.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The pastoral care of the pupils is very good and is a continuing strength of the school. This care encourages the pupils and provides a good environment for learning.
45. The school is a caring community where staff know the pupils well and provide them with good personal support. Good arrangements enable the children in the Foundation Stage to settle into school quickly. In all classes, staff take good care to ensure pupils are confident, secure and valued.
46. The child protection procedures are fully in place and the education welfare officer and the specialist school-nursing practitioner confirm their effectiveness. All routine health and safety checks are carried out on a regular basis and are in order. Discussions with many pupils confirmed that the routines for fire drills are clearly understood.
47. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. The school makes full use of ICT in this area and, when necessary, works closely with the education welfare officer. Registration is carried out promptly and efficiently at the start of morning and afternoon school and late arrival is duly recorded.
48. Measures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. All staff apply the agreed policy consistently. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem that has a positive effect on their personal development. Effective arrangements are in place for supervising pupils during the lunch break with good liaison between the headteacher and the well-briefed school meals supervisors. A few parents expressed concerns about bullying, especially at lunchtime. There are good procedures for dealing with the few incidents of bullying. Older pupils expressed confidence that the school takes bullying seriously. Generally, parents show confidence in the school to deal with such incidents properly.
49. Overall, the procedures for assessing pupils' academic achievements are satisfactory. The systems in place to identify the standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science are good and sound tracking procedures identify the progress pupils make as they move through the school. A weakness in the arrangements is that pupils' progress towards the targets set for them to reach at the end of each year is not monitored enough during the year to check whether the targets set are too easy or too challenging. In the Foundation Stage, the assessment arrangements are complex and time consuming. In Key Stages 1 and 2, nationally validated tests are set at the end of each year when there are no national tests. Careful records are kept to show how pupils' standards compare with the average for their age. The assessment of pupils' work in other subjects is regularly undertaken. A

weakness in the current arrangements is that the assessment of the important skills pupils need to develop in their learning are not always assessed, for example in ICT where pupils' skills in using the computer are not systematically recorded. Consequently the information gained is not as useful as it could be to plan work.

50. Results of the national tests and tests set by the school are satisfactorily analysed to measure the school's performance. The information is used satisfactorily to set targets for each pupil to reach at the end of the year. At present, these annual targets are not shared with the pupils or their parents or carers. The targets set expect the same rate of progress for each pupil and are not sufficiently adjusted to set more demanding targets for those pupils who make quicker progress than the majority. A useful start has been made in Key Stage 1 to set individual pupils targets to aim for in the short term, for example to improve their recall of the five times table.
51. Sound use is made of the results of tests to identify pupils who will need extra support in Year 5 with writing and mathematics, and those in Year 6 who, with an extra 'boost', could reach the nationally expected level in English and mathematics. However, detailed analysis is not made of the results to identify the areas where pupils are having particular difficulties. Consequently, the long-term planning of pupils' work does not take enough account of their previous success and those areas where they have difficulties.
52. Those pupils with special educational needs are identified and suitable plans are drawn up that are specific to their individual needs. Pupils with statements of their special educational needs have sound knowledge of their targets for learning or behaviour, and teaching assistants or teachers log small steps in progress. These are used effectively at review meetings to redefine targets and monitor progress and achievement.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. The partnership between the school and parents is good and makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. This continues to be a strength of the school.
54. The parents have a good view of the school and all those spoken with during the inspection expressed their approval of the school and the progress that their children are making. The great majority of parents expressed the view that they supported most aspects of the school's work, with a few concerns relating to homework and parking arrangements outside the school. Most parents comment that the school is good and that their children make good progress. These views are supported by inspection evidence.
55. There are effective links with parents and these aid pupils' learning. The parent governors play a significant role in the governing body. There is an active parents'/teachers' association that enhances links between school, staff and parents as well as raising considerable sums of money for the benefit of the school; for example the separate room for music and the permanent building for three additional classrooms and the ICT suite. The parents are able to contact the class teachers and the headteacher very easily and informally. The school has a sound home/school agreement involving the school, parents and pupils.
56. The school has good parental support and enjoys a good reputation. The great majority of parents encourage their children's learning with the support they give them

at home. Parents are active in helping in the school and with educational visits. Many parents give support and help, for example they regularly help in lessons in the ICT suite. This support enhances pupils' learning.

57. The parents are given good quality general information about the school and its activities by a very well-produced newsletter that is published monthly. The information about their children's attainment and progress is good with a strength being in the parents' meetings each term. There are four meetings arranged each year. These meetings are very well attended and ensure that parents have good information about their children's progress and attainment. However, the targets set for pupils to reach at the end of each year are not shared with parents. The annual reports are computer generated, apart from handwritten personalised comments. In discussion, a number of parents report that they find the handwritten comments much more useful than the computer generated text. The establishment of a website has further enhanced the information parents receive. The information for the parents of children with special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is three-quarters of the way through a programme of meeting all the parents whose children are on the register of special educational needs.
58. There is an issue between the school, parents and local residents concerning parking outside the school when bringing children to school and collecting children from school by car. The school, parents, local residents, police and local council are actively pursuing solutions to minimise the problem.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The school has a positive ethos. It is concerned to ensure that pupils achieve well and that pupils' personal development is good and is not neglected in the emphasis placed on raising standards. The response to the action plan that was drawn up following the previous inspection underlines the school's commitment to do the best for the pupils. The conscientious implementation of this plan has led to the good improvement since that last report.
60. The headteacher provides very good leadership. Care is taken to support individuals but not at the expense of monitoring pupils' attainment and the quality of teaching. During the past year, the school has been without the services of the deputy head who has been seconded to another post. The acting deputy and Key Stage 1/Foundation Stage co-ordinator have commendably fulfilled their acting roles. The management of the school is good. The key stage co-ordinators collaborate well; collectively with the headteacher they have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The relative responsibilities of the Key Stage 1/Foundation Stage co-ordinator and the Foundation Stage curriculum co-ordinator are not sufficiently clear and need fine tuning.
61. The role of the curriculum co-ordinator has been improved considerably since the last inspection. The quality of the co-ordination of subjects varies; none is unsatisfactory and overall it is good. The emphasis for the observation of teaching has been in English, mathematics and science. Little observation of teaching has taken place in other subjects. Teachers' planning is monitored regularly together with samples of pupils' work that are carefully scrutinised to gauge the standards being attained. The information from these monitoring activities is acted upon effectively and leads to improvement. This is seen in the consistency of the teaching and the successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.

62. The governing body is very effective. Most governors are well informed and the governing body as a whole has a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The curriculum committee looks closely at the results of the national tests and sets out with the headteacher areas for improvement, for example in science. Useful links have been established between subject co-ordinators and individual governors. Reports are written by governors following their visits to the school. Governors are fully involved in the development of the school improvement plan with meetings taking place between individual governors and co-ordinators prior to the budget being set. Once agreed, the school improvement plan is regularly considered by the governors as it forms a standard item on the agendas of most meetings of committees. With the exception of ensuring that the length of the school day in Key Stage 2 meets the national recommendations, the governing body fulfils its statutory duties.
63. The school improvement plan clearly sets out what needs to be done to improve the quality of education over the next year and is part of a three-year rolling programme. Subject co-ordinators write a plan for the development of their subject that is appropriately prioritised by the governors for inclusion in the final plan. The strength of the plan is that it makes good use of the information gained from the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work, for example the levels of attainment of the very able pupils and the purchase of resources to meet the needs of recently revised schemes of work. Effective links are made with the school's finances as individual governors have a sound understanding of the budgetary needs of the subjects they have links with. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in the development and implementation of the plan.
64. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) provides good leadership and a good level of support for the pupils. She is well qualified and her good relationships with external support agencies offering expertise and resources to the school, ensures that pupils receive appropriate support. Teachers and classroom assistants work closely with the SENCO to provide effective support for pupils and to ensure that targets for learning are appropriate and that pupils make good progress. The school has invested heavily in teaching assistants. This good provision is monitored carefully by the senior management team to determine best value. The SENCO leads the highly skilled teaching assistants' team very well and ensures that they are well trained to meet pupils' needs. The governing body keeps good oversight of the provision made for pupils with special educational needs.
65. Satisfactory emphasis is placed on ensuring all pupils have equality of opportunity and that potential barriers for learning are removed. The withdrawal of pupils for extra support in English and mathematics is carefully organised so that pupils do not miss important parts of the curriculum. In music, this is not the case. The timetabling arrangements for the extra music teaching provided by the local authority leads to pupils missing parts of acts of worship, literacy hours and daily mathematics lessons. Older pupils show very positive attitudes to the importance of dealing with discrimination through their firm rejection of racism.
66. Teachers are suitably qualified and have the necessary knowledge and experience to meet the needs of the Foundation Stage, the National Curriculum and the Kent Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Teachers have good expertise in the teaching of English and mathematics and this is seen in the standards pupils attain. Staff expertise in teaching art and design and religious education is not as consistent

and this is reflected in the variation in standards pupils attain between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Subject co-ordinators are appropriately qualified and are well placed to fulfil their role. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

