

INSPECTION REPORT

MIERS COURT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Rainham, Kent

LEA area: Medway

Unique reference number: 118545

Headteacher: Mrs S Patterson

Reporting inspector: S Tweddell
1709

Dates of inspection: 10 – 13 September 2001

Inspection number: 192789

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Silverspot Close Rainham Gillingham Kent
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	W Phillips
Date of previous inspection:	17 March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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1709	Sandra Tweddell	Registered inspector	History English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils or students taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9472	John Edmonds	Lay inspector		How high are standards? 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?
3961	Michael Raven	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Physical education Religious education Special educational needs	
27249	William Hooper	Team inspector	Design and technology Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?
30669	Margaret Sandercock	Team inspector	English Foundation stage	
18638	Christopher Shaw	Team inspector	Science Art Information and communication technology	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Miers Court Primary school is situated in a relatively new private housing area to the east of the Medway Towns. There are 410 pupils on roll, mostly coming from the immediate area, although a few come from further afield. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average, but this figure is misleading as only about ten per cent of pupils stay for school lunches. Children enter school in September and January. Currently, 57 children are in the reception class, all attend school full-time. The majority of pupils come from white European homes and a small number from homes in which English is an additional language, mainly Indian and Chinese. None of these pupils are at an early stage in learning English. Attainment on entry is broadly average but the school has an uneven distribution of attainment on entry. Some year groups have a significant number of pupils of above average attainment and a large number with below average attainment. There is a higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs, a third of the school, but the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is below average. The special educational needs includes specific learning and moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties, as well as children on the autistic spectrum.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Miers Court Primary School provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Strong leadership by the headteacher, who has set a clear direction for the school, has led to a rise in standards over the past three years, particularly of the higher attaining pupils. Attainment in English, mathematics and science is above average when pupils leave the school, although it is below average in information and communication technology and in design and technology. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their work and their behaviour is very good. Governors are very effective and support the school very well. Teaching is good overall across the school. A strong feature is the very good management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs, who make up a third of the school population. The value for money is good overall.

What the school does well

- Leadership is very strong and methods have been established which have improved attainment.
- Pupils achieve well by the time they are 11 and attainment is above average.
- Teaching is good overall.
- Relationships are very good and contribute to the good learning ethos throughout the school
- Teachers have high expectations of how children should behave and as a result, behaviour in the school is very good.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their work which contribute to the high attainment at the end of Year 6.
- There are good methods for reviewing the work of the school which are helping the consistency of provision and are raising attainment.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and so they achieve well.
- Children in the foundation stage are prepared well for entry into the main school.

What could be improved

The school is working on these areas.

- Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) and design and technology.
- The use of assessment in Years 1 and 2 and in subjects apart from English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6.
- The preparation of pupils to live in a multicultural society.

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 March 1997 and has made good progress on the areas that were identified for development. The senior management team is clear about its role and fulfils it effectively. Subject guidance has been developed for all subjects and is generally used well. Curriculum co-ordinators play a key role in managing their subjects through regular reviews of the work of their colleagues. Assessment has developed extremely well and continues to evolve successfully. National Curriculum requirements have been implemented in science, music and design and technology and there have been improvements in the provision of ICT, although it still does not meet National Curriculum requirements. Higher attaining pupils are challenged successfully

and pupils for whom English is an additional language are supported satisfactorily. The quality of teaching has improved significantly.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	B	B	D
Mathematics	A	C	B	C
Science	B	D	D	E

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The table shows that in 2000, performance in English and mathematics was above average and below average in science. In comparison with schools that take in similar pupils, attainment in English was below average, in mathematics was average and in science was well below average. In 2000, the attainment of Year 2 pupils was average in writing, below average in reading and well below average in mathematics. Attainment was well below that of similar schools. This can be explained by the larger number than usual of pupils with special educational needs in Year 2, 50 per cent. Attainment in science has been generally weaker than that of other subjects. However, attainment in 2001 improved, especially in science but national data are not yet available to make comparisons. The school reached its targets of 85 per cent level 4 and above in both English and mathematics.

The inspection found that attainment of seven and 11 year olds continues to improve because of effective monitoring of the school's work, consistently good teaching and the better use of assessment. Attainment in English, mathematics and science is average in Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. Achievement is good in these subjects for seven to 11 year olds, and there is no difference between boys and girls. In most subjects, attainment is average throughout the school and pupils achieve appropriately, except for ICT and design and technology in Years 3 to 6 where attainment is below average. Attainment in religious education is above average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve highly because the provision is very well managed. Pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve satisfactorily.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Most pupils are eager to come to school and to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good both in classrooms and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are courteous and usually respect one another
Attendance	Very good and pupils arrive punctually

The very good relationships throughout the school secure highly positive attitudes from pupils towards their work which helps them to achieve appropriately.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	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 overall, especially in English, mathematics and science. Literacy and numeracy are taught well so pupils use these skills proficiently in most subjects. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school and work is highly appropriate for them. In most lessons, the higher attaining pupils are challenged appropriately by their work although, on the odd occasion, they are not. Staff are aware of the different learning needs of boys and girls, so little difference was found in the attainment of girls and boys. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are taught successfully so they attain appropriately. Strengths in teaching include very good management of behaviour and good planning. Pupils acquire good knowledge, skills and understanding and they put much effort into their work. They generally sustain concentration because they are motivated by the teaching. The use of assessment to plan for the individual needs of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory but is not as well developed as in Years 3 to 6.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad and reasonably balanced.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision is good and the management of it is very good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory, good use is made of external support and pupils who are at early stages of learning English are usually supported well in class, although there are occasions when they struggle if there is no support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. The provision for social and moral development is very good, for spiritual is satisfactory and for cultural is unsatisfactory as there are not enough opportunities to help pupils understand the multicultural society in which they live.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. Pupils are safe in a secure environment.

The partnership with parents is good and has many strengths, such as the information they receive about their children. The curriculum is well planned to ensure that pupils of different attainment achieve appropriately and it is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular provision. Information and communication technology does not meet statutory requirements as parts are not taught fully to 10 and 11 year olds. The way in which the school promotes and monitors both attendance and good behaviour are very good and the use of assessment to track the progress of pupils and to set targets for them to improve their work is developing well although is inconsistent in Years 1 and 2.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall and the leadership of the headteacher is very good. The senior management team support effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Governors know the school well through the good systems they have established.

The school's evaluation of its performance	Good overall and very good use is made of examination data by the senior management team to improve teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Good, money is spent wisely.

The headteacher has set a clear direction for the school to improve, which is firmly fixed on raising attainment. The management of the school is very good. Governors are highly effective in their role and are very supportive of the school. Co-ordinators are clear about their roles, all work hard to support colleagues and are involved appropriately in reviewing their subjects. The budget is planned well and money is used wisely with the aim of raising attainment. Teaching is regularly reviewed as are the systems and practices of the school. Staff and support staff have a good range of experience and qualifications to teach the National Curriculum. The accommodation is satisfactory. There are extensive grounds but many classrooms are small. Resources are satisfactory overall and are used well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most children like school. • The school expects children to work hard, the teaching is good and children make good progress. • Behaviour is good and children are helped to become mature and responsible. • Most feel that staff in the school are approachable • The school is well led. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents feel there is either too much or too little homework. • A small number would like more information about how well their child is doing. • A significant number would like to see a wider range of activities outside lessons. • A few would like the school to work more closely with them.

The inspection found that parents are justified in what pleases them about the school. Homework is set regularly, although sometimes, the same work is set for all pupils so sometimes higher attainers do it quickly and lower attainers struggle. Parents are not justified in their view about receiving more information, as reports are detailed and parents have opportunities to discuss their children's progress with staff. The school does all it can to involve parents in its work. The range of activities outside lessons is good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Attainment throughout the school has improved steadily since the last inspection, particularly that of higher attaining pupils. The reason for this is principally the rigour with which the senior management of the school has reviewed all aspects of the work of the school and put very good systems into place with the aim of raising standards. The actions of senior management are clearly focused upon raising attainment. One of these methods is the monitoring of teaching, which sensitively recognises strengths in teaching across the school, but does not shirk from pointing out where teaching can improve. Information from assessment is thoroughly analysed by senior management and the information is used to review how subjects are taught.
2. In 2001, the performance of pupils in Years 2 and 6 improved, particularly in Year 6 in science. The performance of higher attaining pupils also improved significantly in Year 6. There is no data available yet to compare with performance nationally.
3. The school rigorously analysed its results, which led to improvements in performance in 2001. The inspection found that attainment is continuing to rise, particularly in Years 3 to 6 where assessment is beginning to be used well to pick up where pupils need to improve and to set targets for them. This also happens in Years 1 and 2 but there is some inconsistency in using information from assessment to plan for teaching. The school is aware of this and it is part of a rolling programme of development.
4. Children in the foundation stage achieve well and attain the early learning goals by the time they are 6. Staff who teach these children have a good understanding of how young children learn, so teaching is good and much is very good which enables the children to make good progress.
5. In the main school, attainment in English, mathematics and science is average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. There is inconsistency in achievement in Year 2. Many achieve highly but others achieve appropriately as there is inconsistency in using the information from assessment to plan for teaching. In Year 6, pupils achieve highly. Higher attaining pupils achieve well because the work is carefully chosen to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding and to challenge them to think. The progress of pupils for whom English is an additional language is good when they have become competent in the language. For those who are new to English, progress is satisfactory as although the school uses external support well, there are times when pupils struggle to understand ideas when specialist support is not available. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs achieve well because the provision for them is good, and they are supported most effectively by skilled learning support assistants who have all been trained for their role and who use their training well. The literacy hour has had a positive impact on attainment. Strengths in English are in speaking and listening and in the quality of writing, where pupils use a range of vocabulary well and structure language skilfully. In mathematics, a strength is in understanding and use of number. The numeracy hour has helped to develop these skills successfully. In science, pupils in Year 6 have a good depth of knowledge and understanding, due to the careful coverage of the curriculum. Pupils in Year 2 are good at observing what happens when they are experimenting and recording their observations.
6. In history, attainment in Years 2 and 6 is average but is improving as emphasis is given to teaching historical skills of enquiry and to helping pupils understand the idea of time. Pupils achieve appropriately, but where assessment is used to match work to the attainment of pupils, achievement is good. In geography, pupils' attainment in Year 2 and Year 6 is average and they achieve appropriately although attainment is improving as teachers cover a range of material in depth and they have a good understanding of the subject, supported well by the subject guidance. In religious education pupils in both Years 2 and 6 attain above average standards and achieve highly because the subject is covered in depth and monitoring by the co-ordinator is effective.
7. Attainment in physical education and music is average and all pupils achieve appropriately. In music, pupils' skills in composition are weak as this area is not taught as well as other areas.

Pupils in Year 2 achieve well in art and their attainment is above average because of the teachers' high expectations and good understanding of the subject. In Year 6, attainment is average and pupils achieve appropriately.

8. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve appropriately in ICT and design and technology and attain average standards but in Years 3 to 6 they do not make the progress they should and attainment is below average. The school experienced technical problems in setting up the computer suite, despite appointing a technician to support their use, so teachers have not become used to using it. Pupils therefore have not had the opportunity to develop their skills. In design and technology. Staff have not developed confidence in using assessment to gauge where the pupils are at and how to develop their skills.
9. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in attainment. Higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs now achieve well in many subjects, and the variation in attainment between classes has improved. Attainment in science is improving significantly.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The last inspection report noted that behaviour throughout the school was very good, with no recent exclusions. Relationships at every level were warm and harmonious with the overall majority of pupils having a positive attitude to learning and often showing real enthusiasm for their work. They were encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility and took pride in carrying out their duties efficiently.
11. Parents consider that behaviour continues to be good and that staff successfully maintain high standards through their very high expectations of the behaviour of their classes. The evidence of the inspection strongly supports this view. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Unsatisfactory behaviour was not seen in any lesson. Pupils greatly enjoy coming to school. Their attitudes to learning are usually highly positive, particularly when the teaching is energetic and engaging. High levels of interest are apparent in many lessons, as in a Key Stage 2 literacy lesson, where the teacher encouraged pupils to use their imagination, and in a Year 6 history lesson, where a visiting speaker gripped pupils' attention with an horrific description of life as a child in a Victorian tile factory. The most frequent reason for behaviour being satisfactory rather than good is the inability of one or two teachers to maintain pupils' interest towards the end of an hour long lesson. This occasionally leads to slight restiveness. Marked enthusiasm for work was noted in many lessons, where the pace of working was brisk and the work well matched to pupils' individual attainment, notably in a literacy lesson with work on synonyms using a thesaurus, and in a numeracy lesson, where the use of dice to help with calculations made the lesson fun. Most pupils concentrate and work very well on their own or in pairs. Their capacity to work independently and to persevere is good and even the youngest pupils work responsibly on their own. Pupils have a strong desire to improve their work and take pride in the finished product, as is obvious from some of the art displays around the school, particularly those relating to pupils' holidays. High standards of behaviour in lessons make a major contribution to the learning of pupils.
12. Behaviour round the school is very good, with pupils behaving sensibly when arriving at and leaving school. They walk quietly between lessons and to assembly and behave very well in the dining hall. In the playground, pupils play constructively at break time and line up in an orderly manner for lessons. No incidents of untoward behaviour were seen; bullying is rare and very quickly dealt with when reported. Respect for property is high and there was no graffiti and minimal litter.
13. The school lays great emphasis on good relationships between staff and pupils throughout the school. It has been very successful in this objective, which ensures that pupils learn well and play constructively in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Pupils are courteous to each other and friendly to staff, holding doors open as a matter of course. They relate positively to each other and react politely when addressed. They are friendly and helpful to visitors. There have been no exclusions for many years.
14. The school impresses on new pupils and their parents the need to consider others, and pupils respond positively. Respect for others' feelings, values and beliefs is good, and pupils with special educational needs are very well integrated into the school's social fabric. They show very positive attitudes to their lessons and take a full part in all activities, behave well and work well in co-operation with others.

15. Pupils take an active part in school life. They carry out their many responsibilities very willingly and effectively and participate enthusiastically in the school's programme of extra-curricular activities, for which levels of take-up are good.
16. At the last inspection, the level of attendance was reported to be good, with minimal unauthorised absence and insignificant levels of lateness. Pupils' attendance has been consistently above 96 per cent in the last four years, which is well above the national average. There is no unauthorised absence. Teachers are in their classrooms in very good time. Lessons start punctually in the morning and after breaks. Pupils are on time at the start of the day and have responsible attitudes to punctuality. High levels of attendance and punctuality have a very positive effect on the attainment and progress of pupils.
17. Pupils' behaviour and attendance are strengths of the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. Teaching is good overall and a third of lessons observed were very good or excellent. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. There is little difference in the quality of teaching across the school, mainly due to the effective monitoring of teaching that takes place and the hard work of the staff.
19. Evidence for judging the quality of teaching in the foundation stage comes from planning and other documentation, discussions with staff, and observation of pupils in Year 1 who have just left the foundation stage. This is because children did not enter school until half way through the week of the inspection and were in for two half days as part of their induction. In the reception classes, which are now part of the Foundation Stage, teaching is good, with very good teaching in basic skills. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when teaching for children under-five was sound, and where in some areas of learning, there was insufficient challenge. Teachers now have a very clear understanding of the needs of these young children, backed by a high level of expertise in providing for those needs. Planning covers the six areas of learning well and teachers provide a good range of interesting activities. High expectations ensure that children are well challenged and remain involved in their tasks. Support staff are very effective and help to ensure high achievement. Children benefit from their pleasant and active input, which mirrors the teachers' very caring approach. A wide range of resources is available and children quickly begin to develop independence in finding what they need. Teachers and support staff regularly assess what children can do in all areas of learning, noting progress towards the early learning goals. This ensures that all children move forward in their learning as quickly as they can. Children with special educational needs are fully included in all activities and staff support them well, so that their learning keeps pace well with that of others. Very good relationships between adults and children ensure a high level of confidence when children ask questions and seek advice, and this makes a very positive contribution to the good learning ethos.
20. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school as the provision for these pupils is good. Learning support assistants are well trained and they use their expertise most effectively to enable pupils to take part in lessons and therefore to learn successfully. In many lessons, their quiet, unobtrusive and sensitive support gave pupils the confidence to answer in front of the whole class which raised their self esteem, thereby contributing to good learning. Their effective support is particularly noticeable in classes in which there is a high number of pupils who have difficulty in behaving well. In a Year 5 physical education lesson, the teacher was able to ensure that most pupils developed their skills in games because the learning support assistant used her skills well to focus the attention of pupils who have difficulties with their behaviour. These pupils also increased their skills.
21. The school has a high proportion of pupils who come from homes in which English is an additional language. Most of these are proficient in English and they achieve appropriately because the overall quality of teaching is good and support from outside is used well. The pupils who are at early stages of learning English receive support, both from within the school and externally. They achieve appropriately because the provision is well planned, although the few pupils who are at early stages of learning English sometimes struggle when specialist support is not available.

22. In English, mathematics and science, higher attaining pupils achieve well because the work is carefully planned to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers use the subject guidance well which ensures that their understanding of the subjects they teach is good. In other subjects, although most teachers plan to meet the learning needs of most pupils, there is inconsistency and sometimes less rigour, so the work is not as carefully matched so pupils do not achieve as well.
23. As the inspection was early in the new academic year, teachers were rightly ensuring that pupils knew how to behave in their new classes. All teachers have very high expectations of the behaviour of pupils and they set a clear code of conduct for pupils in their classes. As a result, behaviour is very good and pupils are able to listen and to learn successfully. This extends to their behaviour with visiting speakers, such as when Years 3 and 6 were treated to a visit by an art historian who took on the role of a Roman and a Victorian. The behaviour was impeccable and pupils thoroughly enjoyed the lessons, thrilled by stories from the past, which increased their understanding of history.
24. A key strength in the teaching is the very good relationships in the school, so that pupils feel confident to contribute. Part of this is the way in which many teachers value the responses of pupils, and, if not correct, make a positive comment before asking another pupil. In a Year 1 literacy lesson, the teacher enabled pupils to gain an understanding of rhyming words by using this approach. Although many found the ideas difficult, none gave up because of the sensitive way in which the teacher handled their mistakes.
25. Assessment is being used well in English, mathematics and science to ensure that pupils make the progress they should. The school is aware that this is better developed in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2 which is the next stage of development. Assessment in other subjects is less strong as the school has appropriately followed national guidance to focus on English, mathematics and science. In some subjects such as history and design and technology, the co-ordinators are appropriately working with staff so that they have a secure understanding of how to assess a pupil's progress. Work is regularly marked, the best marking gives pupils guidance as to how they might improve the work. In most cases, however, work is ticked and a supportive comment given, which helps pupils' self esteem but does not help them to improve the work.
26. Teachers have high expectations of the work of their pupils which is seen in their use of questions which thoughtfully probe pupils' understanding and extend learning. In a Year 2 literacy lesson, pupils read *Six Dinner Sid*, the aim of the lesson being to develop their knowledge of how two vowels make one sound. The teacher thoughtfully questioned pupils, engaging particularly with the quieter ones to make sure all understood the idea. Her excellent rapport, coupled with careful questions, encouraged all pupils to think and they consolidated their learning about sounds exceptionally well.
27. Homework is set regularly to a set timetable and is usually effective. Sometimes, the work set is the same for the whole class so that lower attainers may struggle and higher attainers get through the work quickly. Resources are used well, particularly individual white boards which pupils use to try out ideas. These enable the teachers to quickly see how well pupils have done, which helps to maintain their interest and uses time well.
28. ICT is not yet used consistently across the school because of the difficulties there have been in establishing the computer suite. Teachers encourage pupils to use it at home, for example in history for research.
29. There has been good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection when there were weaknesses in planning, challenge for higher attainers, assessment and support for pupils with special educational needs. Teaching is a strength of the school which is enabling pupils to achieve well by the time they leave at 11.

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

30. A broad and balanced curriculum is provided throughout Years 1 to 6 and the subjects meet the requirements of the National Curriculum with the exception of ICT. Religious education is successfully taught according to the locally agreed syllabus. The school endeavours to offer a good range of worthwhile opportunities for pupils that interest and motivate them and gives

priority to this. The provision for teaching ICT has been unsatisfactory for reasons sometimes out of the school's control, so attainment is below average, but skills in information technology are beginning to be consistently taught in specific lessons held in the ICT suite. Resources are clearly set out and accessible and there is a good range of materials and equipment.

31. Provision for the young children in the foundation stage is good. The curriculum takes account of new requirements and ensures that children learn well in a bright, exciting and caring environment. At the time of the inspection, children were being introduced to school and this was being done very sensitively giving children the very best of opportunities to settle into school confidently. Good provision ensured that a wide range of challenging tasks was available for all children including those who are as yet less skilful or knowledgeable. High quality support during this induction time ensured that all children had good opportunities to speak and listen, to begin to write, to enjoy books, to count, to use the computer keyboard and mouse in simple games and to develop personal and social skills. In other areas of learning, provision is usually good and ensures children benefit from the variety of experiences that they should ideally enjoy.
32. Pupils with special educational needs are given good access to the curriculum, through carefully planned tasks which successfully modify the curriculum to meet their particular needs. They take a full part in extra-curricular activities.
33. All subjects have subject guidance with which all members of staff are familiar. These are used well by all teachers when planning lessons. Some of the weaknesses in design and technology, art, music and information technology mentioned in the last report have been tackled and the provision in these subjects is better. All subjects are planned to ensure that pupils make progress as they move through the school and teachers work in close collaboration with each other and the co-ordinators to ensure that this is maintained.
34. The pupils' personal social and health education mainly takes place within the science and religious education lessons. Separate personal, social and health education lessons are not part of the school timetable. Pupils receive education about alcohol and tobacco in science, as well as issues related to sex and drugs. Visiting speakers also contribute to this area. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to include citizenship as part of the personal social and health education programme and plans are in place that will enable this element to be covered. This will also be taught using links with other subjects, for example democracy will be taught as part of the history topic on the Ancient Greeks. Circle time, in which pupils discuss matters to do with their personal development, is mainly used with younger pupils and there are 'think books' and 'think boxes' that enable older pupils to communicate confidentially with their teachers.
35. There is a broad range of extra-curricular activities, clubs and visits out of school, which enrich the pupils' experiences and support their learning. Good opportunities exist for pupils to participate in clubs and activities such as choir, recorders, chess, ski training, art, trampolining, computing and drama. There is a good take-up for these. Several activities take place at lunchtimes and the teachers are generous with the time that they spend on them. The school also organises sports' coaching using the expertise of outside coaches.
36. The school has a strong commitment to equality in education and this is clearly laid out in a good policy document. Pupils who are on the special educational needs register have their needs met through their individual education plans which focus on aspects of literacy, numeracy and personal and social development. There is also satisfactory support for pupils for whom English is an additional language. The individual education plans are well supported by outside agencies and all who are involved with the pupil's continuing education. All pupils with special educational needs receive the full National Curriculum offered by the school with some areas of work modified for their specific needs. They are fully included in all the activities organised by the school, which supports their social and moral development well. Although there is a slight difference in the performance of boys and girls in tests for seven year olds and in English tests for 11 year olds, inspection evidence reveals that every pupil is treated equally and has their personal needs met. No differences are evident in either the challenges set, or the enthusiasm shown or the achievement of boys and girls of similar attainment. The school is well run and provides many opportunities for pupils to work together in groups. Pupils value these opportunities and work well. There is a clear policy to promote equal opportunities for all and in following it, the school creates a harmonious, warm and friendly ethos.

