

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST. MARGARET CLITHEROW CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**TONBRIDGE**

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118773

Headteacher: Mrs Mairead O'Neill

Reporting inspector: Peter Sudworth - 2700

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> May 2001

Inspection number: 193351

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:	Catholic Aided
Age range of pupils:	4-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Trench Rd., Tonbridge, Kent
Postcode:	TN10 3HQ
Telephone number:	01732 358000
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Godfrey Horne
Date of previous inspection:	March, 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Peter Sudworth 2700	Registered inspector	Science; Special educational needs.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Candy Kalms 9275	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
Fiona Ruddick 24007	Team inspector	English; Geography; History; Equal opportunity.	
Gay Wilkinson 2749	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; English as an additional language; Information and communication technology; Design and technology; Physical education.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Sue West 22788	Team inspector	Mathematics; Art and design; Music.	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School is situated on the northern edge of Tonbridge about two miles from the town centre. It educates pupils aged 4 to 11 years. It has 247 pupils on roll taught in nine classes, all of which cater for mixed ages apart from the Reception class. Pupils come from a wide area and about one-quarter of the pupils come to school on special buses from surrounding areas. Most pupils are of white European origin. Two pupils with English as an additional language speak English fluently. Sixteen pupils are entitled to free school meals, well below the national average. Currently, fifty-nine pupils are on the special educational needs register of whom 49 are on the early stages of assessment and ten on the later stages, including three statemented pupils. The overall percentage of pupils on the special educational needs register is slightly above the national average. Attainment on entry is above average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The school has some significant strengths and provides a generally good education for its pupils. Standards in mathematics and English are good overall. However, in music and art and design standards are unsatisfactory and they could be higher in investigative science. Generally, the quality of teaching is good. The leadership and management of the school are sound overall with some good features, including the interest and involvement of the governing body in the school's work. Value for money is sound.

#### **What the school does well**

- The overall good quality of teaching and the implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies;
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons, their work attitudes and their enthusiasm for school;
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and the good progress they make;
- The sharing of information with parents and reporting to them on their children's progress;
- The match of work to pupils' prior attainment in mathematics and English and the use of assessment in planning these lessons;
- Environmental education and respect for the world and its resources;
- The quality of the accommodation and its spaciousness;
- The work of the governing body.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards in art and design, music and investigative science;
- Aspects of the school's day-to-day management systems which need to be tightened up, including time keeping;
- A set of school aims to guide the school's ethos and direction of its work;
- The grouping arrangements in classrooms to encourage mixed gender groupings;
- Manageable systems for recording key skills in the foundation subjects and science.

*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. The school has made sound progress since then in addressing areas for improvement which were pointed out. The standard of teaching has improved significantly. Statutory requirements are now met in history and there is improved provision in information and communication technology. There are improved links with business. Accommodation has improved and staffing ratios are better. The role of subject co-ordinators is more clearly defined and they have a clear view about standards and monitor these to much better effect. Monitoring of teaching quality has improved and the staff share this work, although further work is needed in monitoring the quality of curriculum provision. Assessment systems have improved in the Foundation Stage and in mathematics and English but further development is needed in science, information and communication technology and the foundation subjects. Standards have improved in geography at Key Stage 2 but they are not as high as they were in music, art and design, design and technology. Further development is still needed in investigative science. The school's aims are less clear and there has been some slippage in the quality of day-to-day management systems. Given the current staff, there is good capacity for further improvement.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests. (Similar schools are based on the percentages of free school meals).

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	B	B	C
mathematics	A	B	C	D
science	D	C	D	E

**Key**

Well above average A  
 above average B  
 Average C  
 Below average D  
 Well below average E

Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in all aspects of their learning and standards in all areas of their work are above expectations by the end of the Reception Year. Inspection evidence indicates that standards of pupils' work in English and mathematics are above average by the end of both key stages and in knowledge in science, although their investigative skills in science are about average. Standards in geography by the end of Key Stage 2 are above expectations. In art and design and music they are below expectations in both key stages and in other subjects they are in line. At both key stages, girls appear to do less well than girls nationally in mathematics and science. Over the past three years, the trend in the school's national test results at the end of Key Stage 2 has been below the national trend of improvement, partly as a result of poorer performance in science than in other subjects. This has resulted in grades below those in similar schools in mathematics and science. The school met its targets in 2000 in mathematics, science and English. Pupils' achievements are mostly sound but they are unsatisfactory in music and art and design.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to their work and they show much interest in their studies. Pupils enjoy school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in classrooms is usually good but it is variable at lunch-times in the dining hall. No pupils were excluded last year.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils have good relationships with one another and with their teachers. Their personal development is satisfactory. Pupils could have more opportunities to undertake responsibility.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils are usually punctual for school. There is no systematic recording of pupils arriving late and parents are not routinely notified when pupils are frequently late. Unauthorised absence is slightly above the national average. The marking of registers does not follow requirements. Overall, the monitoring of attendance is unsatisfactory.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, the quality of teaching is good throughout the school and it is one of the school's strengths. Lessons are often interesting and appeal to the pupils, enabling them to work enthusiastically and to persevere with their learning. Of the lessons observed, 97 per cent were satisfactory or better and only two lessons (3 per cent) were unsatisfactory. Sixty-nine per cent of lessons were good and better, 30 per cent very good and 3 per cent excellent. The quality of teaching in mathematics and English is good in both key stages. Work is usually well matched to the pupils' needs in these subjects. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Greater demands could be made of the more capable pupils in some lessons. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and the children make good progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is generally balanced but in some classes a disproportionate amount of time is devoted to silent reading and significant amounts of time are lost when pupils change classes for different lessons. Provision is good in geography in Key Stage 2 but it is unsatisfactory in music and art and design. Extra-curricular provision in the autumn and spring terms enhances the opportunities for pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. The pupils often work in small groups, which enable them to receive more individual attention. The individual education plans contain very clear targets and these are reviewed regularly.



Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Two pupils with English as an additional language speak English fluently.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Sound. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory and they have satisfactory opportunities for undertaking responsibilities and to work independently. They could have more opportunity to work in mixed gender groups. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. It is satisfactory for their spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides pupils with a caring, secure environment that supports their learning and development. Staff know the pupils well and understand their personal needs. They offer good support and advice. There are satisfactory arrangements to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety. The school's statement on child protection is rather weak. Pupils are not always well enough supervised in the playground and in the dining hall. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory.

The school works well with parents. They are kept well informed about their children's progress and what is happening at the school. Communication with them is good.

#### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Some aspects of the headteacher's leadership are good. It is sound overall. Subject co-ordinators manage their responsibilities satisfactorily and some well and in these instances they have a good grasp of standards across the school. The school development plan is generally of good quality and takes a long-term view of future priorities.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is well led by its chair. The curriculum and finance committees are particularly effective. The governing body keeps itself well informed about the school's work. Most statutory requirements are fulfilled.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good analysis takes place of pupils' performance in national tests and the governing body's curriculum committee, including teaching staff, is very involved in this. The school uses the information well to plan for further improvements in standards.
The strategic use of resources	Finances are well managed both strategically and administratively on a day-to-day basis. There are some weaknesses in the systems for spending the money allocated to equipment and resources.

The accommodation is spacious. Resources are generally adequate. They are good in science but unsatisfactory in music. Staffing levels are good. The school has well considered systems for determining best value when purchases are made.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school and are making good progress.</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents.</li> <li>• The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• The quality of teaching is good.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable approaching the school with any concerns they may have.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater consistency in amounts of homework and its relevance. A better match of homework for pupils who have learning difficulties.</li> <li>• More provision for physical education;</li> <li>• Provision of a more interesting range of activities outside lessons;</li> <li>• Better information about how their children are getting on.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with most of the positive responses and comments made by parents. However, behaviour could be better in the dining hall. Pupils make at least sound progress in most subjects but it is unsatisfactory in art and design and music. There is no evidence that there is insufficient curriculum time for physical education. There is some inconsistency in homework arrangements and its relevance to the pupils' needs. Good arrangements are made to inform parents of their children's progress but comments in annual reports on the foundation subjects are largely descriptive of coverage. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. A suitable range is offered by teaching staff in the autumn and spring terms, although the range is reduced in the summer term.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Children in the Foundation Stage receive a good start to their education. They make good progress in all aspects of their learning and exceed the national expectations for pupils' learning at the end of the Reception Year in all respects. The children behave well and have good relationships with one another. They share equipment fairly. They can make choices responsibly and follow these through to a completion, working independently or with others. They have good speaking skills and benefit from the strong emphasis placed on reading and writing skills, which help them to make a good start to written communication and to their interpretation of the written word. In mathematics they understand positional vocabulary, can count forwards and backwards to ten and beyond. They have good opportunities to learn about the world and engage in a wide range of interesting and motivating activities, for example the conditions for growth by working in their own garden plot. They invent, explore and refine movements in physical education. They engage in a good range of daily creative activities and become aware of artists and their techniques, such as Van Gogh's sunflower picture and try to replicate the techniques or subject in their own work.

2. Key Stage 1 boys and girls have been doing better on average than their counterparts nationally in both reading and writing, although in these two aspects the school's girls have been doing better than its boys, following the national trend. Key Stage 1 boys have been doing better than the girls in mathematics but both perform better than the national average gender comparisons. In the 2000 national tests for pupils aged seven, the school's results were well above the national average in reading and above average in writing. Compared to similar schools, reading standards were above average and those in writing broadly average. The proportions of pupils gaining the higher level were well above the national average in reading and above in writing. Most pupils in Key Stage 1 spell simple words accurately and a few use their knowledge of phonics to build up more complex words. As a result, words spelt incorrectly are usually recognisable. Most remember to use capital letters, full stops and some make an attempt at speech marks. The majority tackle texts of an appropriate level of difficulty with suitable confidence and understanding.

3. The attainment of the school's eleven-year-olds in English was above average but broadly average when compared with similar schools. English results have been in line with the national trend of improvement over the last four years. At both key stages, a significant number of pupils are working at a level above the standards expected for their age but a minority do not reach the expected level and these pupils have special educational needs. Key Stage 2 boys have been doing well in English. Their results over the past three years have been better than those for the school's girls, against the national trend, and better than national average gender comparisons. Key Stage 2 boys have also been outperforming the girls in mathematics but both have been doing better than their respective national gender averages.

4. Speaking and listening skills are generally good throughout the school. Most pupils express their ideas clearly using a range of complex sentences and correct language constructions. Most Key Stage 1 pupils make steady progress and this accelerates as they move up through the school. By the end of Key Stage 2, more than half have progressed beyond what could have been predicted from their Key Stage 1 results.

5. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils spell commonly used words accurately and some pupils write stories and poetry with striking imagery. Some poetry has a remarkable maturity. Most can write in a variety of different styles and for different purposes. Pupils can read texts of appropriate difficulty.

6. Since the previous inspection, standards in English have remained above the national average in Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, attainment has improved. Drama now plays a more important part in the curriculum but there is room for this to be further strengthened. Information and communication technology continues to be used well to support pupils' work in English. Overall, pupils' achievements in English are good, particularly by the end of Key Stage 2.

7. In 2000 mathematics results in national tests were above the national average in Key Stage 1 and close to the national average in Key Stage 2. Compared to similar schools as judged by the percentage of free school meals, standards were below average in Key Stage 1 and well below average in Key Stage 2. Inspection evidence indicates that, overall, standards are above expectations in both key stages. Pupils achieve well throughout the school, a direct result of the good quality of teaching and good management of the subject. Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of number and cover a wide range of work appropriate to their needs, including use and application of mathematics. Most Key Stage 2 pupils have good mental skills and can use the four rules of number in their application of mathematics. Pupils' achievements are good in mathematics in both key stages.

8. The percentage of seven-year-olds obtaining the expected level in science, as judged by teacher assessments in 2000, was below the national average. This was due to relatively poorer performance in investigative science. The teacher assessed results were well below average against similar schools for pupils gaining the expected level, although above average for the percentage gaining the higher level. In the past few years, the attainment of 11-year-olds in science has fluctuated from the national average to below it in national tests. In 2000, results were below the national average and well below the national average against similar schools. The percentage of pupils gaining the higher level in 2000 was below the national average. Key Stage 2 boys have been doing better than the school's girls and as well as their national gender counterparts but girls have performed less well on average than the girls nationally over the past three years. The percentage of pupils gaining the expected level has been improving slowly each year. Inspection evidence indicates that the pupils' knowledge is often good, although their skills in investigation are not yet sufficiently matched to the pupils' capabilities. Physical science has also been a weaker aspect of their work. Currently, almost all pupils in both key stages are expected to obtain the expected level and about one-third to reach the higher level in the national tests.

9. Overall, in science, pupils make sound progress and their achievements are generally satisfactory. Progress is good in their acquisition of knowledge in both key stages and satisfactory in their development of skills in investigative work and in written communication, although better in their oral communication. Some use is made of mathematics through measuring and graphs, although graphs are sometimes not drawn accurately enough. There has been some improvement in the quality of work in science since the last inspection. The school met its targets last year in all three core subjects.

10. Although there were some examples of very good work in both key stages, overall the standard of art work does not meet expectations for pupils aged seven and eleven. Pupils do not have a sufficient bank of skills, for example in sewing, weaving or pattern making, to develop their imaginative ideas, although some examples of good work were seen. Where art has a cross-curricular theme, the opportunity to develop artistic skills is sometimes wasted. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop brush control, nor do they continually develop skills needed for working with a variety of media. In music the high standards found at the last inspection have not been maintained and, overall, standards do not reach expectations for pupils aged seven and eleven. Their achievements and progress in these subjects are unsatisfactory.

11. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to learn, practise and develop musical skills progressively. Their work does not show suitable progression from one key stage to the next. In geography, standards of work for pupils aged seven are broadly in line with what might be expected

for their age but are higher than expected at the age of eleven and their achievements are good in the upper part of Key Stage 2. The work of the majority of pupils is above expected standards. In all other subjects, standards are in line with expectations by the end of both key stages, with much improvement in history since the last inspection. Standards in design and technology and physical education reflect national expectations for the end of both key stages and achievement is satisfactory.

12. Some good use was seen of English and mathematics being used across the curriculum but less evidence of links being made with other subjects in information and communication technology. The teaching of literacy skills is strengthened through cross-curricular links with geography, history and information and communication technology. History in particular gives many opportunities for extended writing. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress across the school because of the good adult support, which they receive and the special small group arrangements. The sets usually provide good opportunities for the higher attaining pupils to be extended.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

13. Overall, the attitudes and behaviour of the majority of pupils in the school are good. These together with the good relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and staff create a harmonious atmosphere that supports pupils' learning and has a significant effect on the quality of life in the school.

14. Pupils in the Reception class have very good attitudes to school. They establish good working habits and quickly settle into school routines, becoming happy and confident learners. They co-operate with each other sharing toys and resources. They enjoy the activities and are keen to learn. They are attentive and learn to follow instructions well.

15. The vast majority of pupils enjoy school. They come with a willingness to learn, are well motivated, enthusiastic and interested in their lessons. Most pupils' listen attentively to their teachers and concentrate in their lessons. They eagerly answer questions and willingly take part in discussions, confidently contributing their ideas, as seen in a Year 3/4 science lesson, when pupils listened carefully and were fully involved discussing a healthy diet.

16. Overall behaviour in the school is good. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Generally they are clear about the standards of behaviour expected and this creates a pleasant atmosphere in the school that supports learning. Behaviour, however, deteriorates considerably in the dining-hall at lunchtime when pupils in both key stages are noisy and not always well mannered. Pupils play well together on the playground. They are courteous and polite to adults. There is no evidence of bullying.