67. Staff development is good and this has a positive effect, especially on standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Effective structures are in place to identify and prioritise training needs. Good arrangements have been established for performance management and those teachers who applied, have crossed the 'threshold'. Staff new to the school and newly qualified teachers are given very good support. Teaching assistants feel very much part of the school and are well briefed about their role that enables them to help the pupils they work with to learn.
68. Educational priorities are well supported through the secure planning of the school's finances. The school improvement plan and the budget are carefully thought through and very well monitored. Longer-term issues are taken into account and proper funding allocated. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The governors and headteacher have a clear view of the financial position of the school and have produced a well-prepared financial plan for the next three years. The system for monitoring the receipt and expenditure of specific grants is very good and is integrated with the school development plan and used effectively in the management of the school. Procedures to monitor and control the budget are very secure. The recent auditor's report stated that there was good financial control and the few minor recommendations have been dealt with. The use of new technology in the administration of the school is extensive and is constantly being developed.
69. The governors and senior managers satisfactorily apply the principles of best value to the running of the school. Academic performance is rigorously monitored and compared with a range of similar schools. The governors and the bursar monitor the efficient use of funds. There is a constant and underlying theme of comparing and challenging to deliver the best education to the pupils. The school has started consultations on a broader base but this is an area that is still to be developed fully.
70. Overall the accommodation is satisfactory. The unsatisfactory outside play area for the children in reception was noted at the last inspection and improvement has been delayed by building work. Plans are now in hand to improve this area. The school is short of storage space and this is particularly evident in the hall; equipment stored against the walls limits the opportunities for using some of the larger static equipment. The library is small and this hinders pupils from using it for research. The outside areas, including the sports field, provide good facilities for play and sporting activities. The accommodation is clean and tidy, and the good use of display of pupils' work makes the school an attractive place for staff and pupils to work in.
71. The school has sufficient learning resources to implement its curriculum. Resources are good in mathematics, science, design and technology, geography and for information and communication technology where the computer suite is used very well. The library has many old books and there are few books that reflect minority ethnic cultures.
72. Music resources are too few to enable teachers in Key Stage 1 to keep instruments in their classes. They therefore spend valuable time going to and from the music room. The co-ordinator is aware that the school lacks tapes of multicultural music and instruments from other lands.

73. The improvement the school has made is good. The high standards have been maintained. Teaching has improved. Expenditure is broadly average. The school continues to provide very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

74. In order to continue to raise standards and the quality of education, the governors and headteacher and staff should:

- Improve the assessment of pupils and the use of this information to plan work by:
 - implementing fully and consistently, in subjects other than English and mathematics, the assessment opportunities provided by the schemes of work and the national guidelines;
 - undertaking careful analysis of the results of national tests and the tests set by the school to identify areas where pupils are having difficulty and to use this information effectively to plan the next steps in their learning;
 - ensuring that pupils' progress towards the targets that have been set for them is regularly checked and when necessary new and more challenging targets are set;
 - sharing the targets that have been set with pupils and their parents/carers.(paragraph nos: 49, 50, 57, 107, 118)

- Provide very able pupils with opportunities to learn in different and challenging ways, for example by providing them with difficult and problematic questions and encouraging their individual opinions. (paragraph nos: 1, 23, 106, 113, 132)

- Improve the marking of pupils' work by:
 - giving pupils advice on how to improve their work;
 - making better use of the information gained from marking to plan work;
 - monitoring the quality of marking to ensure consistency across the school.(paragraph nos: 29, 106)

- Ensure that the length of the school day in Key Stage 2 meets the national recommendations. (paragraph no: 33)

Other issues which should be considered by the governors

- Improving the timetabling arrangements for music in Key Stage 1 to avoid pupils consistently missing parts of literacy hours, daily mathematics numeracy lessons, or parts of acts of worship. (paragraph nos: 33, 149)

- Ensuring that curriculum guidance in physical education takes full account of the revised National Curriculum. (paragraph nos: 31, 151)

- Providing more opportunities for pupils to give their opinions and to use their initiative. (paragraph nos: 17, 42)

- Fine-tuning the roles of the Key Stage 1/Foundation Stage co-ordinator and the Foundation Stage curriculum co-ordinator to clarify their responsibilities. (paragraph no: 60)

- Improving the library accommodation and the quality of books to provide more books that reflect cultural diversity. (paragraph nos: 70, 71 97)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	85
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
0	24	55	20	1	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	405
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	71

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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
	2000	34	26	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	31	32
	Girls	25	23	25
	Total	54	54	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (90)	90 (90)	95 (86)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	32	31
	Girls	25	25	26
	Total	54	57	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (90)	95 (86)	95 (93)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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
	2000	26	20	46

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	19	22
	Girls	19	19	19
	Total	41	38	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (80)	83 (73)	89 (80)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	21	21
	Girls	20	19	19
	Total	43	40	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (88)	87 (83)	87 (88)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	0
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	399
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	3	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.6
Average class size	28.9

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	291

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
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	£
Total income	694,218
Total expenditure	696,689
Expenditure per pupil	1,810
Balance brought forward from previous year	38,970
Balance carried forward to next year	36,499

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	405
Number of questionnaires returned	153

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	46	7	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	52	7	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	23	65	10	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	57	16	5	3
The teaching is good.	37	56	3	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	56	13	2	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	41	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	47	1	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	24	56	14	3	4
The school is well led and managed.	45	44	6	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	60	3	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	52	10	3	8

Other issues raised by parents

- Parents expressed concerns about the difficulties with parking at the start and finish of the school day.
- A few parents raised concerns about bullying.
- Whilst some parents commented favourably about support for pupils with special educational needs a few had concerns, especially about early identification.

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

75. The children start school when they are four years of age. There are two reception classes, one for the children whose fifth birthday is before March and one for the children who will be five later in the year. The older children attend full time from September and the younger children attend on a mornings only basis for the first term. This inspection took place at the end of the school year. All of the 60 children were full time and had made a good start to school.
76. The children's achievement is good. When children start school their 'Baseline' test results show that their skills, knowledge and understanding in most areas of learning match those of most four-year-old children in Kent. A significant minority have standards higher than those found typically. By the age of five, the children have attained standards above those expected nationally for children of this age in communication, language and literacy, in mathematical development, in their knowledge and understanding of the world, and in their personal, social and emotional development and in their physical and creative development. In the case of their mathematical development this is an improvement since the last inspection. They make good progress because they have benefited from good teaching both from their teachers and the classroom assistants. The children are taught the appropriate curriculum for the Foundation Stage. There is good provision, except that the outside work and play area is too small for the development of physical skills and for developing the children's knowledge and understanding of the world. This area is to be enlarged very soon.
77. Children who have special educational needs are identified early through the use of the 'Baseline' tests and teachers' observations. Until recently, however, the school has not placed these children on the special educational needs register. This reflects the concerns of a few parents. Class teachers, however, make satisfactory arrangements to meet the needs of these children in class so that they also make good progress.

Personal, social and emotional development

78. By the age of five, the children's development in this area is above average. This is an outcome of good teaching. Children are well behaved and polite. Most dress and undress independently and manage their own personal needs. This is because the teachers and the assistants allow the children to try for themselves. The children sit quietly and most initiate ideas and speak confidently to answer or ask questions as adults listen to them and their ideas are valued. They work well as part of a group, take turns and form good relationships with adults and their peers. Children move confidently between activities as the teachers give clear instructions and provide interesting and varied tasks. They are sensible and follow the teachers' well-established routines. The children are settled, try hard with their tasks, concentrate and work well by themselves, even when not directly supervised, for example at the computer, in the pretend 'pirate ship' which they tidy up very well by themselves and when painting their name.