37. The school has satisfactory links with local secondary schools that take pupils from Miers Court. As there is such a wide range of these, there are no schools that have a particularly close link, but all the secondary schools have staff who liaise well with the relevant staff at the school. Year 7 teachers from these secondary schools visit to speak to pupils that are going on to their schools, and some of them also organise 'taster days' for Miers Court pupils at their new schools.
38. The last inspection report indicated that the school had a positive ethos for learning and met its aim of creating a family ethos very well. It tackled the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness satisfactorily, particularly through the curriculum, which included an effective health programme and sex education. The current provision for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development remains satisfactory overall, though there are variations in its quality.
39. The school's schedule of assemblies is planned in detail at least a term in advance, but it has no policy on collective worship or on developing spiritual awareness. Acts of worship are mainly Christian, offering opportunities for prayer, meditation and singing, and they usually comply with statutory requirements. A prayer is offered in many classes just before lunch. The school is developing the idea of using music to enhance pupils' spiritual experiences during assemblies.
40. The promotion of spiritual awareness is satisfactory, but would be more effective if teachers promoted it more consciously. Nevertheless, there were some instances of spirituality, for example the rapt attention shown by pupils when certain historical artefacts were drawn out of a bag in a Year 5 lesson and when the terrorist attacks in America were discussed in a Year 1 lesson. In particular there was an intensely spiritual moment in assembly when the whole school reflected with its eyes shut for three minutes in memory of those killed in America, while listening to Saint Saens' sombre 'The Swan'. Religious education makes a good contribution to the spiritual provision of the school.
41. The provision for social and moral development is very good, with pupils accepting and helping to develop codes of expected behaviour and normally living up to those expectations. Assemblies usually have a significant moral content, where pupils are taught to distinguish right from wrong and to consider the effect of their actions on others. Staff use reasoned discussion to resolve problems that arise in lessons or on the playground. The success of the school policy and practice is reflected in the high standards of behaviour and the happy atmosphere.
42. The school is very successful in developing pupils' social skills. Their generally considerate behaviour reflects very well on their teaching. There are circle times in some classes to discuss issues that arise in and out of school, but they are not yet consistently implemented in every year group. Pupils engage in fund-raising, thus helping to increase their awareness of those less fortunate than themselves. The head teacher and staff are very good role models, with one of the highlights being the very good co-operation between classroom teachers and their learning support assistants.
43. School trips are used well to teach pupils about their own cultural traditions and heritage. In other respects, cultural development is promoted in a rather low-key fashion, with not enough emphasis in lessons or in other aspects of school life. For example there were displays of pupils' own artistic efforts, but no prints of the works of great artists or literary, musical or artistic posters to whet pupils' appetites. However, there is always music at assembly, and during the inspection pupils experienced a fascinating visit combining history and art to make tiles and mosaics.
44. Generally the opportunities for learning about other cultures are unsatisfactory. The school has not developed a policy to promote pupils' knowledge of life beyond their own immediate environment, though the programme for assemblies covers the feast days of several major religions. Individual subjects such as geography and religious education cover the study of life in other countries and different faiths. Promotion of an awareness of other cultures depends on the emphasis placed on it by individual teachers and on what artefacts pupils may bring into school. There was some evidence during the inspection of teachers raising pupils' awareness of other cultures; for example, a lesson on a French christening and a reference in history to a the skin colour of ancient Romans. African music was used in a music lesson and an African dance group visited recently. Apart from a rainbow saying 'welcome' in several languages in a reception classroom, there were virtually no examples of the languages, art works or culture of

Europe or other continents in the walls; however, pupils do like the photographs of native Americans in the headteacher's office.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. Arrangements for child protection are very good. The school complies fully with child protection guidelines and staff are well trained in identifying potential neglect or abuse. Liaison arrangements with external agencies are very good.
46. The school complies with legal requirements for health and safety and for risk assessment, with appropriate involvement by governors. It has a very good health and safety policy, and backs this up with practical and frequent inspections, which include systems for staff to take action on any matters needing immediate attention. Provision for medical care and first-aid are good as are the medical facilities for sick pupils. Regular tests are carried out on all types of equipment.
47. Systems for the support and guidance of pupils and for the provision for their welfare and personal development work well and make a positive contribution to educational standards and to helping pupils feel happy and secure. The school's very positive ethos, backed up by assemblies and a satisfactory personal, health and social education programme, helps pupils to develop a strong moral and social sense and to act responsibly. The school still maintains a cheerful and supportive ethos. Class teachers look after their pupils very well and are familiar with their strengths and weaknesses. They keep a close eye on personal progress and generally pupils know that they can turn to them or other staff for help. However one or two pupils interviewed were not wholly confident that staff would take action when bullying was reported. The school offers all pupils the chance of carrying out at least minor classroom duties. Older pupils, particularly those in Years 5 and 6, have the opportunity to take on greater responsibilities, such as answering the telephone at lunch time, acting as playground and table monitors and supporting teachers in Years 1 and 2. There is also a 'buddy' system for older pupils to help younger one with reading. Parents greatly appreciate the school's highly effective procedures for helping new pupils to look forward with enthusiasm to joining the school.
48. Measures to promote good attendance are very effective. This is witnessed by the school's very high attendance rates. The school works closely with the local education welfare service on the rare occasions that this is necessary.
49. Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are extensive and are very effective. Staff have high expectations of good behaviour and promote an orderly and cheerful atmosphere throughout the school. These expectations are realised by the standards of behaviour observed around the school. Pupils negotiate their own class rules and know that the school expects them to behave sensibly. The use of exclusion is not part of the school culture for maintaining good behaviour. Bullying does occasionally occur, but the school has an effective system for dealing with inappropriate behaviour, when observed or reported, and for involving parents rapidly, as required. Time spent by the headteacher with any pupil who may have difficulty in behaving sensibly and the reporting of bad behaviour to parents act as effective deterrents. The school continues to deal with bullying incidents effectively with proper records of incidents being kept.
50. The development of assessment has a high priority in the school and very good systems have been developed at a whole school level and are still developing for use in individual classes. Assessment is also used as a tool to ensure that resources are placed where they will have the greatest effect on the achievement of the pupils. There are some good individual examples of assessment being used to help teachers to decide what to teach next and the best examples of these are very good. The use of assessment is however inconsistent across the school.
51. In the foundation stage, there is effective monitoring and recording of academic progress. There is very good provision for the assessment and tracking of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are also assessed by external agencies. In English, mathematics and science the information that is collected about pupils' attainment and progress has been successfully used to plan lessons. It is also used as a way of celebrating pupils' progress and helping them to focus on the areas that need improvement. The co-ordinator plans to extend this to the other subjects, where teachers are not always confident about judging the National

Curriculum levels. Without this, there can be no informed consensus about the attainment of pupils and what needs to be done to remedy shortcomings in the planning of lessons and homework. Marking is generally positive in tone but it does not always comment on pupils' work in ways that lead to improved performance and progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. Generally parents have a positive view of the school. They confirm that their children enjoy coming to school and consider that they make good progress. Those who attended the parents' meeting expressed their satisfaction at the high standards achieved. Respondents to the questionnaire feel that behaviour in the school is good, and those at the meeting commented that overall standards of behaviour are very high, with the school dealing quickly and fairly with the few instances of bullying. Parents see the teaching as good, with individual attention being given to each child. They consider that the school is well led, with those at the meeting commending the headteacher's decisive leadership. They feel comfortable about approaching the school, and those at the meeting commented that the head teacher provides an early and helpful response to representations. Parents recognise that the school both expects their children to achieve their best and effectively helps them to mature.
53. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are informed when concerns arise and pupils are placed on the special needs register. They are kept well-informed about pupils' progress when individual learning targets are reviewed.
54. While respondents to the questionnaire generally gave positive answers to all questions, a small minority expressed more negative views of the school's performance in three areas. They felt that pupils either had too much or too little homework, though the consensus at the parents' meeting was that the right amount of homework is now set at appropriate levels, having regard to age and attainment of their children. Those at the meeting praised the quality of the homework diary system and the way teachers follow up parental queries. Some parents felt they were not kept sufficiently informed of how their child is getting on and that the school did not work closely enough with parents. Nearly one third of respondents, a significant minority, considered that the school did not provide an interesting range of extra-curricular activities. However, the parents of pupils in Years 3 to 6 who attended the meeting were very pleased with the wide range offered.
55. The inspection results supported parents' positive comments about the school but concluded that the minority concerns were not justified. Homework is set regularly, although sometimes the same work is set for all pupils, so there is the risk that high attainers do it quickly, while low attainers struggle. Reports are detailed and parents have the opportunity to discuss their children's progress with staff at any time. The range of activities outside lessons is good.
56. The school's links with parents are effective. Parents want their children to do well and most see that homework is done. Every three years the governors consult parents on the performance of the school and take their views into account in moving the school forward. When appropriate, the school provides them with information evenings on school and curriculum matters, such as the national numeracy strategy and support for these events is satisfactory. The school is intending in due course to open up its new computer suite for community use. The school holds regular, very well supported parents' consultation meetings, and actively encourages informal contact by parents. Parents are invited to a range of musical and dramatic productions, sporting events and other activities.
57. The quality of information provided for parents is generally good. The tone of the school's documentation is efficient and the contents are informative, covering all the key school policies, such as those relating to homework, behaviour and uniform. Some parents however, find them rather curt. The prospectus and governors' report to parents are very comprehensive, but the latter does not meet statutory requirements. The induction information for new parents and the preparation for new pupils to join the school are of very high quality. There are half-termly newsletters to keep parents informed on specific school events and requirements. The information is not translated into community languages.
58. The quality of the annual written reports is generally very good and they meet statutory requirements. They include provision for setting individual targets for pupils and recording parents' views, and pupils in Years 3 to 6 are invited to comment on their work. The layout does not allow much room to report on subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

Generally, teachers evaluate pupils' performance clearly, and most are consistent in setting out what pupils know, can do and understand. The school makes proper provision for discussing reports with parents. Parents of pupils with individual education plans or statements of special educational need are fully involved in the reviews of their children's progress.

59. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is good. Parents have the opportunity to keep themselves informed about their children's homework and to support day-to-day progress through the homework diaries and reading records. Currently there is a number of parent volunteers working effectively to broaden pupils' experience in school. They help in class and support outings. There is an active Parents Teachers and Friends Association, which holds social and fund-raising events that have raised significant sums for the benefit of their children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

60. There has been very good improvement in leadership and management of the school since the last inspection. The overall leadership of the school is good and that of the headteacher is very good. She has set a very clear direction for the school to develop, based very firmly on raising attainment. All the adults in the school have worked hard to ensure that the school has made good improvements since the last inspection. The management of the school is very good and good methods have been established to gather information and to use it as a basis for improving the school. The senior management team is clear about its role and support the headteacher well.
61. The governors fulfil their role very well which is good improvement since the last inspection. They visit regularly and are attached to classes. They write a report when they have visited the school which is used to add to their information about how the school operates. As a result, they know the school well, are prepared to ask questions and to suggest other ways of working. They use their expertise well to support the school. Their evaluation of how well the school is doing has developed well and they have a good understanding of the performance of the pupils. They have not yet formally begun to evaluate value for money in terms of the increased attainment of pupils. A strength of the governing body is its involvement in the process of the school improvement plan. Each committee has an action plan for its own work which is used well for guidance. The school improvement plan has become a more useful tool for ensuring that the school meets its priorities than it was at the last inspection.
62. Co-ordinators too are very clear about their roles, which is an improvement since the last inspection. All follow school guidance well when managing and monitoring their subjects and they offer good guidance to colleagues.
63. The school reviews its work well overall, and very well at senior management level. Teachers are regularly observed in their classrooms and the information is used to improve teaching across the school. This has led to a high consistency in the quality of teaching. Data from assessment are rigorously analysed by the senior management team and the results used to inform the teaching. Co-ordinators are given time to review the work of their subjects and are beginning to do this perceptively, helped by written guidance from the senior management team.
64. The management of the provision for special educational needs is very good. The headteacher is acting as interim special needs co-ordinator. She is very knowledgeable and effective in this role. Very thorough records are kept, enabling pupils' progress to be carefully monitored. There are very good relations with outside agencies, particularly the educational psychologist, and they support the school's work very strongly.
65. The management of the provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory. External agencies are used when a pupil is new to English, and support staff help pupils in class.
66. Financial control is very good. The headteacher and bursar have established rigorous systems to manage and monitor spending and prudent action has been taken to reduce the deficit in the budget, so the school now has an appropriate carry forward. The governing body is both effective and aware of the principles of best value. Governors take an active role and have a very good knowledge of the school and the need to use resources efficiently so that they have the maximum impact on the achievement of the pupils. One example is using the budget to

enable learning support assistants to plan with their class teacher before pupils come into school. Another is enabling co-ordinators to be released twice a term to review their subjects. Both of these actions have raised the quality of the provision and hence attainment. The head teacher is involved in financial planning and uses the available budget shrewdly so that maximum value is extracted from all expenditure. When building or repair work has to be done, the governors follow all the guidance given by government and the Local Education Authority and use these criteria for selecting contractors and seeking quotations.

67. The senior management team puts an appropriately high emphasis on professional development and staff use the information from courses well. For example, the history co-ordinator has reviewed subject guidance in the light of a course and is supporting staff to become more familiar with the stages of the National Curriculum that pupils go through. A key strength is the appointment of learning support assistants to each class. Governors ensure that the assistants are trained which results in skilful support to pupils. This is good value for money. Monitoring of the work of staff and setting targets is developing well.
68. The accommodation is satisfactory. Some classrooms are rather cramped; there is no gym and the playgrounds are rather small. Storage space is restricted, for example there is not enough in the Reception year classrooms and design and technology resources are stored in a cleaner's cupboard. However, many significant, improvements have been introduced since the last inspection. Several of the classrooms have been rebuilt or enlarged and for all year groups except Year 4, which is still accommodated in mobile units, there are useful additional work areas to supplement the main classroom. A new library and a computer room have been built. There is a refurbished kitchen and currently the rear of the old one is being converted to provide increased office space; the playground for the under fives is newly fenced. The school provides a clean and pleasant environment, which contributes positively to the education of most year groups and does not seriously detract from that provided for the remainder.
69. At the last inspection, resources were judged to be satisfactory in all areas and good in physical education, art and design technology, with a well stocked, well used library. However, some resources were underused in several areas, in science in Years 1 and 2 and in design and technology in all classes. The resources for learning remain at least satisfactory in all areas, but there have been some changes. The resources for the three subjects which were seen to be good at the last inspection are now deemed to be only satisfactory, while those for literacy, science, history, music and for the under fives are judged to be good. The library stock has recently attracted considerable investment. The library was not in operation at the time of inspection, but is a much needed resource for developing research skills.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

70. In order to continue to raise the attainment of pupils, the headteacher, staff and governors should;
- (1) Continue with their plans to ensure that ICT is used as part of teaching and to enhance the quality of learning. (paragraphs 8, 28, 30, 106, 111, 117, 125, 134, 136, 139, 144)
 - (2) Ensure that the work that is being done on assessment continues, especially in Years 1 and 2 so that there is consistency in using assessment to inform the planning of all teachers in order to raise attainment in Years 1 and 2. (paragraphs 3, 5, 6, 8, 22, 25, 50, 110, 122, 125, 135, 140)
 - (3) Prepare pupils for living in a multicultural society by developing a whole school approach to raising pupils' awareness and by taking appropriate opportunities to discuss differences and similarities between different cultures. (paragraphs 43, 44, 143, 153)

Other areas that governors should consider in their action plan are;

When appropriate, make written comments when marking pupils' work which indicates how it might be improved. (paragraphs 51)

Improve the provision for spiritual development (paragraphs 39, 40)

Ensure that pupils are taught skills in musical composition as part of the provision for music (paragraphs 7, 142, 144)

Review how time is used throughout the day so that lessons remain focused (paragraphs 11, 117)

Ensure that homework is appropriate for pupils of different attainment (paragraphs 27)

Ensure that the governors' annual report to parents and prospectus contains all that is required by law (paragraphs 57)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	63
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	16	26	16	0	0	0
Percentage	8	25	41	25	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/a	410
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/a	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/a	139

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	27
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	1.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	33	25	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	29	26
	Girls	21	25	22
	Total	47	54	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (100)	93 (94)	83 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	26	18
	Girls	21	22	16
	Total	43	48	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (89)	83 (96)	59 (100)
	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 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	34	26	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	25	28
	Girls	21	19	23
	Total	48	44	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (79)	75 (73)	85 (78)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	26	29
	Girls	22	21	23
	Total	49	47	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (86)	80 (81)	90 (82)
	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	0
Indian	4
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	5
White	344
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	0	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
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.3
Average class size	29.3

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	350

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	687,669
Total expenditure	724,037
Expenditure per pupil	1745
Balance brought forward from previous year	56,384
Balance carried forward to next year	20,016

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	410
Number of questionnaires returned	100

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	39	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	39	4	3	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	51	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	54	13	1	3
The teaching is good.	58	39	0	2	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	53	10	5	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	34	4	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	38	1	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	31	55	11	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	53	51	2	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	52	2	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	14	44	15	13	14

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

71. At the time of inspection, children were being admitted to school so only two thirds of the children in this intake were seen in lessons. However, in making judgements, further evidence was gathered from discussion with teachers and an analysis of their planning and records, analysis of the work from last year's reception classes, lessons in Year 1 classes and discussions with Year 1 pupils.
72. Since the last inspection, the provision for the young children in the foundation stage has improved. At that time, provision was appropriate and children made sound progress. Provision is now good. The curriculum takes due account of the new requirements for children in the reception year and the school effectively provides a range of activities across the six areas of learning so that children make good progress during the reception year. Children who have special educational needs are supported well, and higher attaining children achieve appropriately as the work is planned satisfactorily for them. At the time of the last inspection, the report identified a need to develop science in the area of knowledge and understanding and this has been successfully tackled. Children's work now indicates that the majority reach and some exceed the early learning goals in this element. The lack of challenge identified in information and communication technology at the time of the last inspection has also been tackled and children have regular access to computers, and a good level of adult support to develop their skills. The provision for physical development remains good. There is a stimulating and secure outdoor area, specifically designed to meet the needs of these young children.

Personal, social and emotional development

73. Children enter the reception class with skills that are similar to those found nationally in personal, social and emotional development. Provision in this area of learning is good so that by the end of the Foundation Stage, most children achieve the early learning goals and some exceed them.
74. Teaching in this area of learning is very good. No opportunity to promote personal or social development is missed and teachers create a harmonious learning environment. The majority of children have had some form of pre-schooling. On starting school, they show respect for others and behave appropriately in class. This, together with the very supportive introductory programme, contributes strongly to ensuring that children settle into school routines quickly. On their first day, many of the children came into the classroom confidently, separating from their carers with ease and looking for their friends. There was an air of anticipation. All staff are very skilled in encouraging shyer children to join in, and these children quickly learn to work and play with others, so that it was difficult to remember that the school year was only just beginning. Teachers' high expectations regarding behaviour and co-operation quickly develop children's awareness of boundaries and of how to behave with others. They respond well to adults and to other children. Excellent relationships often became quickly evident between children and their teachers.
75. Many of the children starting school are happy working alone with a minimum of adult help. This was particularly noticeable when using the computer, when several children in turn showed a good level of concentration and independence whilst working on computer programs. Timely intervention from an adult supports these activities well and encourages children to share resources. In pairs or small groups, they share their views politely, and are confident in saying, 'I don't want to do any more'. Children are usually encouraged to take responsibility, though when working in groups, such as snack time, opportunities are sometimes missed, for example for children to prepare snacks and serve each other. On the first morning, one child who had already been to the toilet, happily showed a friend the way, and by the end of the foundation stage, children take the register to the office and tidy away after work, carrying out these tasks briskly and confidently.
76. Conversations and children's reactions on arrival at school show that they understand about being part of a family and look forward to being part of the school community. By the end of the foundation stage, their class discussions show that they are aware of their value in the community and confident in school, giving their views and listening to the views of others

thoughtfully. By this stage, they also recognise the importance of sitting quietly in school assembly. Through the year, a few opportunities for understanding other cultures and beliefs are given, but there is little evidence to suggest that this understanding of community is being extended to include an understanding of our multicultural and multi-faith society. There is a strong emphasis on Christian festivals, but opportunities to learn about the colourful and interesting festivals from other faiths could be usefully extended.