17. The quality of relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and teachers is good and contributes to the pupils' motivation and consequently to their learning. Pupils get on well with each other. Most pupils settle to work quickly. They work well independently and together in pairs and small groups. However, boys and girls almost always work in separate groups and they are not learning sufficiently from each other's enthusiasms. Nevertheless within those groups, they co-operate and collaborate well, sharing equipment, materials and ideas sensibly when working together. For example, pupils in a Year 3/4 English lesson worked well in pairs creating their own word banks and lists.

18. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Generally they listen to one another during lessons. They show respect when incorrect answers are given to questions, as in a Year 3/4 mathematics lesson, and by not interrupting when listening to others during discussions. Pupils' grow in confidence and gain a developing sense of personal responsibility. From the Reception Year,

pupils develop an understanding of their environment through the 'eco project' in the school. They value their participation on the School Council and the contribution they are making to the life of the school. Older pupils help younger pupils to settle into school. They show their care for others through their involvement in a range of fund-raising activities for charity, many of which are planned, organised and run by the pupils themselves.

19. Attendance in the school is satisfactory. There has been a slight improvement since the previous inspection. Whilst many absences are due to illness, a number are due to parents taking their children on holiday during term-time. Unauthorised absence is slightly above the national average. The majority of pupils are punctual for school. A small number of pupils, however, arrive late in the mornings, including some who are often late.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

20. Overall the quality of teaching is good. Of the 65 lessons observed during the inspection, 97 per cent were satisfactory or better and only two lessons (3 per cent) were unsatisfactory. Sixty-nine per cent of lessons were good and better, 30 per cent very good and 3 per cent excellent. The quality of teaching is a significant strength in the school and has improved since the last inspection.

21. All teachers have good relationships with the pupils they teach. They manage their classes well and maintain a good standard of discipline. The work is planned well and in most lessons, there is a good match of work to the pupils' needs. Examples were observed, however, where the set tasks were too easy for the higher attainers or too difficult for the lower attaining pupils. Teachers share the objectives of their lessons with the pupils in language, which the pupils can understand and so the pupils know the range of work to be covered in them. Occasionally during these introductions, pupils are seated for too long on the carpet and the area in which they are seated is not large enough for the number of pupils. They are squashed up and uncomfortable. Lessons frequently begin late due to the fact that pupils are split up in year groups for some lessons and by ability groups for others, for example in English, mathematics, and in science. Arrangements are not streamlined enough in getting pupils to move from one class to another with their necessary belongings, particularly after breaks.

22. In many lessons there is a good pace and learning proceeds briskly. Lessons are well prepared and resources ready to hand, so time is used effectively within them. In a clearly structured Year 2 art and design lesson on clay modelling, everything was available. The pupils were seriously absorbed as they shaped, smoothed and tooled in the features of their bears, profiting from the good skills of the teacher who had demonstrated the correct technique of releasing air bubbles before modelling began. The teacher made good use of praise and gave many pupils the opportunity to talk about the pose they had adopted for their bears.

23. The quality of questioning is often good, draws on pupils' knowledge and uses their experiences. However, occasionally in assemblies questioning is sometimes unclear and rather vague and the pupils do not respond well as a result. Questioning in lessons is sometimes very challenging and probing. In an excellent Year 5/6 mathematics lesson, very good questioning on probability included specific and appropriate terminology. Expectations were high. The pupils were challenged well and enjoyed the appeal and relevance of the work. Instructions were very clear so pupils understood the tasks. Very clear expectations of behaviour supported learning and pupils' work rate was extremely high. Work was neatly set out.

24. Instructions for tasks are usually clear. Good use is made of assessment in the core subjects to plan future learning. The teaching of mathematics work in the Foundation Stage clearly takes into consideration the level of understanding the children have reached. Role-play mathematical activities take learning further forward, as in the shop 'play' where the teacher had a clear understanding of the potential for mathematical opportunities. She intervened in their play and encouraged precise thinking and use of language through such questions as 'How much altogether?' and 'Have you got enough money?' Teachers usually have good subject knowledge of the content they teach but this is not as good in art and design and music and leads to pupils making unsatisfactory progress in these subjects. Teachers do not have enough understanding of pupils' previous knowledge and skills in these subjects and the work throughout the school is not structured enough so pupils can develop skills sequentially. For example, the work in a Key Stage 2 art and design lesson was too difficult because it assumed skills that the pupils did not have.

25. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good and they are often taught in small sets which enables them to learn at a slower pace and undertake work which is more fitted to their understanding. However, the learning support assistants sometimes sit and watch for long periods during the introductions to lessons but when engaged with pupils they work effectively.

26. Teachers have implemented the national strategies for numeracy and literacy satisfactorily and mental sessions are often suitably brisk, keeping pupils alert and keen and sustaining their interest. Nevertheless, on one occasion during the inspection week, the duration of the Key Stage 2 numeracy lessons was well below the minimum requirement. This was due to a prolonged assembly beforehand, followed by a break, and the lessons observed during that time suffered as a result. The work planned could not be completed in the time that was left. In some numeracy lessons, too many questions are asked directly of individual pupils which do not require the others to think. In these lessons better use of individual white boards or number fans during the mental work would have ensured greater pupil involvement. In literacy lessons, teachers usually set good examples of expressive reading in the shared text of the lessons, although occasionally the reading is too fast for lower ability pupils and they cannot keep up. The structure and balance to literacy and numeracy lessons are usually satisfactory and often good but sometimes there is not enough time to develop what they have learned in the concluding plenary. On one occasion there was no opportunity for the pupils to read the shared text and teaching points were sometimes not emphasised sufficiently. In one very good Year 4 English lesson the teacher skilfully led pupils into finding words to describe the character presented on an overhead projector. She extended the pupils' vocabulary with that of her own. Unobtrusive class control had an extremely good effect in maintaining a quiet, orderly atmosphere.