Communication, language and literacy

79. The children attain standards above those expected for their age due in the main to good teaching. Children enjoy stories and join in when they know the text that is often repeated in the story. Some children predict what might happen next. Most children enjoy books and handle them correctly. Several, in response to the teachers' probing questions, give sensible reasons why they like a book and why they have chosen it. For instance, one child chose 'The Snowman' because she liked snow. Several children retell stories in their own words, in the correct sequence. They remember stories and talk about them. Children recognise print and know that it tells the story and also use picture clues appropriately. Many children read a few familiar words in a simple text. Children listen attentively and most speak confidently in both classes. Most children have a satisfactory vocabulary and often answer questions in sentences. The majority of children know some letter names and their sounds. They recognise their own name and write this with increasing control and accuracy. They write avidly in the 'pirates log', progressing well from scribble writing to strings of letter like shapes and recognisable words. Generally the children's writing is neat and well formed and becomes more accurate. This is because the children respond well to the good opportunities for writing provided by the teacher. They are also given plenty of regular practice and writing is used well in other areas of learning, such as keeping a weather log in 'knowledge and understanding of the world.'
80. The children progress well in their early reading and writing skills and the more able children write sentences correctly on their own but are not yet using full stops in their work. Many children also know the sounds made by groups of letters (phonics) such as 'ing' and 'qu' as teachers place emphasis on teaching phonics. Overall, good progress is made during this first year at school but this is not helped by the lack of non-fiction books in the classrooms. Books are also not stored well. They are overcrowded so that it is difficult to find the one you want and the covers cannot be seen to entice the children to try something new.

Mathematical development

81. Most children attain standards above those expected for their age. They make good progress due to good systematic and challenging teaching and good links with other areas of learning. For instance, pupils sort animals into those with or without fur in science-based work. Most count confidently to one hundred and are beginning to count in tens. One whole class counted in twos up to fifty-eight. Through a variety of stimulating practical experiences provided by the teachers, they add two numbers to make eight. They record their practical sums neatly. Children are beginning to compare two numbers using terms such as 'more' or 'less' and quickly choose a number less than twelve. By the end of the year, most children are able to subtract one and count back in twos from ten. They also sort different items, such as belts, according to one similarity such as colour or length. They talk about, recognise and make simple patterns choosing and explaining these. The children are well prepared by their teachers for the National Curriculum in that they are questioned and challenged to give reasons for their choices. Many name several two-dimensional shapes accurately. Consequently, by the end of the year many pupils are working at the early stages of the National Curriculum. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

82. As a result of good teaching, most children attain standards above those expected for their age. Despite the area outside being small, it is well used by the teachers and their assistants in fine weather to challenge and question the children. The children find out and understand that not all things made from plastic prevent water leaking out, for instance a sieve. They describe when containers are full and empty and that the bowl is spilling over. Because of good opportunities provided by the teachers, children begin to gain an understanding that animals are different and record differences in animals. They use their writing skills well to record the life cycle of a tadpole and the stages of growing bean plants. This work is made into books by the teacher and assistants so that the children try hard to make it good. Most pupils are gaining an understanding of time by comparing 'now' and 'then'. When working on the computer, the children use the keyboard and mouse competently to work on games to improve their skills in areas such as mathematics but the computer was not used often. By the age of five, the main area where the children are doing well is in asking questions about why things happen and how things work and using the correct vocabulary, such as 'sheep shearing' and that water 'evaporates'.

Physical development

83. Most children attain standards above those expected for their age. This is due to the fact that the teachers are good at teaching dance and make every effort to compensate for the small secure outside play area where children should develop the skills needed for riding wheeled vehicles. The children move about the hall with enjoyment and have a good sense of space. Most children balance on the beams and bars well and are becoming more confident. They make many different shapes with their bodies and move backwards and sideways. When teachers prepared them for sports day, the children were keen to improve their performance, worked in teams and demonstrated good balancing and skipping skills. They also supported each other and understood that it was a team effort. Generally they try hard, listen carefully and follow instructions. Children's fine manipulation skills are developing well. They thread beads to make patterns and they build with small construction equipment. Most hold pencils correctly and cut with scissors reasonably accurately. They squeeze, roll and pinch plasticene to make the required shape with enjoyment. The teachers plan for physical education lessons well but do not plan sufficiently for using the outdoors. This is because there are too few resources for this area; it is too small and can only be used in fine weather.

Creative development

84. Teaching is good overall. Most children attain standards above those expected for their age and they enjoy a wide range of interesting activities planned by their teachers. They paint freely and are often absorbed in this activity. They name different colours and have a clear idea of the picture that they want to paint. Children draw with pencils and crayons in increasing detail. In music, children know a range of nursery rhymes and songs but the time given to music is too short to develop their singing well. They follow the actions well and show an appropriate understanding of time by all performing their actions in time to the music. Children enjoy imaginative play in situations such as being in a 'pirate ship.' This area is designed and used very well by the teachers and teaching assistants to encourage the children to use a variety of skills. These adults act in role and question the children, making 'the ship' interesting and exciting. As a result the children use colloquial terms of speech such

as 'Aye, aye, my captain'. In dance sessions, the children relate to characters when they pretend to drink grog and rub their tummies at the same time. Generally the children's creative efforts are valued and artwork is displayed well by the adults, but occasionally their paintings are tailored by the use of templates and the teacher cutting to modify the children's work. This detracts from the generally good standards of work seen.

85. The quality of teaching is good overall and children's achievement is good. No teaching was unsatisfactory and at times it was very good. The best teaching is characterised by the teacher's enthusiasm and ability to make learning fun. The children are challenged and the teacher gives very good demonstrations and involves all pupils well. Time, and the teaching assistants, are used very well to involve and help all children learn and complete tasks. Good links are made across the areas of learning to effectively reinforce and extend teaching points. Expectations for behaviour are high. The teachers and their assistants clearly know the children well but the assessment procedures are too complex and time consuming to enable the teachers to retrieve information easily. The teachers have good relationships both with the children and with their parents. They work hard to prepare the children for school by providing several pre-school visits and provide comprehensive training for parents. There are few areas of relative weakness but these include the fact that there are occasions when the children spend too long sitting on the carpet listening to the teacher. This does not always help to extend their active questioning skills or actively involve them in their learning. Overall, however, the children are given a good start to school with good teaching.

ENGLISH

86. The school has maintained the very high standards in English seen in the previous inspection, and has stayed well above the rising standards seen nationally. Throughout the school, pupils' achievement is good. A major contribution to the standards in English is the consistent good quality of the teaching. Teachers have a good understanding of the requirements of the English curriculum and are confident in their teaching of the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils are provided with a rich, broad and balanced curriculum that places a good emphasis on developing pupils' expressive language. Aspects for development have been well identified, so that pupils receive extra time for the development of writing skills and there is additional literacy support for pupils who are not achieving as well as they might. This extra support has enabled pupils to make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by the teaching assistants and the class teachers and make good progress. Very able pupils are not always given sufficiently challenging learning opportunities and this hinders their progress which is satisfactory overall. There are good opportunities for discussion in English lessons and in other subjects, such as history, geography and science. Teachers encourage pupils to enrich and enliven their writing, and have high expectations of the presentation of their work. Pupils respond well because the lessons are relevant to their experiences. They enjoy their lessons, work hard with enthusiasm and achieve good results. The majority of pupils with English as an additional language are fluent in English and achieve at the same levels as their peers.
87. The results of the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000 showed that standards were well above the national average and were above average in comparison with similar schools. The proportion reaching standards higher than those expected for

pupils of this age was also well above the national average and was above the average for similar schools. The standards attained by seven-year-olds in the national tests were above the national average in reading and writing and were average in comparison with similar schools. The proportion that reached higher standards was well above the national average in reading and average in writing. When compared with similar schools, the proportion that reached higher standards was above average in reading and average in writing. Inspection evidence, together with the unconfirmed test results and teacher assessments show that it is likely that pupils will attain similar results in the 2001 tests, with improvements in writing at Key Stage 1. Pupils' achievement is good with pupils continuing to improve their performance as they move through the school. The exception is those pupils identified as being very able who do not go on to reach even higher standards. The attainment of boys and girls is broadly similar.

88. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards of pupils' speaking and listening standards are above average and by the end of Key Stage 2 are well above average. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn to use 'exciting' vocabulary. They suggest good describing words to add to the captions in the 'big book' they are reading together, for example, the 'multi-coloured puppy dog', the 'scaly mermaids' and suggest that Anna might go on her space journey to 'the galactical islands'. Older pupils know how to explain their ideas and opinions in debates about the environment. This happened in Year 6, where pupils took on the role of members of different interest groups to discuss the impact of the building of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link on the local environment. They listened well to each other's opinions. The final sharing of poetry based on their points of view shows that pupils perform confidently with expression and rhythm.
89. Reading standards are above average by the end of both key stages. Pupils enjoy reading, and read for pleasure at home and at school. Many pupils said that they read to younger brothers and sisters, as well as to parents and grandparents. Younger pupils have a good grasp of letter sounds as these are emphasised by teachers and this helps pupils tackle unfamiliar words. As they move through the school, pupils read with growing fluency and accuracy and develop a critical appreciation of a range of books. Teachers ensure pupils of all ages know how to get information from non-fiction books. Older pupils are particularly successful in using reference books in history and geography. The reading skills of the average and higher ability eleven-year-olds are sufficiently well developed to enable them to cope with most books. There are a small but significant number of pupils with exceptional reading skills who are not always being challenged in their choice of book for personal reading. Pupils with special educational needs whose reading skills are weaker, are given good support from the teachers and teaching assistants so that they develop their fluency and understanding and make good progress.
90. Standards in writing at the end of both key stages are mainly above average as a result of the extra time now provided by teachers for the development of pupils' writing. Pupils know how to vary their style according to who the writing is for. Across the school, pupils produce interesting and exciting writing. In Year 2, pupils learn to use exciting description, such as 'green is the colour of waving grass blowing in the breeze.' Pupils in Year 6 work enthusiastically at writing poetry 'with an impact', and produce thoughtful work on the environmental issues around the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) – 'I want to whiz to France, but for the environment I feel guilt'. Older pupils use different styles of writing appropriately, for instance pupils in Year 5 understand the difference between formal and informal writing, and write competent letters expressing their opinions about the CTRL to the local council. Pupils use

different forms of writing effectively when reporting on scientific experiments and in history when writing a newspaper report on VE day. Younger pupils write simple stories with good attention to characterisation and plot, and the more able pupils include dialogue; older pupils develop these skills to produce imaginative 'story books' with chapters. The majority of pupils have the writing skills they need. Less able pupils and those with special educational needs who have difficulties with literacy are given good support by the teachers, teaching assistants and voluntary helpers and make good progress.

91. Standards of handwriting and presentation are good. Teachers ensure younger pupils regularly practise forming their letters correctly. As pupils move through the school, they use punctuation effectively and accurately, and paragraph their work correctly. Younger pupils use successfully their knowledge of letter sounds to help with their spelling, and older pupils check their spelling and use of words with dictionaries. Pupils edit and re-draft their work competently.
92. Teaching is good throughout the school because teachers know the subject well, and have high expectations for their pupils. The majority of teaching seen was good, with well over half the teaching being very good. Consequently, pupils make good progress in lessons. Teachers across the school have a very good understanding of how to teach reading and writing. In Year 1, there was very good teaching to develop pupils' 'exciting' language'. The very simple and uninspiring captions to the big book of Anna's Amazing Glasses were used very well to prompt pupils to spice up the language and re-write the text. Good use is made of the structure provided by the National Literacy Strategy. The majority of teachers make sure pupils know what they are to learn and how this links to what they have learnt before and this leads to pupils often making good progress in lessons. Teachers' planning helps pupils make connections across subjects and maintains their interest. For example, pupils in Year 3 write a report on the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb, and in Year 6 they write a diary about their residential visit to the Swattenden Adventure Centre. The majority of teachers use a rich and wide vocabulary, and the proper terms for language are used and demonstrated, so that pupils use these with confidence. They provide for a good level of discussion and give pupils time to think through their ideas before they begin to write.
93. Teachers encourage pupils to think about what they are reading. Teachers and teaching assistants make sure that younger pupils understand the meaning of what they are reading as well as helping them develop their ability to tackle new words and to develop reading skills. When older pupils read, they show that they understand how to pause and break up long passages in order to make the text understandable to the listener. Teachers develop these skills effectively in the 'guided reading' sessions. They also encourage pupils to 'read between the lines' of a story, and skim and scan for information. Pupils are taught effectively how to take notes and extract the main points in order to make concise summaries of stories and information, such as identifying the arguments for and against certain advertising.
94. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support to help them meet the targets in their individual education plans. The teaching assistants who work with them are well briefed and help them to make good progress. There is a good balance between giving support and helping pupils to work independently, so that support is given to pupils within their groups as well as some more focused teaching based on their specific needs.

95. A weakness in the planning of lessons is that it is not made clear how tasks will be adapted to challenge the very able pupils. Many teachers ensure that there are follow up tasks for these pupils, so that their time is used well. However, there are no clear plans to provide them with work that challenges their thinking. Teachers generally move lessons along at a good pace, so that pupils remain enthused and interested. However, the end of the literacy session is sometimes rushed, and doesn't give the teacher enough time to establish what children have learned and to help children think about what they need to learn next.
96. The management of English is good. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching and planning effectively to help her to identify areas where learning needs to improve and has identified staff training needs. The timetable has been adjusted to allow additional time for writing, and there is additional support for pupils identified as achieving below their potential. The assessment procedures are being reviewed so that they give a clearer picture of what pupils know and can do, and pupils in Key Stage 1 are given their own individual targets for improvement but rarely in Key Stage 2. Pupils' work is marked regularly but pupils are not consistently given written advice about how to improve their work. There is good tracking of pupils' attainment, with most pupils achieving their predicted levels. However, this system is not allowing for the more speedy progress of pupils identified by the school as very able, so that they are not all achieving as well as they might. A recent audit of pupils' reading ages by the special educational needs co-ordinator should help the school evaluate pupils' reading ability more accurately, to ensure that pupils are reading books of the correct level of difficulty.
97. The small library is used mainly for the teaching of small groups. It is not adequate for whole-class use, and its position makes it unsatisfactory for pupils to use for private study or research.

MATHEMATICS

98. The high standards reported at the last inspection have been maintained. The eleven-year-olds reach standards well above average and the standards attained by the seven-year-olds are above average. Pupils' achievement is good. Most pupils make good progress because the teaching is good in both key stages and developments to improve standards are well led by the subject co-ordinator, with good support from key stage co-ordinators. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. The successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has ensured that pupils build their knowledge and skills successfully on what they have learnt before. The setting of pupils in Key Stage 2 into broad ability groups to focus the teaching more closely is effective, with the exception that the thinking of the very able pupils is not sufficiently challenged and these pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress. Pupils in both key stages enjoy their work in mathematics and this is a credit to teachers' enthusiasm and determination to raise standards. Pupils in Year 1 devised posters to illustrate 'maths is fun'. One pupil, with a very good drawing, noted that mathematics gives you a 'Big Mac brain'. It might seem a contradiction in terms but the pupil's meaning was clear.
99. The standards attained by the eleven-year-olds in the national tests in 2000 were well above average. In comparison with similar school they were above average. The proportion of pupils that reached standards higher than those expected for pupils of this age was well above average both nationally and in comparison with similar schools. The seven-year-olds attained standards above average in the national tests,

and when compared with similar schools, the standards were average. The proportion that reached higher standards was average both nationally and when compared with similar schools. These results reflect pupils' good achievement. The attainment of boys and girls is broadly similar. The unconfirmed test results and teacher assessments for 2001 show similar standards with an improvement in the number of seven-year-olds who reach higher standards. Inspection evidence reflects these standards.