Communication, language and literacy

77. By the end of the reception year most children, except some of those with special educational needs, achieve the early learning goals relating to speaking and listening, writing and reading. Teaching across this area of learning is good, and the good teaching particularly in aspects relating to writing, ensures that children are well placed to tackle the challenges of the literacy hour when they enter the main school. No children for whom English is an additional language were in the class at the time of the inspection to make any judgement about their progress.
78. From their earliest days in school, children are encouraged to give opinions and to answer their friends. Teachers involve children well in class discussions. Informal talk is encouraged when children are involved in independent activities, and they have opportunities to join in songs. As they start school, most children concentrate well when listening to others or to stories, responding appropriately, and few interrupt. For example, when listening to the story of *Mrs Wishy-Washy* most quickly recognised that the 'wishy-washy' theme was coming next and joined in. Teachers give clear instructions taking good account of the level of children's understanding. The use of appropriate vocabulary, for example about how to use the cursor keys or the mouse on the computer. The majority of children are able follow these simple instructions accurately. By the end of the foundation stage, the majority of children can express their thoughts and feelings using vocabulary that is more sophisticated than is usually found.
79. Opportunities to develop the early skills related to reading are good. From the first day, children are encouraged to share and read books. Stories are a regular feature of the day and large print books are well used to focus children's attention on the text. The few who are as yet unaware of how books work, are well supported. There is a strong emphasis in these sessions on the enjoyment of reading, with humour and involvement a very positive feature. A reminder about sounds and the reading of frequently used words is a natural and regular part of every activity and provides a secure basis for early reading. Planning ensures that all children share frequent and focused early reading activities with an adult. Books are regularly sent home so that parents can support this element of children's learning. By the end of the foundation stage, children read from the books in the class confidently. The great majority achieve the early learning goals related to reading, and some exceed them.
80. Many children come into school able to make recognisable marks relating to their own name. A few can write their name, though some are confused about capital letters. From the outset, children are taught the single letter sounds and how to write these, and are encouraged to write whenever the opportunity arises. The teaching of writing is good and is a strength of the foundation stage provision. Skills develop at a good rate so that when they enter Year 1, all children, including those with special educational needs, understand that words make sentences to give specific information, and all know that I and the first letter of a name is always capitalised. Higher attaining children in Year 1 are beginning to develop the idea of writing in sentences well in their independent writing. For example, one child wrote independently, *I went to my nanas huse and I had a slep ovu*, using carefully formed letters and showing a good command of sentence construction and the sounds needed to make the words. Most of the children, apart from a few of those with special educational needs, attain the early learning goals in writing by the end of reception year, and several exceed them.

Mathematical development

81. When they enter the school, children's mathematical skills are less well developed across the whole range of mathematics than their skills in communication, language and literacy. Their mathematical language is less well developed than usual at this age. However, by the end of the foundation stage, attainment is appropriate for the children's age. By that stage, children have experienced a full range of mathematical activities, including counting, matching, comparing and shape-work. The majority of children, apart from those with special educational needs, achieve the early learning goals. This represents good progress over time in this area of learning, and this is due to good teaching. Activities are relevant to the children's age and

experience and work is carefully marked so that children move forward in their learning at a good pace.

82. Teaching is clearly targeted on counting, ordering and using numbers. As well as activities focused specifically on mathematics, teachers provide a range of opportunities in other tasks and the every day routines of school. A small proportion of children, on starting school can recite numbers in order, counting to 10 reliably and a few can count beyond 10. These children are able to match numbers to objects, and identify the biggest, the middle-sized and the smallest or 'littlest' bears in counting activities. By the end of the foundation stage, a few higher attaining children exceed the early learning goals: they count far beyond 10, some to 100, and can do simple addition using three single digit numbers to 20, although some children with special educational needs find difficulty in sequencing to 10 and adding up to seven. There is little evidence in planning or in children's work to suggest that children are introduced to large numbers in everyday use, like house numbers, telephone numbers and how many children are in school and opportunities like these could usefully enhance children's understanding of numbers.
83. Teachers provide appropriate activities to enhance children's knowledge of shapes and patterns. On arriving in school, a few children already recognise a circle and square, but also use these words to describe three-dimensional shapes. By the end of the foundation stage, the higher attaining children recognise squares, circles and triangles and some name simple three-dimensional shapes using correct words like 'cube'. These children can identify these shapes successfully when recognising and copying simple patterns. The majority of children recognise mathematical language such as *circle and square, small and large and tall and short*.
84. Children quickly begin to use their mathematical knowledge in practical ways. On admission, it is evident that several children have limited experience in developing mathematical ideas and language through play with sand, water and construction kits. Independent activities, involving counting, comparing and sorting, are quickly introduced, providing good opportunities to develop and reinforce mathematical language. The quality and level of adult intervention supports this development well.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

85. Across this wide area of learning, some children reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year, but a higher proportion than in other areas of learning do not. In aspects related to science and using computers most children will reach and some children will exceed the early learning goals.
86. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good teaching in the aspect relating to early skills in ICT and very good teaching, leading to a good level of understanding, in science. The reason why teaching is not as strong in this area is that time is less precisely allocated to these activities and their focus is not identified so clearly. Although the plan for the year shows a fair balance across the aspects of this area of learning, regular references to all these aspects are not routinely incorporated in plans. In finding out about the past and the world around them, there is not the same attention to detail that occurs in other areas of learning and these aspects could usefully be developed.
87. When the teachers plan tasks to further children's knowledge and understanding of the world, as they do in the information and communication technology aspect, the teaching and learning are good. Children on their first day were using programs on the computer and were successfully taught to use the mouse to drag or place objects, and the directional keys to move objects up, down and along the maze. The teacher's precise input in this activity contributed to good learning. The children were very involved, took turns fairly and used the computer with increasing skill, leading to a good level of expertise for their age.
88. The children arriving in school for their first days were given access to an appropriate range of resources, and enjoyed playing with the sand, water and construction kits. Planning indicates that these resources are usually available. Children work well together and with the intervention of an adult, are able to develop scientific knowledge through these independent tasks. For example when playing with water, children talk about floating and sinking and they compare the colour of the boat on the surface with the colour when it is under the red water. By the end of the foundation stage, children have a basic understanding of simple science such as what is attracted to a magnet and what is not, and they have explored texture and materials.

89. Little evidence was available to judge children's skills in using tools, but planning and discussion with staff indicate that although kits are widely used for buildings and constructions, the range of tools and opportunities for early tasks in design and technology could usefully be extended.

Physical development

90. Teaching and learning in this area are good and most children attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.
91. The outdoor fenced play area is accessible and used every day unless the weather is poor. Large challenging play equipment lends itself to a range of independent activities with associated opportunities for social and imaginative development. As soon as children start school, they use the area and teachers ensure an appropriate regard to safety.
92. Teachers have high expectations about children using space well and regularly remind them about taking care. On entry, most children move around the classroom with due regard to others. The majority already line up well, without bumping into others and can 'follow-the-leader' sensibly when returning to class. When using the climbing apparatus, they show good body control and use space well, turning, climbing, balancing and jumping with due regard for others. They are skilful in pedalling wheeled toys, and the variety of equipment and its availability contribute positively to children's enjoyment whilst learning these skills.
93. The children are given an appropriate range of opportunities and resources to develop their fine motor skills. In painting, drawing and writing tasks, provision of small tools like brushes and pencils ensures that control is developing reasonably. When building with construction kits or playing with the *Brio* trains, children lock pieces together skilfully and take them apart, adapting and changing their constructions with care.

Creative development

94. There is insufficient evidence to judge overall attainment in creative development by the end of the foundation stage, but children were given a good start in art and singing in their induction sessions. Planning indicates that teachers provide a reasonable range of activities to promote the children's creative development, and in lessons good advice and intervention from adults ensures this area is well taught.
95. Planning provides appropriate opportunities for the children to explore different media but there is insufficient evidence to suggest that teachers provide examples of work by different artists for children to enjoy and copy. On arrival in school, children's artwork shows similar features and skills to those usually found at this age. Classroom displays show a delightful range of examples produced by children at the end of the foundation stage. A colourful display of fish made from carefully cut coloured papers, metallic foils and tissue paper; sponge printing used to good effect both as a background for collage work and for trees in the picture of *The Three Bears*; bright colourful paintings of clowns, and paintings of members of the class showing appropriate mixing of colour; another display of fish in which children have carefully drawn around and cut out their hand shapes. These examples indicate a reasonable level of development for their age by the end of the Foundation Stage. In lessons, teachers discuss colour selection and the vast majority of children identify the primary colours accurately. The care with which work is displayed demonstrates to the children that their work is valued.
96. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about music and dance. Children sing pleasantly and join in appropriately for their age when singing well-known rhymes such as *Goosy Goosy Gander* with their teacher, and some are confident enough to sing alone. Regular opportunities to play instruments and listen to music are evident in planning.

ENGLISH

97. At the time of the last inspection, standards in English were in line with those found nationally. Since then, despite the high and fluctuating levels of pupils in school with special educational needs, there has been a steady improvement in results. The number of pupils attaining the higher level 5 in English by the end of Year 6 in 2000, for example was above the national average. The school slightly exceeded its target in 2001. 87 per cent of eleven-year-olds attained or exceeded the expected level 4 in English, with 47 per cent of pupils reaching the higher level 5. Slight differences evident in the performance of boys and girls in tests are due

to the numbers of pupils on the register for special educational needs. Inspection evidence revealed no differences in either the challenges set, the enthusiasm shown or the achievement of boys and girls of similar attainment.

98. Provision and teaching have improved since the time of the last inspection. The school follows the recommendations of the National Literacy Strategy closely. This gives pupils a wide range of experience and expertise, appropriate to their age. Teaching is now good throughout the school. Plans are well structured and effective in keeping pupils working at a good pace. Teachers' knowledge of important elements such as literature and grammar is good. This ensures that basic skills are well taught so that, over time, pupils acquire a good range of skills and a good level of understanding. Classroom management is good. The good deployment of support staff usually ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, work at a brisk pace. The shortcomings in Years 1 and 2 noted at the time of the last inspection have been eradicated and although teaching is still variable, two out of four lessons were very good. In Years 3 to 6 the satisfactory and often good teaching seen at the time of the last inspection has been considerably improved. During the literacy hour, the teaching seen was now good in nearly all lessons and excellent in two of them.
99. Attainment is average by the end of Year 2 and pupils achieve appropriately. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above average and pupils' achievement is good. The majority of average and higher attaining pupils speak confidently and clearly and listen well. The higher than average numbers of lower attaining pupils are developing skills at an appropriate rate. Teachers work hard to promote learning in this area, making their own positive contributions to discussions and sometimes using humorous anecdotes to keep pupils involved. This gives pupils good models to follow. Teachers invariably value pupils' own ideas, so that they express their views clearly, building on the high levels of confidence evident at the end of the foundation stage. Young Year 1 pupils were very concerned about the American tragedy and used vivid vocabulary to express their understanding. Their listening skills are good. Many had gained an accurate picture of what had happened from television reports and their discussions with parents, and several were articulate in describing events, with others making simple, clear statements. In Year 2, although teaching was variable, good questioning was evident throughout and ensured that pupils concentrated well and thought about their answers. In one lesson, where teaching was very good, the teacher used a variety of strategies to involve pupils and encourage participation, injecting warmth and humour into the reading of *Six Dinner Sid* and speaking in a conspiratorial tone, so that pupils became very absorbed and were eager and anxious to give their views. These were received with warmth, and with good suggestions for development, so that pupils' confidence increased noticeably and a good level of attainment was evident.
100. Throughout Years 3 to 6, teachers are sensitive to the needs and understanding of the pupils during discussions and when speaking to pupils individually. Challenging questions and opportunities to think are usually evident and these contribute in no small measure to the good quality of pupils' spoken responses. Teachers are patient, and explain what is required clearly. However, in an occasional lesson in Year 4 and 5, where pupils work in mixed-age groups, the teacher's explanations are unclear, so that although pupils listen carefully, their understanding of what is required is not secure. This leads to a slowing of the pace of the lesson, so that learning is not as good as it could be. Throughout the key stage, the majority of teachers try to extend pupils' skills by using technically correct vocabulary and this attention to detail has a positive impact in developing pupils' accuracy in explaining themselves across a range of subjects, like history and science. Opportunities for pupils to speak to a wide audience are regularly given in class assemblies, and the school has been recognised locally as successful in promoting good speaking skills. Last year, several pupils from the school were chosen to read at the Medway Schools' Carol Service due to their high level of confidence and clear delivery. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well supported and given constant reminders about extending ideas when answering questions or sifting through detail when asking for clarification. This support is given equally well by teachers and learning support staff. All have very good relationships with pupils and foster high levels of confidence. These contribute significantly to the pupils' good level of skills in speaking and listening by the end of Year 6.
101. Pupils throughout the school enjoy books. The co-ordinator ensures that books are in good condition and up-to-date so that pupils like to borrow and read them. Throughout the school, the majority of pupils read to their parents regularly and read in school during the whole class literacy hour. The school provides a good programme using a graded compilation of books

from several reading schemes. Pupils have a reasonable choice of titles at appropriate levels, which contributes to the steady progress made through the school.