27. Good use is made of subject specific language, for example in a Year 6 science lesson. In music the teaching is sometimes laboured and there is too much of the same. In the teaching of hymns during hymn practice, the session lacked a musical dimension other than singing up and repeating phrases.



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

28. The quality and range of the curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage are good and provision is based on national guidelines called Early Learning Goals with an appropriate emphasis upon personal, social and emotional development, literacy and numeracy. Reception class activities are well planned and these provide good support for children's learning in all areas of the Foundation Stage.

29. The curriculum for pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 is broad and generally balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Foundation subjects, other than art and design and physical education, are blocked over a two-year cycle to meet the needs of the mixed-age classes. However, because of the way in which the curriculum is planned and organised, pupils have insufficient opportunities to regularly learn, practise and consolidate specific skills in music. Arrangements for the systematic monitoring of the foundation subjects are in the early stages of development. The National Literacy Strategy is incorporated well into curriculum planning and is reflected in the structure of literacy lessons. Pupils' literacy skills are developed successfully in other subjects throughout the school, for example reading for information and writing for a range of purposes in science, geography and history, although library skills are not well developed. The National Numeracy Strategy has also been implemented successfully and has increased pupils' competence in numeracy. Pupils are systematically taught the basic skills well overall and pupils' numeracy skills are well developed in other subjects throughout the school, for example the interpretation of data in geography. There is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy as part of the school's initiative to raise standards and the setting arrangements help to ensure activities match the pupils' capabilities. Information and communication technology skills are used generally satisfactorily across the curriculum, but not extensively. The curriculum is appropriately planned to provide pupils with a range of interesting and relevant opportunities and the overall time allocated to subjects is appropriate in both key stages. Judgements on the curriculum are similar to those at the time of the last inspection.

30. The curriculum includes satisfactory provision for personal, social and health education. The policy includes health education and drugs awareness and this is taught through both circle time activities, religious education and the science curriculum. The school nurse teaches sex education despite the fact that there is no formally ratified sex education policy. Circle time activities are used to encourage pupils to think about issues such as caring for, and sharing with, others and taking responsibility.

31. The curriculum is socially inclusive and provides equality of access and opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs; they are very well supported by classroom assistants and make good progress as a result. They have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum and the arrangements made for them support and maintain their interest in their work.

32. There is a good range of out-of-school activities during the autumn and spring terms and these both enrich the curriculum and support pupils' social development. There are opportunities for pupils to participate in a range of competitive sports activities, including football, swimming and orienteering making a positive contribution to the development of team spirit, as well as contributing to standards in physical education.

33. The school makes good use of a range of visitors, including artists and performers. These enhance the curriculum. A visiting potter extends the pupils' understanding of working with clay and a 'Roman Centurion' adds to pupils' knowledge of the Roman occupation of Britain. Pupils also visit

museums, art galleries and other places of interest both within the local community and further afield to supplement curricular activities. Year 5 pupils also have the opportunity to undertake a residential visit to the Isle of Wight. These activities broaden the pupils' experience and promote their personal development.

34. The school has developed good links with local secondary schools and these make a good contribution to the pupils' preparation for the next stage in their education. For example, Year 5 pupils have the opportunity to visit one school for two 'taster' days. There are sound links with other schools in the area that support curricular development, including information and communication technology. The school participates in a number of local events involving other schools, including music festivals and sporting events. A number of positive links with industry have been established, as for example those that have led to the sponsorship of the school's ecology and healthy eating projects, and these make a good contribution to the curriculum.

35. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. It is satisfactory for the pupils' spiritual development. The daily act of collective worship complies with statutory requirements but varies in quality. It provides satisfactory opportunities for spiritual development, including personal reflection and prayer. On occasion at such gatherings individual pupils' achievements, both in and out of school, are celebrated and recognised. Teachers sometimes use appropriately contemporary and Bible stories, drama and music to provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own lives, attitudes and feelings. The school celebrates religious festivals and topical events.

36. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school's behaviour policy places a strong emphasis on positive rewards and praise. Together with individual classroom codes of conduct, which pupils draw up with their teachers, the policy makes a significant contribution to promoting pupils' moral development. Teachers show pupils the difference between right and wrong and place a high value on truth and honesty. As a result, pupils' understanding of right and wrong is very good. This is well reinforced by staff who provide positive role models by demonstrating respect and care for others and commitment to their work. There is a strong work ethic and all pupils' work well even when not directly supervised. Stories and themes covering moral issues are used regularly in collective worship and literacy lessons.

37. Provision for the social development of pupils is good. Teachers and support staff set a good example to the pupils through their work as a mutually supportive team. In all classes pupils are provided with some opportunities to take responsibility that they accept willingly, including representation on the school council. They work well together in collaborative tasks, including competitive games. They play well together on the playground at break-times. The use of 'circle time' is making a good contribution to the development of pupils' self-esteem and social maturity. The school participates in both local and national events that encourage the pupils to think about their place in the community as well as the wider world.

38. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. They make visits to places of interest including museums, historical sites and other places of interest and there are visits to the school by a range of visitors, including artists and performers. These arrangements make a sound contribution to pupils' awareness of their own cultures. During the period of the inspection, there was little evidence of pupils' learning about other cultures that would prepare them for living in a multi-cultural society.

## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. The school provides the pupils with a caring, secure environment that supports their learning and development. The staff know the pupils well and they offer good support and advice and understand their individual circumstances. Judgements are similar to those at the last inspection.

40. Generally satisfactory arrangements are in place to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils. The school recognises the need to comply with requirements for health and safety but the policy is out-dated. Each year a member of the governing body carries out a detailed check of the site and premises and any issues are systematically recorded. In between times, although informal checks take place, these do not clearly document and record any issues and action taken. Equipment is subject to annual checks. Formal arrangements for child protection are not fully in place. Local child protection procedures are followed but the school does not have its own clearly stated policy. Members of staff are aware of the designated person but a regular pattern of training to ensure they are kept up to date about procedures to follow in the event of any concerns has not been established. Day-to-day first-aid and care for pupils who are unwell are satisfactory, although not all minor injuries are recorded. Parents are informed by telephone and the homework diary in the event of a head injury.

41. Some parents express concern at the lack of supervision in the playground in the morning. The inspection team confirms that there are sometimes periods of time before registration when pupils are unsupervised. However, some parents drop off their children well before the agreed time for arrival at school. The inspection team also observed times during the lunch-break when pupils are not sufficiently well supervised.

42. Pupil's personal development is well supported through the caring atmosphere in the school, the celebration of their achievements in assembly and the positive relationships that exist between teachers and pupils. They use this knowledge to monitor personal development informally. The school system for recording and monitoring pupils' personal development is at an early stage of development, but any serious concerns are discussed with senior staff or shared at daily briefing meetings.

43. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are unsatisfactory. There is no whole school system to monitor attendance and follow up absence or punctuality. Individual class teachers are initially responsible for following up those absences where no explanations have been received but they do not continue to do so with any regularity. Punctuality is not being regularly monitored. There is no systematic recording of pupils arriving late and parents are not routinely notified when pupils are frequently late. Registers are not being marked according to statutory requirements with the result registers do not clearly indicate reasons for absence and do not show a clear distinction between authorised and unauthorised absence.

44. The school has satisfactory procedures to promote good behaviour. Monitoring of these procedures is informal. The behaviour policy and the 'golden rules' provide staff with a brief framework of rewards and sanctions, but guidance on when to apply them and clearly defined limits on unacceptable behaviour are less clear. The management of pupil behaviour in the classroom is at the discretion of individual teachers who in the main control behaviour very well. Members of staff discuss any concerns with their year group leaders but there is no whole-school system to record or monitor any incidents of inappropriate behaviour. The school has satisfactory systems to eliminate oppressive behaviour. Pupils are of the opinion that bullying and harassment are rare. The headteacher deals appropriately with any matters brought to her attention but is not systematically recording referrals.

45. Assessment procedures for English and mathematics are much improved since the last inspection and are now good in these subjects throughout the school. In the Foundation Stage, procedures are thorough and comprehensive. Children are tested on entry, targets are set for the end of the year and their learning and achievement are monitored and tracked. Children who achieved low scores are re-tested at the end of the year.

46. Pupils' attainment is now tracked from entry through Key Stages 1 and 2 and targets are set for English and mathematics. Together with statutory assessment tests in Years 2 and 6, pupils take optional tests in Years 3, 4 and 5. The results of these tests are used to inform planning and teaching. Termly profiles which detail pupils' progress in mathematics, English and science are rigorous and informative. The senior management team and governors analyse statutory assessment test results together and identify individual progress and that of the year cohort. Spreadsheets are produced for the rest of the staff to discuss. Planning is then addressed accordingly. Reading records are kept throughout the school. However these are inconsistent in quality and content and do not always clearly state where pupils have difficulties, for example in their letter blends, or in what they have achieved.

47. Assessment procedures for foundation subjects are still general. Most teachers evaluate work done in these subjects on a class basis but there is limited assessment of individual pupils' gains in skills and understanding and what they need to do next. As a result, teachers who take the pupils the following year do not have a clear picture of their prior attainment, which they can use to plan their work.

48. The school has a suitable marking policy. Marking is up to date and usually accurate. Whilst teachers' comments in the pupils' books assess what pupils have achieved, they do not consistently give developmental points about how the individual pupils can improve their work. The pupils do not often follow up the written comments, which ask pupils to carry out particular tasks to complete their work, for example when being asked to label diagrams.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

49. The majority of parents are supportive of the school and with what it provides, although a few express some concerns. Most parents who attended the parents' meeting and completed the questionnaire were generally happy with the school. The vast majority of parents state that their children like school, behaviour is good, the school expects children to work hard and helps them become mature and responsible. Many were happy with the progress their children make and the quality of teaching. They consider the school works closely with parents, are comfortable approaching the school and a large majority feels that they receive good information on their children's progress. The inspection team supports the positive views parents have of the school. A small minority of parents, however, express concern about the amount of homework given but the main area of parental concern relates to the range of extra-curricular activities. The inspection team found that the school offers a wide range of activities outside lessons and football, cycling, swimming, cricket and dancing are offered in the reduced range for the summer term.