100. The work seen in pupils' books shows that they make good progress in all areas of mathematics and especially in number and mental calculations. Teachers give them good opportunities to apply their knowledge in the real world and solve problems. This consolidates their understanding and mathematical vocabulary. For example, in using graphs and charts in science, in interrogating the CD-Rom index for geography and history or in the analysis of data from pupil elections. This is a strong feature in both key stages. They develop a good knowledge of the number system, place value and metric measure.
101. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good knowledge of number patterns and use them successfully in mentally adding and subtracting two digit numbers. They use doubling and near doubles to halve and multiply numbers and have a good knowledge of multiplication tables to five. Many round numbers to ten, and some to hundreds and are beginning to understand division. Most have a secure knowledge of the use of methods for addition and subtraction. This is because teachers use the structure provided by The National Numeracy Strategy effectively at the start of lessons to ensure pupils calculate quickly and accurately in their heads. Pupils have good knowledge for their age of fractions, metric measure, data handling, measurement of time, and of the properties of plane and solid shapes. They are confident and keen to learn because teachers challenge them in the work they plan.
102. The eleven-year-olds have built successfully on their earlier work because the curriculum is well planned. They use equivalent fractions to add or subtract accurately and develop a good understanding of percentages and decimals. Pupils have a good understanding of positive and negative numbers through the work teachers provide on co-ordinates grid and temperature. They extend earlier knowledge of reflective symmetry in studying reflections and translations using number pairs on the co-ordinate grid and have a good knowledge of shapes and their properties when calculating areas and volumes. Teachers' good knowledge and understanding is further shown in the effective teaching of long division and algebra.
103. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is good and pupils learn well. Targets for learning are shared with pupils and the pace of most lessons moves learning along quickly because teachers assess how well pupils are doing in discussions or during the tasks set for them. To keep all pupils attentive and confident, good planning ensures that pupils are challenged at their next step in learning and so they make good progress. There are high expectations of all pupils. In a good lesson in Year 2, the teacher pitched questions in mental maths on doubling two digit numbers to suit different abilities. All pupils learned the strategy but some doubled numbers in hundreds. The teacher used assessment well to know pupils' individual needs. In the main activity on equivalent fractions all had tasks that matched ability, the most able identifying and matching complex fractions on a sixty-four square grid. The skilled teaching in a lesson in Year 1 modelled the thinking required for the lower attaining pupils to help them to add three numbers together. This effective teaching role-plays the teacher in the position of pupils striving to use what they have learnt to solve a

problem and is very effective in helping pupils to learn. Pupils gain confidence and acquire good mathematical language to enable them to think aloud. The teacher used this strategy again with the higher attainers in finding missing numbers in a sum of three digits with good use of praise when pupils learned from their mistakes.

104. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is good overall, but is not as consistent as it is in Key Stage 1 as one lesson was unsatisfactory. In almost all lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils, especially in their mental agility and speed in mental calculation. This is why the recall of all multiplication tables is good for most pupils. In two very good lessons, the mental maths was brisk and lively, challenging most pupils to high levels, but questioning, so good in other ways, was not used effectively to raise the level of challenge to test and extend the thinking of the very able pupils. In the unsatisfactory lesson, the pace was slow and the content was aimed at the middle ability learners. The planning was unclear as to what different groups of pupils were to learn. Consequently, many pupils were not interested and began to occupy their time in other ways that did not help learning. Pupils were restive and uninterested and learning was minimal.
105. Teachers use and explain technical language very well so that pupils develop a good mathematical vocabulary. This enables them to think mathematically and communicate ideas well, and learn quickly. For example, in a very good lesson about data handling in the Year 6 lower set, the teacher imaginatively used the election results of the poll and exit poll by pupils, from the debating society's nomination of candidates for the post of Prime Minister. Work was well matched to pupils' different abilities, including the more able in this group. She modelled well the strategies of self-review and thinking of how they could solve problems in the independent tasks by acting out the question. 'Do I need to panic?' Consequently the pupils were confident, highly motivated, willing to persevere and made good gains in their learning.
106. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and give praise and encouragement but marking lacks evaluative comments to help pupils with the next steps in their learning. The best marking was seen in Year 2, where targets for improvement are shared with pupils. Overall, there is no target setting of this kind to challenge the highest attaining pupils to attain even higher standards. Homework is set and this consolidates learning. A sample of Year 6 homework books showed little record of pupils' achievements. There is little evidence of investigative open-ended problem solving tasks being set for the very able pupils. Teaching assistants and teachers work together very well to promote good levels of learning for all pupils and especially for those with special needs who make good progress.
107. The leadership of the subject is good. There has been systematic monitoring of teaching and learning and the information has been used effectively to identify areas for improvement. Arrangements for assessment are good and the information is used effectively to identify pupils who need extra help in 'booster' or Springboard groups. However, it is not used well enough to check to see whether the targets set for pupils to reach at the end of each year are challenging enough and to set new targets if necessary. The quality and quantity of learning resources are good.

SCIENCE

108. Standards attained by the seven-year-olds have improved since the last inspection and are now above average. However, the standards of the eleven-year-olds have

fallen since the last inspection and are average. Standards have fallen overall in science because teachers have not been teaching to the higher curriculum levels to enable the able pupils to attain the higher levels in the national tests at the age of eleven. However, an improving picture is now evident. Teachers are now teaching to higher levels and standards are improving. Pupils' achievement is good. The quality of planning and teaching in the subject is good and all aspects of the subject are covered and taught well through scientific enquiry and well-planned investigations. This, together with the good attitudes pupils have to learning ensure that all pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs make good progress, and gain a good knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the subject.

109. The results of the national tests in 2000 showed that the standards attained by the eleven-year-olds were average and compared with similar schools were well below average. The proportion that reached standards higher than those expected for eleven-year-olds was below average and well below average in comparison with similar schools. The teacher assessments of the seven-year-olds showed that standards were above average but no pupils reached higher standards. The attainment of boys and girls is broadly similar. These results reflect considerable underachievement by the more able pupils. The school has acted quickly to rectify this. The unconfirmed results of the national tests in 2001 indicate that just over a third of the pupils in the current Year 6 have attained standards higher than those expected for eleven-year-olds; with 96 per cent reaching the national standards expected for eleven-year-olds. At the end of Key Stage 1, all pupils are expected to attain at least average standards with a third reaching standards higher than those expected of seven-year-olds. Pupils' achievement is now good because all aspects of the subject are taught thoroughly and teachers promote important skills and knowledge very effectively through scientific investigations.
110. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to carry out their own investigations. So by the age of eleven, pupils plan and carry out their own investigations well. They predict, make a series of observations and record their results in a variety of ways, such as charts, graphs, tables, and through well-annotated and labelled diagrams. Pupils understand well the principles of fair testing and understand the need to change and control variables. Pupils gain a good knowledge and understanding of life processes as a result of teachers' good planning. For example in Year 1, pupils observe the growth of a runner bean and record what they observe carefully in a diary and also identify and label the different parts of a plant correctly. In Year 4, pupils describe the life cycle of a frog accurately. In Year 5, pupils explain some of the ways in which plants disperse their seeds and by Year 6 pupils describe the reproduction system of a plant correctly.
111. The good teaching enables pupils across the school to acquire a good knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties. For example in Year 2, pupils use proper scientific vocabulary such as rough, dull and hard in order to describe the properties of different materials and know that materials can be changed by heating, bending and stretching; and by the age of eleven pupils classify substances correctly into solids, liquids and gases and describe effectively some reversible and irreversible changes. Pupils make good progress in understanding physical processes as teachers provide them with interesting work. For example in Year 1, pupils test which materials are attracted to a magnet. In their investigations on forces, Year 2 pupils discover that different variables such as height, size, weight and texture affect the distance a toy car travels down a ramp. In Year 4, pupils learn how to measure force accurately with a Newton meter and in Year 6, pupils learn about air resistance as

they investigate how the shape of a piece of A4 paper can affect how fast it falls to the ground.

112. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and investigations and tasks are well planned to develop pupils' scientific skills of enquiry. For example, in a good lesson in Year 1, good planning and effective use of resources enabled pupils to investigate the effect of different surfaces on a toy car travelling down a ramp. Good questioning by the teacher enabled the pupils to learn more about friction. Good demonstration by the teacher helped pupils to record their results accurately. Pupils use, and have, a good knowledge and understanding of specific scientific vocabulary because teachers promote it well during lessons. Teachers have high expectations of how pupils should record their findings and this ensures that pupils' written work is well organised and presented. Skilful questioning effectively enables pupils' knowledge, understanding and thinking to be suitably extended. The wide range of resources for the subject is of good quality and is used effectively by teachers to support learning.
113. Good cross-curricular links, particularly with geography, ensure pupils apply skills learnt in other areas. For example, in a geography topic about the effects of human activity on the environment, pupils carry out scientific enquiry to find out which areas in the immediate locality have the highest air pollution. When there are shortcomings in teaching, pupils do the same work regardless of their ability. As a result, the very able pupils are not sufficiently challenged nor is the lesson planning for this particular group of pupils well matched to their specific needs. Marking is not sufficiently evaluative or constructive in order to indicate to pupils how they might improve their work.
114. The subject is managed well by the co-ordinator. The careful analysis of national test results and the effective monitoring of teaching and learning across the school has resulted in effective action being taken to raise standards in the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

115. The achievement of the eleven-year-olds is satisfactory and they attain the standards expected for pupils of this age. The seven-year-olds achieve well and the standards they attain are above those expected due to their teachers' good subject knowledge. Across the school, standards vary from being average to above average, according to teachers' confidence and knowledge of the subject. For example, standards of painting are higher in Year 5 than in Year 6, reflecting the good subject knowledge of the co-ordinator who teaches in Year 5. Overall teaching is satisfactory and generally pupils make satisfactory progress. There was insufficient evidence at the time of the last inspection to make secure judgements on the standards being attained.
116. Teachers in Year 2 provide the seven-year-olds with good opportunities to develop their skills and the pupils' achievement is good. They enable pupils to develop good skills in drawing, for example when they carefully observe and draw their training shoes using pencil and pay close attention to light and dark shades. Pupils make good quality drawings of sections through fruit and vegetables using felt-tipped pens effectively. A number produce high quality drawings of well-known buildings such as St. Paul's Cathedral and Big Ben. The quality of these drawings was recognised by the award of a prize in a competition organised by the Royal Institute of British Architects. When pupils paint, they mix colours confidently to decorate masks or to illustrate animals. They have worked successfully in three dimensions. The eleven-

year-olds achieve satisfactorily. They have sound skills in drawing and painting. These are seen in their pencil drawings illustrating Christmas and in their painting of landscapes. They understand the ideas of light, shade and texture. Pupils work with clay satisfactorily, but the opportunities to do this are somewhat limited and this does not enable pupils to reach above average standards. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2.

117. The teaching of art and design is satisfactory overall and occasionally is good. It is never less than satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress, enjoy their lessons and try hard to do well. Teachers plan their lessons carefully, with a good balance between the introductory explanation of the tasks and the practical activities. Where teachers are confident, they demonstrate techniques effectively, the teaching is good and pupils make good progress in learning skills and techniques. This happened in a lesson in Year 2 where the teacher drew designs for badges to be placed on shields and in Year 5 where the teacher carefully showed pupils how to use brush strokes in the style of Van Gogh. Pupils responded well and tried hard to incorporate what they had seen into their work. A strength in the teaching is the links that are made with other subjects. For example, in Year 2, art and design is used effectively to illustrate work in history. In Year 6, pupils paint the local landscape as part of their study of the effect of the construction of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link on the area. Such links make the work interesting and pupils concentrate on their work.
118. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator who has usefully drawn up a good scheme of work, together with helpful advice on how to use the range of materials provided to build effectively on what pupils have already done. Teachers' planning is carefully monitored and standards of work are regularly scrutinised. Pupils' work is assessed each term but the information is not used effectively to plan work, especially for those pupils who are talented. Resources are adequate to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

119. Design and technology was not being taught in all classes during the inspection. The lesson seen, together with a scrutiny of work previously completed and teachers' planning provided sufficient information. Standards at the end of both key stages are similar to those expected for pupils of these ages. The standards reported at the last inspection have been maintained. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The scheme of work, which was unfinished at the time of the last inspection, is now complete. This helps teachers to plan their work and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.
120. The quality of teaching is satisfactory across the school. Throughout the school, the teachers encourage their pupils to evaluate the success of their work. In Key Stage 2, the pupils first plan their work to a tight design brief. This was evident in a lesson where pupils designed a 'marble run'. The slowest run was to win. The pupils gave good suggestions as to how to slow the marble down by lowering the angle and to add tissue paper to increase friction. This lesson was good, partly because of the good resources that enabled the pupils to saw wood competently and safely at an angle, but also because the teacher, the co-ordinator for the subject, has good subject knowledge. Sufficient time was given to enable the pupils to develop and execute their ideas.

121. In Key Stage 1, teachers make very good links with other subjects and this enhances pupils' learning, as they are well motivated and interested in what they are doing. For instance, when studying electricity, the pupils make lighthouses. These light up as the pupils use a circuit. They also make different types of shops from cardboard when studying times passed. Although these shops looked very similar, the pupils are aware that in 'granny's time' there were few supermarkets and that you could find easily a butcher and greengrocer.
122. There is now a suitable scheme of work to help the teachers plan. Pupils' work is assessed each term but the information is not used to plan lessons. Teachers' planning is regularly monitored against the scheme of work. However, the co-ordinator is based in Key Stage 2 and has little knowledge of the teaching in Key Stage 1. Consequently, the younger pupils are not yet following the full design process. Resources overall are good and make a good contribution to pupils' learning. The co-ordinator is aware that the facilities for 'cooking' need to be improved and funds have been set aside to do this. In the meantime, the pupils plan and make salads and sandwiches and this links effectively with work in science about healthy eating.

GEOGRAPHY

123. The standards attained by the seven- and eleven-year-olds are above those expected for pupils of these ages. Pupils' achievement is good because of good planning and teaching. Standards have improved in Key Stage 1 since the last inspection because of the improved teaching and pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Well-planned visits and good links with other subjects such as science also contribute to the standards as they enhance pupils' learning.
124. Throughout the school, pupils gain a good knowledge and understanding of a range of places and environments and skilfully compare different and contrasting localities both within the UK and abroad. For example, in Year 2, pupils successfully compare some physical and human features of Botswana with the UK and know that Botswana has a much hotter climate and as a result the crops grown and the style of houses built are different. Pupils in Year 3, similarly compare different settlements in the UK as they look for similarities and differences between Maidstone and Flatford Mill in Suffolk.
125. Fieldwork, links with other subjects and visits to places of geographical interest, both locally and further afield, support pupils learning in the subject very effectively and contribute significantly to the good standards achieved by pupils throughout the school. For example in Year 6, a visit to Tyland Barn, close to the construction of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, very effectively develops pupils' awareness and understanding of how human activities cause change to the environment. They come to appreciate that people often have different views about issues such as this as they debate the advantages and disadvantages of building the Channel Tunnel Rail Link.
126. Across the school pupils make good progress in mapping skills and they use maps, plans and atlases with a range of scales successfully. For example, from an early age, pupils in Year 1 make simple plans of everyday objects. In Year 4, pupils use maps of the local area successfully to identify key human and physical features in the town of Maidstone. The eleven-year-olds successfully use an ordinance survey map of Colton when studying a contrasting locality in the UK. The very able pupils have few opportunities to work in more challenging ways and this limits their progress.

127. Throughout the school, pupils acquire a range of geographical skills through well-organised fieldwork and the use of geographical sources. For example, in Year 2 pupils learn how to use a compass in order to find direction. Pupils in Year 3 use an anemometer and weather vane carefully to measure the force and direction of the wind. The older pupils use instruments to accurately measure and record rainfall, temperature, wind direction and speed in order to keep a weather chart. In science, pupils in Year 6 effectively develop further their geographical knowledge and understanding of the effects of air pollution on the local environment as they investigate ways of monitoring the level of air pollution in and around the school grounds.
128. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they use resources, fieldwork and visits to various places of interest very effectively to enhance pupils' learning in the subject. Good guidelines for the subject ensure all aspects of the subject are covered and taught well. Teachers manage pupils well when they are engaged in fieldwork activities and give good levels of support and guidance in handling different equipment. In the best lessons, teachers use questioning very skilfully to extend pupils' thinking, knowledge and understanding.
129. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Planning is checked to ensure that the scheme of work is being fully implemented. Pupils' work is assessed each term but the information is not used to plan work, especially to provide more challenging opportunities for the very able pupils. Learning resources are satisfactory.