102. Pupils are already enthusiastic about reading when they enter Year 1. They recognise initial letter sounds and frequently used words, and use picture and context clues when reading simple text. However, reading records indicate that teachers could usefully extend the opportunities taken for setting specific targets and sharing these with pupils, thus developing specific skills like reading with expression and meaning from both fiction and non-fiction texts. Some higher attaining Year 2 pupils read reasonably fluently and already recognise and can explain terms like author and title. They can use a simple index to locate a particular story in their reading books or piece of information in a simple reference book. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs usually attempt to work out simple words, but do not routinely use other methods such as looking for clues in the text. As a result, their efforts to make sense of what they are reading are sometimes frustrated. Although constant practice ensures sound progress and an analysis of pupils' reading during the inspection indicates that pupils are reading at an appropriate level for their age, more focused teaching could further improve standards.
103. Between Years 3 and 6, high quality teaching regularly reinforces basic skills in reading. Pupils are given a range of opportunities to practise these skills when reading with the class during the literacy hour. Year 6 pupils are confident and enthusiastic when reading stories and their skills are good. They have favourite authors. Constant reminders in class about, for example, the audience for their reading, ensure that higher attaining pupils read very well. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, can read fluently. Throughout the key stage, fiction texts are used very well in teaching. By the beginning of Year 6, higher attaining pupils can accurately predict what is about to happen in a story and use the context of the story to help their understanding of new vocabulary or complex ideas in text. Excellent teaching in one Year 6 class ensured that lower attaining pupils could take account of a viewpoint within a text and could compare the abridged version of a classic text with a film adaptation, accurately identifying changes in the story. The use of books for research is developing well. Some Year 4 and 5 pupils use a thesaurus and in several classes throughout the school, pupils routinely use a dictionary. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 have reference skills appropriate for their age, but teachers could usefully support the development of higher order research and classification skills by more careful monitoring of individual reading progress. Average and lower attaining pupils in Year 6 are not yet confident in their understanding of the use of a library and the way in which books are classified, but the school is well placed to meet this need by the provision of the new library. Although the range of authors and fiction books, and the inclusion of poetry supports pupils' cultural development appropriately, the range of texts from other cultures and from other continents could usefully be extended.
104. Results in writing tests for seven-year-olds in 2001, for which national comparative data are not yet available, show 89 per cent of pupils attaining the expected level 2 in writing, with no pupils attaining the higher level 3. An analysis of the work of these pupils confirms that although some higher attaining pupils can write in a structured and imaginative way, others do not write as fluently and skilfully as they should. Variations in teaching throughout the key stage mean that when teaching is very good, higher attaining pupils write well-sequenced stories, using complex sentences like, *When she got home she gave her engine to her brother, who had wanted one for years.* Sentences are accurately punctuated and the use of exclamation marks and question marks is developing well. However, other higher attaining pupils in Year 2 are insufficiently challenged. Their sentences are still in a simple form and ideas are not sufficiently extended. An analysis of work shows steady improvement over time across Years 1 and 2. Sometimes there is a lack of clarity of purpose and a lack of challenge for average and higher attaining pupils with insufficient opportunities to write. Although some methods are routinely used to reinforce spelling rules, higher attaining pupils in Year 2 have not yet started to use a simple thesaurus to help enhance their vocabulary. By the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils consistently spell very simple words correctly and some are developing accuracy in the spelling of more complex words. Neat and careful presentation characterises much of the work seen and pupils' handwriting, although not yet consistently joined by the end of Year 2, is even in size.
105. Between Years 3 and 6, pupils, including those with special educational needs, have a clear purpose for their writing and work hard on writing tasks, and by the end of Year 6, achieve good standards. They can write for a range of purposes and for a range of audiences. They write poetry in a range of forms, like Haiku, Limericks and Tanka. Their story writing shows an increasing depth of thought and an awareness of different genres. Higher attaining pupils in

Year 6 have a good grasp of writing to inspire interest, for example, by using 'cliff-hangers'. Average attaining pupils can give clear opinions about books or poetry they have read, making statements like *I dislike it because the author did not create a picture in my mind*. Teachers have good subject knowledge and offer challenging tasks, which develop pupils' writing at a good pace particularly in Year 6. In an excellent lesson in Year 6, lower attaining pupils were challenged to select and record a list of adjectives to describe the feelings of the *Baddun* brothers in *101 Dalmations*, as portrayed in the text and enhanced in the video. The teacher's understanding of pupils' needs was exceptionally clear and learning support assistants were very well deployed and supported these pupils extremely well. After discussion, pupils appropriately identified adjectives like annoyed, bored, amused and lucky, and having discussed the context and constructed sentences verbally, wrote them in reasonable and legible script, in an appropriate format. This represents good achievement for these pupils. In Year 4 and 5, where mixed age classes are in operation, teaching is variable. In an excellent lesson, an average group worked at an appropriate level when writing a character sketch. The learning support assistant was very well deployed by the teacher, having been well prepared. She supported pupils in writing several relevant sentences. The higher attaining and older pupils within this group compiled a clear well constructed piece using suitable strings of adjectives, accurately punctuated. However, the exceptionally able pupils did not demonstrate the high quality writing normally found at this age. When comparing story openings, pupils shared expertise and good teaching ensured a good mix of questions so that the quality of learning was good. However, although older pupils used punctuation well in their writing, some younger higher attaining pupils used little punctuation apart from full stops and capital letters.

106. During the last year, the school has appropriately targeted pupils' attainment in writing throughout the school. The co-ordinator, who is extremely knowledgeable and enthusiastic, has given teachers considerable support and guidance following her observations of lessons. An analysis of the methods needed to raise standards and an analysis of test results have been well used to identify year group and class group targets. This has begun to have a positive impact, raising standards in writing in the foundation stage and throughout Years 3 to 6. Improvements in Years 1 and 2 are as yet, modest, but the school is in a good position to raise standards further. ICT is sometimes used for word processing, but not all staff have the confidence to use it.

MATHEMATICS

107. By the end of Year 2 pupils reach standards which are average for their age in all the aspects of mathematics studied – number, algebra, and shape, space and measures. The results of the most recent national tests and assessments for seven year olds confirm this inspection judgement, showing a clear improvement on the Year 2000 results, when standards were very poor compared with all schools nationally and compared with similar schools. This was because the group of pupils taking the tests that year contained a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, about 50 per cent. By the end of Year 6, standards are above the national average. This year's national test results confirm this judgement. Standards were also above average in 2000 and comparable with similar schools. The trend in standards reached by 11 year olds has been rising over the past five years and standards for this age group are better than they were at the time of the last inspection.
108. There are no great differences between the standards reached by boys and girls. This inspection judgement is borne out by an analysis of national test results. Pupils with special educational needs, and those learning English as an additional language, are supported well in lessons and helped to make good progress, so that they reach the standards of which they are capable. Pupils achieve appropriately in Years 1 and 2 and attainment is average by the end of Year 2. In Year 6, attainment is above average and pupils achieve well.
109. By the age of seven, most pupils count on and back in multiples of two, three, four and so on. They round numbers to the nearest 10. Pupils understand simple fractions and partition regular shapes such as circles and squares into halves and quarters. They learn the two, five and ten-times tables. There are some good opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills to practical situations, such as shopping problems. By the age of 11, most pupils know the multiplication tables. They work out the mean, median and mode of a set of numbers, for example the shoe sizes of members of the class. They know some metric and imperial equivalents, for example that 1kg=2.2lbs and that 4.5 litres = 1 gallon. Pupils learn about probability in simple terms, for example that some events are likely, some probable and some impossible.

110. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good overall and never less than satisfactory. The examination of pupils' work suggests that a small proportion of teaching in Years 1 and 2 has not always been as good as that seen during the inspection, and this is why standards are not as high as they are at the end of Year 6. In the best lessons, pupils are managed very well and a good working atmosphere is established from the start, so that pupils are purposeful and involved. This helps them make very good progress in their learning. A very brisk pace and good use of questioning keep pupils alert and interested. The grouping of the older pupils into broad ability sets helps teachers match work more closely to pupils' needs. Those who find learning more difficult are set tasks well matched to their abilities. Teachers and learning support assistants give good support to help them learn. Lessons are securely based on the National Numeracy Strategy and teachers plan lessons well to ensure a good balance between whole-class teaching and group work based on ability. Teachers give careful thought to what is to be learned and there are some very good examples of these learning intentions being explained to pupils at the start of lessons, seen, for example in Year 6 lessons on using the four rules of number. Time is taken at the end of lessons to gather the class together again and discuss and consolidate what has been learned. Teaching is less successful when tasks are not matched well enough to pupils' needs. This was seen, for example, in a lesson on place value with the lower ability Years 4 and 5 pupils. Because the task was not demanding or interesting enough, pupils did not concentrate well and instead spent time chatting.
111. Not enough use is made of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in mathematics. There are some good examples of the use of mathematics in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, pupils use number skills to devise time lines in history and data handling skills to produce pie charts in science. In Year 2, pupils use their data handling skills to produce graphs showing the results of their traffic survey in geography lessons.
112. The subject is managed very well by a knowledgeable and energetic subject leader. He is making a good contribution to raising standards in mathematics, particularly through the sensitive and supportive monitoring of teaching. This effort is now to be appropriately concentrated on raising standards by the end of Year 2.

SCIENCE

113. Overall, provision in science is good. By the time they leave school at age 11, pupils have above average knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of the science curriculum.
114. Attainment in the teacher assessments and national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 has varied considerably over the last four years but the general trend has been a rise in line with the national picture. In the 2000 tests, for example, attainment in the teacher assessments in Year 2 was very low compared with the national average but improved in the 2001 tests. In 2000, Year 2 had a large number of pupils with special educational needs. In Year 6, attainment in 2000 was in line with the national average and is likely to be above average in the 2001 tests. The difference in attainment between boys and girls has also varied significantly over the last two years, the biggest departure from the national picture being in 2001 when *all* the girls reached the nationally expected level and 40 per cent reached the higher level. However, in the same tests 93 per cent of boys reached the expected level and 50 per cent reached the higher level. Nationally, boys do only slightly better than girls.
115. The inspection confirms the improvements in attainment. Pupils achieve well in all year groups. By the end of Year 2, attainment is in line with the national average but with strengths in observation and recording, both key skills in developing scientific understanding. In Year 6, attainment is above the national average, with pupils having a good all-round understanding of science and the ability to relate different areas of knowledge when exploring or experimenting. In a lesson to explore the differences between solids, liquids and gases, Year 5 pupils used their knowledge of forces to explain air resistance. In observing and talking to pupils and looking at their work, the inspection could find no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. In most lessons, all pupils received appropriate attention and encouragement and the work provided contained no apparent bias. Since the last inspection, attainment has improved, particularly the pupils' practical skills.