50. The school has maintained its good links with parents since the last inspection. Many parents are involved in their children's learning and in the life of the school. Some help in lessons and around the school. Parental support is encouraged in all areas of school life and this has a positive impact on the work of the school and on pupils' progress, for example in reading. Induction into the Reception class is well organised and establishes a close relationship with parents. The headteacher welcomes parents into school. An open day each term offers parents a good opportunity to see the school during a normal working day and parents are encouraged to attend class assemblies. They are invited to comment on a range of issues associated with the life of the school. A questionnaire recently invited them to express their views about arrangements at the end of the school day and their views have been taken into account. Each year parents are invited to a meeting to analyse the school's performance in national tests results.

51. A regular pattern of homework has been established. From Reception, pupils are encouraged to take reading books home regularly. Reading and homework diaries, used by a number of parents, provide a good link to support pupils' learning at home and provide an effective means of communication between the teacher and parents. Some parents are unhappy with the arrangements for homework and they state that there is an inconsistent pattern across the school and that it is often too difficult for pupils who have special educational needs. There is some evidence to support these views.

52. The quality of information the school gives parents is very good. It helps them become involved in their children's learning and to understand the work of the school. Weekly newsletters, additional letters and a two-monthly calendar of events keep parents well informed about school matters and key dates. The prospectus provides useful information on school routines and the annual governor's report to parents' reviews the work of the school. However, both have some minor omissions. For example, the governors' annual report does not include information about the next election of parent governors or a statement on the progress in implementing the action plan drawn up after the last inspection. The school prospectus does not remind parents that they have a legal entitlement to withdraw their children from all or part of the religious education and collective worship provided.

53. Good opportunities are provided for parents to understand what is being taught. Teachers provide parents with detailed letters explaining the curriculum and the work to be covered during the term. Parents are kept very well informed about their children's progress. In addition to a full annual written report at the end of the summer term, parents receive a written termly report setting targets in the core subjects. Each term parents are offered the opportunity to discuss these reports and targets with their child's class teacher. The quality of comment on reports is analytical in the core subjects but more descriptive in the other subjects.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The overall leadership and management of the school are satisfactory but with some strengths. The governing body has good expertise amongst its membership and it is led effectively and served well by the chair of governors. Its system of committees works effectively. The governing body has a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses through the work of the curriculum committee, which is an active and effective group and monitors the progress of the pupils. It analyses the school's performance in national tests rigorously. The finance committee has good strategies for managing and monitoring the budget but the current contingency is low. The school's procedures for managing, prioritising and evaluating the expenditure on learning resources are less good. Nevertheless the day-to-day management of the budget is managed effectively by the office manager and the school secretary efficiently deals with other office procedures. Value for money is sound based on the strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum provision, pupils' achievements, the attainment on entry, pupils' personal development, attitudes and behaviour, including lunch-times, and the pupils' achievements throughout the school.

55. The governing body has a mission statement, which suitably represents the school's religious affiliation. However, the school does not have a distinct set of whole school general aims to guide its work. The governing body fulfils most of its statutory responsibilities but it does not have a formal written sex education policy. The school prospectus does not inform the parents of their right to withdraw their children from collective worship and religious education. Some of the school's policies are not kept well enough up to-date, for example the health and safety policy is out of date. The child protection statement is rather weak.

56. The overall leadership of the headteacher is sound. Some aspects of the headteacher's leadership are good, such as the useful initiatives, which have been implemented to track pupils' progress and her work with the governing body. She has good relationships with the staff and the governing body and effects a pleasant tone and learning atmosphere in the school. The school development planning process is managed well. She delegates effectively to subject co-ordinators, most of whom manage their responsibilities soundly and some well. The school development plan, formulated jointly with the governing body, is generally good but some references to how success criteria are to be evaluated would add to its quality. She has a good partnership with the deputy headteacher. There are some weaknesses in administrative procedures, such as logging incidents and complaints and ensuring policies are dated and review dates known to all. The staff handbook provides a satisfactory written support but it lacks quick reference guidance. Some of the detail in it differs from that in the school prospectus, for example the organisation of the school day. The monitoring of pupils' progress is good. The quality and range of comment on lesson observations, which are undertaken, are satisfactory.

57. Day-to-day management of the school is sound overall but with some features which require attention. Internal lunch-time supervision and arrangements during the inspection were often unsatisfactory, resulting in some observed instances of poor behaviour. Supervision arrangements are not tight enough. Time management is often unsatisfactory. Several lessons during the inspection began late. The assembly arrangements on the last day of the inspection were unsatisfactory and resulted in lost time and, as a consequence, lack of compliance with the minimum time for the numeracy hour. Staff meeting minutes are descriptive and do not record key decisions reached. The agenda could be more focused in some meetings. These aspects indicate some slippage in the quality of day-to-day management since the last inspection.

58. The school is well staffed and has good extra adult support to assist with pupils who have special educational needs and for other classroom duties. Effective induction arrangements are made for staff new to the school and for newly qualified teachers. Members of staff are appropriately matched to age groups in the school. Staff have good opportunities for in-service training.

59. Resources for learning are satisfactory overall. They are good in science but unsatisfactory for music. In other subjects they are adequate. The school has satisfactory amounts of books and materials for conducting the literacy and numeracy hours.