HISTORY

130. The seven-year-olds' achievement is very good and that of the eleven-year-olds is good. Standards in attainment at the end of both key stages have improved significantly since the last inspection. The standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are well above those expected as the teaching is very good. Standards generally have improved because of better planning in the subject which has ensured that knowledge and skills are taught systematically and build successfully on what pupils have already learnt. The quality of teaching remains good overall and this ensures that pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good gains in their learning across the school.
131. Throughout the school, pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding of important people and events in history and understand about the 'cause and effect' of events. Pupils in Year 2 achieve high standards because of very good teaching that enables pupils to make very good progress in lessons. By the age of seven, pupils have acquired a very good knowledge and understanding of the passage of time. Pupils recognise that things change over time and successfully make comparisons between life in the past and today. For example, through a very motivating and challenging task, pupils in Year 2 were able to explain how food was different in medieval times from today. They understood clearly how food was gathered in medieval times and that people living in a medieval castle would not have had supermarkets, fast food chains or milk delivered to their door. In Year 1, pupils distinguish correctly between old and new houses in the local area.

132. By the age of eleven, pupils show an increasing depth of factual knowledge and understanding of aspects of history and use this knowledge well to describe different historical periods and events. They make good progress because the teaching is interesting and catches the pupils' imagination. For example in Year 5, pupils show a good understanding of the living conditions and life style of a Tudor sailor as they write about the last voyage of the Mary Rose. Pupils in Year 4 show good empathy when describing the excitement and feelings of people celebrating VE Day at the end of World War 2 and understand the difference between tears of sadness and joy. The achievement of the very able pupils is satisfactory rather than good due to the limited opportunities to learn in more challenging ways.
133. Across the school, teachers promote and develop literacy skills very effectively in history through research and extended writing. Teachers encourage pupils to use lively vocabulary in order to make their factual and descriptive writing more interesting and to capture the mood of the period being studied. For example, in the same lesson about VE Day one pupil opened his account of the day with 'Cheers and shouts of gaiety filled the streets'. Pupils' listening and speaking skills are well developed by teachers in Year 6 as they debate the Roman invasion of Britain from the Celt and Roman soldiers' point of view.
134. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is very good and is good in Key Stage 2. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it well to plan interesting tasks that effectively develop pupils' knowledge and historical enquiry skills. Resources, including visits to historical places of interest, are used successfully by teachers to support pupils' learning. Clear explanations and skilful questioning ensure pupils' knowledge and understanding is effectively extended.
135. A good feature of teaching is the way in which teachers provide and encourage pupils to look for historical evidence using a range of historical sources in order find out about the past. For example in Year 4, pupils obtain a better understanding about the events of World War 2 as they read newspaper reports from that period and in Year 5 pupils use books, artefacts and photographs in order to find out about Tudor characters and lifestyles. Teaching such as this motivates pupils who are interested and persevere with their learning.
136. The management of the subject is satisfactory. Teachers' planning is monitored regularly to check that the scheme of work is being implemented properly. Pupils' work is assessed each term but the information is not used to plan work. Work is regularly marked but pupils are rarely given advice about how to improve their work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

137. At the last inspection, the standards of attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) were above the standards expected nationally in both key stages. However, although word processing was a strength in the curriculum, standards in the aspect of control technology needed improvement. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are still above the standards expected for pupils of these ages. Pupils' achievement is good as teaching is good and pupils make good progress in their learning. However, control technology is still in need of improvement in Key Stage 2. Word processing is still a strength. The school has made a satisfactory improvement in using the improved facilities provided by the new ICT suite, and in widening the range and quality of pupils' learning. This is because teachers have used training

opportunities effectively to update and extend their skills and so take full advantage of the new software and hardware recently available to the school.

138. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have good skills in control technology as teachers help them to use a program to locate overlapping squares in particular sections of the screen grid, using commands in the Logo program. They create a simple database and show good skills in producing graphs to illustrate results. Good teaching has enabled pupils to have good skills in using the keyboard, opening and closing programs and operating icons and screen tools. Most interrogate a CD-Rom and search for information effectively. Teachers provide good opportunities for word processing and pupils' skills are good. They create documents with a variety of fonts and effects, importing pictures and effects from Clipart, for example to enhance visual effect.
139. The eleven-year-olds make good progress in their skills and knowledge as a result of the good teaching and the good management of the subject. They use 'Power Point' effectively to create and design stories about hidden jewels for younger pupils to enjoy. Pupils develop successfully control skills in operating icons to vary the story outcome. They import icons from Clipart to increase its appeal. Many format text to be pleasing and use Spellchecker with confidence. Teachers have set up mailboxes for pupils which they use for sending and receiving e-mail. Using an Internet site, which teachers have ensured is 'safe', most pupils understand the function of a search engine, for example in locating information about the Romans. They have good skills in using Excel to create and explore databases using formulae to generate and manipulate data. Pupils generate graphs such as that for a family transport survey showing mean values. The teaching is lively and very competent and this encourages the pupils to be inspired, creative and very confident. For instance, in a pupil's use of 'Paint' to design a chocolate bar wrapper for jelly centred chocolates called Jelly Bellies. Current work is centred on devising a multimedia presentation of their visit to Swattenden Centre using a template for text, importing video images, sound, and special effects using the computer.
140. The teaching seen was good overall in both key stages and was never less than satisfactory. Pupils learn well. In a good lesson in Year 2, pupils use the computer to explore a database and answer questions such as 'what are the main sections of an insect's body?'. The teacher skilfully guided them in understanding the index and the icons that operated it and how to use highlighted text to locate information. Teachers work hard to improve their technical knowledge and thus provide effective learning and challenging tasks, through good planning. This is why pupils show high levels of perseverance and concentration, and work together so well in making good progress in learning. In Year 6, teachers were able to promote good learning levels in using spreadsheets because of good planning and good knowledge and understanding of ICT. Pupils made good progress because teachers were able to get the attention of pupils quickly to review learning and assess the next steps needed. Not the easiest of tasks in the crowded suite during a heat wave! ICT is used well to support learning in other subjects, for example in science, history and geography.
141. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by both the teachers' planning and the good input and care of teaching assistants. This effective support enables them to make good progress. However, the use of specialist programs for literacy and numeracy are not well used in the class base or for additional learning. Parents support staff well and give valuable additional support to pupils at an individual level in lessons in the ICT suite. In discussion, pupils show that parents at

home use ICT facilities well to support the school in developing basic skills. The very able pupils take advantage of the ample scope for progress as the facilities allow for a good level of independent learning.

142. The ICT curriculum has recently been improved as the school has adopted the structure provided by national guidelines. This builds progressively on skills and knowledge from the simple to the more complex. Within it is an assessment element, not yet used by the school, which identifies pupil progress and their individual achievements. There is as yet no consistent assessment of pupils' achievements to guide curricular planning. The curriculum leader provides good leadership but has not yet had sufficient opportunity to monitor teaching and learning to identify areas for improvement to raise standards further. There is an effective policy in place that includes appropriate criteria to access the Internet. The management of the development of the new ICT suite has been good and the grants available to the school have been used effectively to maintain standards. Teachers have benefited from well-organised training opportunities. Overall resources are good but there is a lack of equipment to improve control technology, for example, heat sensors.

MUSIC

143. By the time that pupils leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2, the standards they attain are above those expected for pupils of this age. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were average. The achievement of the eleven-year-olds is good. This is because the teaching is good and many have instrumental tuition. The standards attained by the seven-year-olds are similar to those expected for pupils of this age. Their achievement is satisfactory, mainly as teachers have a limited amount of time to teach music. Pupils enjoy music and try very hard to do their best. More able pupils also sensitively help their classmates.
144. In class, pupils in both key stages sing in tune and rhythmically. They make their singing louder and softer and their articulation is very good. This skill, however, is not always used in school assemblies, where at times singing is quiet and unenthusiastic. The pupils in Key Stage 2 who sing in the school choir sing very well in two parts and the standard of their singing is so good that they have been selected to take part in the national final of 'Music for Youth' to be held in London. Their repertoire is varied and includes good expression and use of both the speaking and singing voice.
145. In both key stages, the pupils work well in groups to compose and perform music using unpitched percussion and voice. In Year 2, the pupils followed the conductors' directions and performed their own work to show how a storm developed. They are beginning to use notation as they follow the teachers' signs. Pupils use the correct vocabulary of 'tempo,' 'rhythm' and 'dynamics' as they are always encouraged by their teachers to use the correct terminology and they are keen to improve.
146. In Year 6, the pupils benefit from the teaching of the subject co-ordinator who is a music specialist. In these lessons the pupils interpret and perform a piece of music interpreting a score that is given to them. They work well together and count beats, know when sounds should be loud or quiet and whether notes should go up or down a scale. Most are confident in their performance. Other teachers also enable the pupils to appreciate the mood and purpose of music and help them create their own interpretation of the 'Journey into Space' and to appreciate and enjoy American work songs.
147. The quality of teaching seen was good in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory in Key Stage 1. The difficulty for teachers in Key Stage 1 is that lessons are too short to develop themes sufficiently. They are thirty minutes long. This includes getting to and from the music room. Generally the teachers have good subject knowledge and plan their lessons well. They have very good relationships with pupils, which enable them to take constructive criticism well. This helps the pupils to improve their performance. In the best lessons, the teachers share their enthusiasm and enjoyment of the subject and praise and encourage their pupils who respond well. Pupils with special educational needs have their talents in music recognised and are included in all activities and make good progress.
148. Many pupils in Key Stage 2 have instrumental tuition. This includes piano and guitar. Specialist teachers take these lessons and the pupils make good progress and enjoy playing in the school orchestra. This orchestra has a varied repertoire and often plays publicly. The orchestra consists of an almost equal number of boys and girls and unusually the choir has more boys than girls. Overall the pupils make good progress, which is accelerated in the upper part of the school where the specialist co-ordinator teaches Year 6 classes.