116. The majority of teaching observed was good across the school. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection. All pupils make good progress in their learning because the teachers take great care to provide work for pupils with different levels of attainment, with special needs or having English as their second language. To help them achieve this, teachers make very good use of well-trained and knowledgeable learning support assistants. Lessons are always very well planned and organised so that they run smoothly. Pupils enjoy the security of knowing what they will be learning and the clear instructions they are given. Teachers have high expectations and pupils at all levels work hard, showing interest and enthusiasm. Pupils also behave very well and have very good relationships with each other and adults. In a very good Year 1 lesson about 'our body', the pupils engaged in a lively mix of activities (including a video and an action song) and a challenging interaction with the teacher. This not only enabled them to develop their knowledge and understanding of science but provided very good opportunities for speaking, listening, observing and recording. The level of achievement was high, especially for the beginning of the school year, with many pupils writing labels for their pictures. A very small number of lessons were less successful. In these, the teachers did not make such good use of the time or resources, and made less effective use of the school's scheme of work. As in the last inspection, scrutiny of the pupils' work reveals that teachers are still taking too much lead when setting investigative work for the older pupils. Children made less progress when work was repetitive or insufficiently challenging.
117. A contributory factor in the variations in attainment over the last few years, is that, after some experimentation, the school has only recently introduced new guidance for the subject. This now covers all aspects of the National Curriculum and follows a common set of guidelines. This term, timetable changes have meant that some lessons are too long, with consequent difficulties for the teacher in maintaining interest and learning. These are being well monitored by the new co-ordinator who is beginning to provide feedback and share good practice. In addition, she has recently improved the resources and staff are getting used to the possibilities they afford. When they are used successfully, as with the full-size and half-size skeletons during the inspection, they have a big impact on the learning. However, teachers are missing many opportunities to use ICT to enhance learning, for instance in sensing and recording data, displaying information or searching databases. Teachers make sound use of assessment in their teaching and the co-ordinator has very good information about pupils' performance that can be used to inform planning. Considering the enthusiasm and commitment of the teachers and the plans for the future, the school is well placed to make further improvements.

ART AND DESIGN

118. Art and design plays an important part in the visual life of the school. Whilst many good features have been maintained since the last inspection, standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 have slipped. This is mostly due to a new curriculum which has not yet been fully developed and understood by all teachers.
119. Attainment at the end of Year 2 continues to be above average and pupils achieve well. Particularly strong are the pupils' skills in observation and drawing. In a Year 1 lesson pupils used mirrors to draw themselves, mixed paint for skin colour and discussed portraits of children by other artists. Some surprisingly detailed drawings emerged for such young children. By the time they leave school at 11, the pupils' attainment is average and they achieve appropriately. The difference between Years 2 and 6 is the use of the subject guidance which is recently in place and has yet to work through the school. Pupils in Year 6 have developed a range of skills with which to express their ideas and feelings and explored the way in which other artists and craftspeople have worked. Group projects such as big mosaics and murals, giant dragons and masks, also show very good collaborative skills. The main 3D work takes the form of pottery. Year 6 pupils for instance make splendid vases in imitation of the ancient Greek style. Other 3D work is less well developed. Pupils are not reaching the higher level because they have few opportunities as individuals to research, design and refine their own ideas.
120. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection, both in Years 1 and 2. Here the teaching is generally good. Pupils work with enthusiasm and enjoyment, well motivated by the teachers and the tasks set. They achieve good results because they learn to review what they have done and make improvements. Sometimes the tasks can be a little too challenging. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were asked to use a frame to observe and draw really difficult views of the classroom; a task for which they had not developed an adequate visual vocabulary. It was

a tribute to the pupils' persistence and hard work that many completed the task. Teachers plan and organise the lessons very well and make good use of the non-teaching assistants and a sound range of resources. In one of the lessons observed, the teachers made good use of working areas outside the classroom, even a room which the reception class were not using. In the other lesson, pupils were confined to the classroom; these are too cramped for art and design.

121. The newly developed scheme of work is based on national guidelines. It is supported by a wide range of stimulating topics, often linked to other areas of the curriculum such as science, history and English. Whilst the school uses a sound range of materials for painting and drawing, the sketchbooks do not show this, as they consist of work mostly in pencil and crayon. Paintings, except when done in groups, are rarely bigger than A3. The school's resources are enriched by visiting artists and visits that the schools makes to local sites. Amongst many others, displays during the inspection showed detailed and expressive illustrations of visits to a nature reserve, along with clay plaques and also stories that the pupils had read.
122. The co-ordinator for art has begun to monitor teaching and learning but the other teachers need more help in interpreting the scheme of work and assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Given the commitment of the teachers and the value placed on art, the school has good capacity to achieve this and raise standards.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

123. No teaching of design technology took place during the period of the inspection. Taking other evidence into account, pupils' work at the age of seven is satisfactory and they achieve appropriately. Pupils are able to generate ideas and plan what to do next, based on their experience of working with materials and components. They use pictures and words to describe their designs. They select appropriate tools, techniques and materials, and use tools to assemble and combine materials and components in a variety of ways. Pupils have made glove puppets and used cutting, measuring and joining skills to assemble these before decorating them. They have learned how to create movement by using pivots and created jointed figures out of card and split pins. Pupils have also used recycled materials to create vehicles with wheels from scrap materials. They recognise what they have done well as their work progresses, and suggest things they could do better in the future.
124. At the age of 11 the standards are below average and many pupils underachieve. Year 3 pupils have a working knowledge of pneumatics and the way in which they could be put to use in making model machines. A Year 4 project on making wallets showed that pupils are able to use words and labelled sketches to communicate the details of their designs. However, pupils need to be exposed to a greater range of techniques and tools so that they make better progress in their acquisition of skills. They can evaluate their designs by identifying what is working well and what needs to be improved. However, by the age of 11, they are not able to generate alternative designs for their projects or make step by step drawings that show the process of realising their design.
125. The subject co-ordinator liaises successfully with the co-ordinator in the upper part of the school. The school has adopted new subject guidance and has chosen appropriate topics for each year group. There are sufficient resources kept in a central location, but the access to them is not easy as the space is shared and this does not encourage teachers to use them. The co-ordinator has had no special training for her role and is not always confident about National Curriculum levels and how they relate to the projects in the scheme of work. This rather inhibits her in supporting other members of staff to help them gain confidence with techniques that are new to them. The recording and monitoring of pupils' progress are still not fully in place and this is something that needs further work. There is also a need for a photographic record of pupils' work so that this can form the core of displays for the subject and act as exemplar material. It will also help to raise the profile of the subject and celebrate the work of the pupils. The use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in this subject is unsatisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language have full access to this subject.

GEOGRAPHY

126. Standards in geography are similar to those usually found nationally at the ages of seven and 11, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Attainment is improving as new subject

guidance and effective monitoring by the co-ordinator is leading to good coverage and depth in teaching the subject. Pupils achieve appropriately, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.

127. By the time they are seven, most pupils have a sound understanding of some of the human and physical features of their home locality. For example, they carry out a traffic survey outside the school, counting and recording the number of cars, lorries and cycles going by. They consider how home time could be made safer, for example by encouraging more people to walk to school. Many pupils recognise that there are times of the day when the local roads are busier or quieter, and they understand some of the reasons for this. They identify some common road signs. Good use is made of mathematical skills to record the findings of their survey, for example they produce graphs showing the numbers of different types of vehicles passing near the school. By the time they are 11, pupils know what the water cycle is and how it works. They understand the processes of evaporation, condensation and precipitation. Pupils know about the course of a river from its source to the mouth. They understand the terms tributary, confluence, delta and flood plain. They know the location of some of the main rivers in the British Isles, such as the Clyde, the Severn and the Tay. Pupils know about igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic rocks and where these are found. Higher attaining pupils use six figure grid references to locate places on a map.
128. The teaching seen during the inspection – in Years 5 and 6 only – was good. Lessons were well planned and built successfully on what pupils had learned in the previous lesson. Teachers showed a good knowledge and understanding of the subject, particularly evident in a Year 6 lesson on “the story of a river”. This enabled the teacher to explain things clearly, so helping pupils to understand and make good progress in their learning. Lessons proceeded at a brisk pace, so that pupils were kept involved and interested, and worked hard. The examination of pupils’ past work shows that the teaching is satisfactory, overall. This explains why standards overall are average, but not good.
129. The subject is enthusiastically managed by the subject leader and a colleague who gives able support. Although teachers’ planning is checked for lesson content and compliance with the scheme of work, there has not yet been any systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching. There are appropriate plans to monitor teaching in Years 2 and 6, in order to raise standards.

HISTORY

130. There has been satisfactory improvement in history since the last inspection. Standards have been maintained and teaching is now good. Assessment is beginning to be a focus as until now, the school has rightly concentrated on English, mathematics and science in line with government guidance.
131. Pupils make sound progress overall and attainment is broadly average by the time pupils are seven and 11, but it is improving and a strength lies in pupils’ skills of historical analysis and research. Many pupils in Year 2 respond well to the encouragement to ask questions, for example about the Fire of London. They thought about these questions when watching a video of the Great Fire. Many were able to work out that houses burnt down because they were built close together and were made of wood. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are developing a very good awareness of the differences between the past and the present, and they are beginning to understand about the passing of time. Many understand that some things happened a long, long time ago. Pupils in Year 6 use skills of research well, using artefacts to hypothesise about the sort of things that people did and who might have owned them. A significant number are prepared to justify their point of view by using evidence from artefacts, such as their study of paintings of Queen Victoria as a child. Pupils for whom English is an additional language used them well to put forward ideas about life at the time. Many have a sound knowledge of events and people in the past and they present information well.
132. Higher attaining pupils achieve appropriately and in classes where work is sufficiently challenging, they achieve highly. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well and so achieve highly. In a Year 2 lesson, these pupils were questioned carefully about what they might look for in the video of the Great Fire of London and as a result they achieved very highly in the lesson. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve appropriately.

133. Most pupils enjoy history and listen eagerly to the information that is given. Some, including boys, are prepared to ask questions. After the video, a boy commented spontaneously *I didn't know that!* Lessons are often enjoyable, which leads to a love of history. Resources are used well, including external ones, so that pupils are motivated to want to learn. Most were spellbound by a visiting art historian and listened attentively to her stories. They collaborate well in pairs and groups, discussing artefacts and sharing resources well. Teachers have very good relationships with their classes, so pupils are confident to respond and not worry if they make a mistake.
134. The teaching is good, supported well by clear subject guidance which gives staff confidence to extend the learning of the pupils. In addition to the features of teaching above, teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour so pupils know what is expected of them and they can listen and learn. Questions are used well to develop historical skills of enquiry and as a model for the pupils' own questioning. Pupils in a Year 4 class who had researched the life of Henry VIII gained much information and deepened their understanding of the time of the Tudors, by the probing questions asked by the teacher. High expectations of the pupils' work are a feature of the very good teaching. A Year 6 class studying the Victorians clarified their understanding and knowledge of the period by the way in which the teacher insisted on clear explanations of their findings. The analysis of pupils' work from last year showed much of the work in Year 6 was copied, with no different work for higher and lower attainers and little opportunity for pupils to put forward their original ideas. However, this was not observed during the inspection. Computers are used well by some teachers who encourage pupils to research from the internet and CD-Rom. The use of computers is, however, inconsistent across the school.
135. The match of task to the attainment of pupils is inconsistent; some teachers ensure that different work is given, particularly for the higher attaining pupils, but this is not always the case. The use of assessment to inform teachers' planning is also inconsistent as there is not yet a system in place, although teachers assess in different ways. These inconsistencies sometimes adversely affect the learning of the pupils. Assessment is a focus of development for the school and the co-ordinator is thoughtfully trying out methods and involving staff in discussion. The subject is well led and the co-ordinator reviews the work of the department regularly.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

136. The provision of ICT is unsatisfactory because standards of attainment have fallen since the last inspection. This is partly due to a loss of confidence brought about by problems with the installation and running of a new computer network, some of which were beyond the school's control.
137. Very little computer work took place during the inspection and there were few files or printouts of the pupils' work to be seen. The evidence came from a portfolio of work begun by the co-ordinator, some displays and from talking to pupils and teachers. The inspection found that attainment at the end of Year 2 is average and that pupils achieve appropriately. Pupils learn how to interact with the computer by means of the mouse and keyboard. They can write simple text and make and print out pictures. Higher attaining pupils can manipulate icons on screen which provide simple simulations. Most pupils know how to give instructions to a floor robot. By the time they leave school, the pupils' attainment is below average and their achievement unsatisfactory. The majority of pupils can combine text and clip art, save and print files, send an e-mail and find information on the World Wide Web or a CD-ROM. Some year 6 pupils enter data into a simple database. However, none know how to produce a graph or use a spreadsheet to analyse data. Higher attaining pupils are able to work together to produce a simple newspaper or multimedia presentation. None has used a computer for measuring or control.
138. Not enough lessons were seen during the inspection to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. The computer suite stood mostly idle as did the classroom computers. The planned lessons, including the two seen, followed the school's programme of study and aimed to get pupils thinking about types of information and forms of communication before actually exploring these using the technology. This was very successful with year 1 pupils but barely stretched pupils in Year 5. Pupils in Year 1 also took the opportunity to discuss with their teacher the terrorist attacks in the USA which took place the day before. This added a poignant and spiritual dimension to the lesson. Pupils evidently enjoy ICT, some bring in work

done at home and others talk excitedly about their exploration of the Internet and different CD-ROMs.

139. There is insufficient expertise in the school to maintain the network effectively at present and the school has been unable to recruit a technician after the previous one left at short notice last year. Because of this, the planned programme has been severely curtailed and teachers have been less than eager to make use of a system which has let them down in the past. Nevertheless, some work has been done, for instance in history and science, with pupils using CD-ROMs for research and for making pictures in art. The school works to national guidelines and when running properly, ICT will be used in most areas of the curriculum. At present, sensing and control are not tackled in Years 3 to 6 which means that the school is not meeting statutory requirements. The school is well into a nationally funded training programme for teachers. The majority of teachers have a good level of ICT skills and are keen to use them in teaching and learning. This is clear from the range of posters and other effective learning resources produced using computers.
140. Since the last inspection, the school has engaged a permanent co-ordinator who has overseen the purchase of all the new hardware and software. These resources are good compared with many other schools. She is in the process of introducing a system of assessment. At present assessment is unsatisfactory and does not provide a clear picture of pupils' attainment and progress. There is no clear strategy for using ICT to enhance the achievement of pupils with special educational needs or those who have English as their second language. Given the enthusiasm and commitment of the teachers, the potential provided by the resources and the plans for the future, the school is well placed to get back on track and raise pupils' achievement to the level found in other areas of the curriculum.

MUSIC

141. During the period of the inspection there were few music lessons taught. Of the lessons seen, all were satisfactory or better and one was excellent. Taking this and other evidence into account, pupils' attainment is average and they achieve appropriately. Pupils can sing in tune and have an evident sense of enjoyment in music making. Many pupils learn instruments such as clarinet, flute, violin and the guitar. These lessons are taught by visiting music teachers. There are recorder groups and choirs, which enrich the musical life of the school. Pupils who play instruments perform at 'Musical Happenings' before the rest of the school and the recorder group regularly accompanies hymns in the morning act of worship. The choir takes part in the Rochester Cathedral carol concert every year and visits to other musical events are organised. Some of these contribute to cross-curricular learning as they place music in an historical context.
142. Younger pupils respond well to music lessons. In a Year 2 lesson, many pupils were able to distinguish between high and low notes, to appraise a piece of Bach on a simple level and use actions to signal changes of pitch. However, some of the material for this age group is rather thin and lessons can become repetitive. In this age group pupils learn about pitch and duration and about how sounds can be made in different ways. They also know about the various purposes of music, e.g dance, lullabies, and background music. There are some lively and well-planned lessons, but this is not always the case as some teachers lack confidence in their grasp of the subject. Pupils have little opportunity to develop composing skills or to evaluate their performances. Improvisation skills are not taught and some pupils find it difficult to discuss their own preferences in music.
143. Many older pupils grasp the difference between pulse and rhythm well, and are able to demonstrate various rhythms using percussion instruments. In a Year 4 class, some pupils could improvise using the pentatonic scale, sing in tune, maintain a vocal part while other groups were singing different notes and keep a steady pulse using percussion instruments. Pupils express their likes and dislikes of various types of music and many can recognise different instruments and use appropriate vocabulary to describe the sounds they make. Music is used as a stimulus for other artistic areas, and pupils have written poems as a response to a piece of music. Pupils also listen to examples of music from other cultures and appraise them. However, teachers do not always take the opportunity to do this.
144. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection but there are still areas that need to be developed. The newly appointed co-ordinator is a music specialist and recognises that not all areas of the curriculum are taught as well as they might be. She is aware of the difficulties experienced by non-specialist teachers of the subject and plans to support

colleagues by helping them to be fully aware of the appropriate levels of the National Curriculum for each age group. She is also inviting an outside adviser to come in next term to help teachers with the composition element of the syllabus, as this is the area that non-musicians find most challenging. The school uses the government-approved scheme of work and planning for the subject is clear. The co-ordinator attaches importance to making it clear to all teachers what pupils should achieve in each unit of the scheme of work. The resources are adequate for effective teaching and are kept in a central, accessible location. Pupils with special educational needs or who have English as an additional language are supported appropriately and have full access to this part of the curriculum. The use of information and communication technology is unsatisfactory in this subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

145. Attainment in physical education is similar to that found nationally at the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils achieve appropriately. There is no difference between the standards achieved by boys and girls. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. The full range of the physical education curriculum is planned for, including swimming and outdoor and adventurous activities.
146. By the time they are seven, pupils have a good understanding of the importance of exercise to keep fit. They know how the heart-rate and pulse change after exercise. In Year 2, pupils enjoy tossing balls of different sizes in the air and catching them. This activity leads appropriately on to a small game, consisting of passing a ball to a partner. Pupils show increasing control as they do this, with levels of skill usually found at this age. Older pupils are enthusiastic in dance lessons. For example, pupils in Year 3 developed imaginative ways of using their body as part of a machine. They successfully built and performed a sequence of "machine" movements, for example moving up and down and backwards and forwards. By the end of this lesson, pupils had produced a movement sequence which was better than those achieved by most pupils of this age. Pupils in Year 5 learn racquet and ball control skills which will fit them to play traditional games such as tennis. Year 6 pupils enjoy playing simple relay games with skill which is similar to that usually found at this age. Pupils have swimming lessons in year 5 and most, including those with special educational needs, are able to swim the recommended 25 metres by the time they transfer to secondary school.
147. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory overall. The best lessons, in Years 2 and 3, were characterised by very clear planning, based closely on the subject guidance and spelling out precisely what pupils would do and what they should learn. Very good class control was established from the outset, so that pupils listened carefully, for instance to instructions about safety, and worked quietly and sensibly. Teachers make good use of pupils to demonstrate what they can do, so encouraging the others to try harder and improve their work. A weakness observed in one lesson was that the teacher spent too much time talking, so that pupils sat still and listened for about 30 minutes, so achieving less than they could have done.
148. The subject leader manages the subject well. She has given a good lead to staff in arranging training in various aspects of the subject and has renewed equipment. Good use is made of time to check teachers' planning and some time has been spent helpfully in monitoring the quality of teaching.
149. The school offers its pupils many good opportunities to participate in extra-curricular sport. For example, football, netball, dance, trampoline and gymnastics activities are offered after school. Pupils have taken part in an interesting study by the Department for Education and Skills into sports coaching and its later effects on performance.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

150. By the ages of seven and 11, standards in religious education exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. There are no significant differences in the standards achieved by boys and girls and their achievement is good. Pupils who have special educational needs are well supported and helped to make good progress. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language make good progress. Standards are better than those found at the time of the last inspection. Standards have risen because there is now a knowledgeable and

enthusiastic subject leader, with specialist training, and she is supported well by a colleague. Non-contact time is helpfully used by the subject leader to talk to pupils about their work and check through teachers' planning. There are appropriate plans to monitor the quality of teaching through classroom observation.

151. By the time they are seven, many pupils have an understanding of some religious festivals, such as the harvest festival, and why people celebrate them. They know about some of the main features of a range of world religions, such as Christianity, Islam, Sikhism and Judaism. They know that these religions have their own sacred books, such as the Bible, the Quran, the Guru Granth Sahib and the Torah. Many pupils know some of the prayer rituals of the different religions, for example that Muslims pray to Allah five times a day and that they wash before prayer. They know that different religions have different sacred buildings, such as the church, the mosque, the temple and the synagogue. By the time they are 11, most pupils know some of the history of the books of the Old and New Testaments. They are familiar with some of the Psalms, such as Psalm 23. They know why the Bible is so important to some people. Many understand what the Christian religious building – the church – tells us about Christian values. They know, for example, the significance to Christians of features of the church such as the confessional, candles, the Bible, the cross and the Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament. Pupils are familiar with the architecture of a parish church – the aisle, the altar, the chancel, font, nave and pulpit. They also learn about belief and ceremony in Buddhism, about the Buddha and how Buddhism began.
152. The teaching of religious education is good overall and this is reflected in the standards achieved by pupils. Lessons are lively and stimulating. This was seen, for example, in a good lesson on *What do we value?* in Year 6. A lively discussion on what pupils value and why gained their attention well and soon got them thinking about values. Questioning is used well to help pupils think and understand. Lessons are well balanced between whole class teaching and working alone or in pairs, ending with a good whole class discussion to consider and consolidate what has been learned.
153. The subject leaders have recognised that there is a need to develop the role which visitors and outside visits play in promoting pupils' knowledge and understanding of religion.