149. The curriculum is enriched for Key Stage 2 pupils in that they rehearse and perform musicals such as 'Pirates' this year. It is broad and balanced in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, however, the timetable for 'Kindermusik' is unsatisfactory. Not all pupils benefit from this extra music tuition as parents choose whether or not to take their children out of numeracy and literacy sessions. Added to this, the timetable is arranged so that 'Kindermusik' takes place on the same day as some class music lessons. Thus a few pupils receive only half an hour of music each week and enjoy the full literacy and mathematics sessions whilst the majority of pupils have one and a half hours of music in one day and miss some literacy or mathematics.
150. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory but the co-ordinator, who is based in Key Stage 2, has a limited understanding of the standards of the younger pupils and the difficulties encountered by teachers in Key Stage 1. Learning resources are satisfactory but the co-ordinator is aware of the need to have more resources and recorded music that is representative of different cultures.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

151. Pupils at the end of both key stages reach standards expected for pupils of these ages. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Very good standards were seen in a dance lesson in Key Stage 1. It was not possible to see any gymnastics lessons. There is adequate time on the timetable for physical education, and the good weather during the inspection allowed teachers to make good use of games lessons on the field and in the playground. Pupils enjoy physical education, work with enthusiasm and try hard to develop their skills. They make good progress in individual lessons, including those pupils with special educational needs, but pupils' progress over time is satisfactory. The scheme of work is out of date and whilst it provides satisfactory guidance for teachers on what is to be taught it is less helpful in enabling them to develop pupils' knowledge and skills. This partly explains why standards are average rather than above average as reported at the last inspection. The policy and scheme of work now need to be brought in line with the expectations of the revised National Curriculum.
152. Teachers help pupils in Year 1 to work hard at improving their skills in throwing and catching balls and beanbags. In Year 2, these skills are built on so that pupils are learning the basic skills of different ball games. They improve their skills well, developing their catching skills in passing the ball. Pupils try hard to hold the ball correctly to aim at a target, or score a basket. All pupils behave well and are very keen to improve and appreciate each other's efforts. In a dance lesson in Year 2, pupils moved gracefully and rhythmically to music in a way that reflected the sadness they had identified in the music. They moved in space and on the floor, stretching and curling and balancing, to put together a very good sequence of movements.
153. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have satisfactorily developed their skills in games. Teaching is often good and they enjoy their games lessons and try hard to improve their skills. Pupils know how to hold the bat correctly for cricket, and understand the need to 'follow through' when batting. They satisfactorily develop their skills in throwing, so that they field competently in games of cricket and rounders. Teachers provide useful opportunities for pupils to play variations of cricket and rounders and this helps them to understand the rules of the games. In a dance lesson in Year 4, pupils interpreted a story, working in groups to take different parts. As they lost their inhibitions, they began to move expressively and with feeling and performed well. By

the time they leave school the majority of pupils can swim beyond the required 25 metres.

154. Teaching is good in both key stages, with just under half the teaching being very good and pupils make good progress in learning skills. Teachers make good use of time and organise the lessons so that pupils are active throughout. A number of teachers have qualifications to teach sports. Pupils with physical difficulties are supported well by the teaching assistants, so that they can join in with their peers. They achieve as well as they are able to. Warm-up sessions are a good element to the lessons. These are well planned, with teachers taking pupils through a range of good stretching and kinetic exercises; in one case based on a lively version of the US Marines style call and response related to why a warm-up is needed. There is good attention to coaching and teaching skills and teachers' expectations of their pupils are high. The use of pupils to demonstrate skills and to encourage pupils to reflect on their performance so as to improve is not always a strong element of lessons.
155. Two co-ordinators share responsibility for the subject; one for indoor physical education, the other for outdoor games, and another teacher has newly been given responsibility for dance. Overall, the management of the subject is satisfactory. With this new appointment in place, there is now the need to review the subject so that pupils achieve the good standards seen previously. There are satisfactory procedures to assess the standards that pupils achieve, but the information is not used effectively to plan work. The resources are satisfactory, although the lack of storage space for the hall equipment reduces the teaching space. The outdoor areas are good and are being developed to provide for orienteering, and cross-country. In Year 6, pupils receive additional sporting opportunities, such as adventure sports and orienteering during their residential visit to the Swattenden Adventure Centre, and in Year 5 pupils now have the same chances with a weekend visit to The Bowles Outdoor Centre. There is a good range of sports clubs and out of school activities, with additional opportunities for pupils to have football coaching. These clubs enhance learning but are limited to pupils in Key Stage 2. Pupils participate in competitive sports and team games.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

156. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' achievement is good and they attain standards that are above those expected by the Kent Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with those expected and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. These standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection. Pupils' knowledge about the distinctive features of religions is strong, especially in Year 6, which accounts for the high standards. Across the school, pupils' ability to express views on religious ideas is not well developed. This is particularly true for the very able pupils. Teaching is satisfactory and the subject is well managed.
157. By the end of Key Stage 1, teachers' planning has enabled pupils to understand how Christians and Jews celebrate their holy days. They have compared successfully what Christians do on Sundays with the ways Jews celebrate Shabbat. Pupils have a sound understanding of the ways Christians use a church to worship, as well as what they would find in a synagogue. Teachers share the stories Jesus Christ told and this enables pupils to begin to understand some of his teachings, such as the story of the Good Samaritan. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a good knowledge about religions. They understand some of the significant events in the life of Jesus Christ. Pupils understand the importance of communion to Christians and the Pesach to

Jews. Pupils write explaining clearly the differences between Kosher and non-Kosher food. In addition, teachers have provided useful opportunities for them to gain insights into Sikhism and a start has been made to help them know more about Islam. The eleven-year-olds are not as confident about expressing their opinions about religious issues as this aspect of religious education is underplayed in lessons in Key Stage 2.

158. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with no unsatisfactory teaching. Overall, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. On occasion, teaching is good when the teacher has a good knowledge of the subject. For example, in a lesson in Year 4 about the Jewish festival of Pesach, good use was made of religious artefacts and confident questioning by the teacher drew out the important religious ideas. This enabled pupils to ask pertinent questions and to strengthen their understanding and make good progress.
159. Good use is made of visiting speakers, including a local vicar and a specialist lecturer from a nearby college of higher education to augment the teachers' knowledge and understanding. For example, in a lesson in Year 6, the visitor very effectively introduced pupils to the life of Muhammad. Very good use was made of pupils' knowledge of the Bible to consolidate their learning. The use of religious artefacts was skilfully linked to important events in the life of the Prophet which enabled pupils to make good gains in their learning. The strength in lessons such as these is that pupils are encouraged to express their own ideas about religious issues, a feature which is not emphasised enough in the teaching generally. For example, in a lesson about Sikhism, mention was made of heaven but there was no discussion about what heaven might be like or what pupils thought it was.
160. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator. Teachers' planning is carefully monitored to ensure that the scheme of work is being used properly and that the Kent Agreed Syllabus is being fully implemented. Pupils' work is scrutinised effectively to check the standards but teaching is not observed. Although pupils are assessed each term, the information is not used effectively to plan work. Resources are adequate and satisfactorily support the curriculum.