60. Overall the accommodation is good. The school is bright and airy. Classroom spaces are adequate and the hall is of a good size. There are extra rooms for small group work, a medical room, administrative section and library. The internal provision for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory but there is not a large enough enclosed external space for physical activities. The school has good external grassed and hard surface space, gardens and wild-life area but the clay terrain makes much of this provision unusable for long periods after wet weather.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. In seeking to build upon the progress which has been made, the headteacher, staff and governors should attend to the following:

- improve the quality of work in art and design, music and investigative science in both key stages so that pupils develop skills continuously in these subjects in all year groups;  
(Paras. 8, 24, 27, 29, 86, 96, 119 )
- take steps to improve day-to-day procedures so that:
  - a) time-keeping is better and there is a reduction in the lost amounts of teaching time during the school day, ensuring lessons begin at the scheduled time;
  - b) assemblies do not reduce the amount of time available for the next lesson, particularly the numeracy hour;
  - c) the arrangements in which pupils change classes for different lessons are refined, general behaviour and supervision are better at lunch-times in the dining hall;
  - d) staff and governors all know which policies are current, when they are to be reviewed and recorded decisions are made of agreement reached in staff meetings;
  - e) ensure attendance registers are better maintained and there are clear procedures for monitoring lateness and attendance.  
(Paras. 21, 26, 40, 41, 43, 44, 57, 87 )
- write a set of school aims to support the mission statement which set out clearly the work of the school and its ethos;  
(Para. 55 )
- provide more opportunities for boys and girls to work together in mixed groups and so learn from one another's skills, knowledge and enthusiasm.  
(Paras. 17, 90 )
- put in place manageable pupil records of key skills in the foundation subjects.  
(Para. 29, 49, 96, 106, 111 )

Additionally the governors should write a sex education policy to comply with requirements and ensure they fulfil all statutory requirements.  
(Paras.30, 55 )



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	64
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	30	36	29	2	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		247
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		59

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	00	20	20	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	16	18
	Girls	20	20	18
	Total	38	36	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 [98]	90 [95]	90 [98]
	National	83 [82]	84 [83]	90 [87]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	19	17
	Girls	19	19	18
	Total	36	38	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 [95]	95 [98]	88 [95]
	National	84 [82]	88 [86]	88 [87]

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	00	22	12	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	19	20
	Girls	11	8	9
	Total	29	27	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 [73]	79 [64]	85 [76]
	National	75 [70]	72 [69]	85 [78]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	18	19
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	25	27	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 [82]	82 [71]	85 [76]
	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	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	95.8
Any other minority ethnic group	4.2

*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 – Year 6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.7
Average class size	27.4

**Education support staff: YR – Y6]**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	90

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

***Financial information***

Financial year	00/01
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	£
Total income	435866
Total expenditure	438383
Expenditure per pupil	1747
Balance brought forward from previous year	6259
Balance carried forward to next year	3742

## *Results of the survey of parents and carers*

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	247
Number of questionnaires returned	109

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	25	4	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	41	9	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	55	4	3	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	43	11	4	2
The teaching is good.	59	33	6	1	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	30	10	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	27	4	6	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	39	2	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	48	38	8	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	51	37	8	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	38	3	1	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	33	19	2	1

### **Other issues raised by parents**

- Some parents are concerned about the end of school arrangements and the confusion at the top of the school drive. They report that there is an accident waiting to happen. Some parents feel that there should be a full risk assessment.
- A parent stated she had to fight each year when the annual review of her child's statement came about. However, the school fights for the child's rights and she was appreciative of the school's efforts.

## **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**

60 The school makes good provision for children in the Foundation Stage. Children are admitted into the Reception class either in September or January depending on their date of birth. Those children who are five during the Autumn term are admitted full-time in September whilst the younger children attend part-time until January when they commence full-time. The Reception class curriculum is well organised and provides a stimulating learning environment into which the children settle quickly. The atmosphere is friendly and caring and is particularly appropriate for children's first introduction to school. The school has good induction procedures to support children and their parents on entry to the school. Tests, called baseline assessments, are carried out during the first half of the term following children's admission into the Reception classes. The results of these assessments show that the attainment of the majority of children on entry is above average in communication, language and literacy and mathematics but below expectations in personal, social and emotional development. By the end of the Foundation Stage the majority of children make good progress and exceed the nationally recommended standards for the end of the Reception Year. The good standards reported at the last inspection have been maintained.

61 The quality and range of the curriculum are good. Both teachers in this stage are familiar with, and knowledgeable about, curriculum expectations for this age group and they use national guidance well to inform their planning. The curriculum is mainly provided through well chosen adult directed activities that are based on the early learning goals, the national literacy and numeracy strategies and free choice play. The early years co-ordinator plans together with the part-time teacher and plans are shared with support staff and parents. The relationships between teaching, non-teaching staff and parents in the Foundation Stage are good and make a significant contribution to the well being of all children. The classroom assistants provide good support that promotes children's achievements. Weekly and daily planning of the activities to be provided is detailed with clear learning objectives. The quality of teaching is always good and sometimes very good. Baseline assessments provide early identification of pupils with special educational needs and are also used to group pupils for particular activities. Teachers and support staff regularly observe and record examples of children's learning and the information is used well to inform planning so that children can make the best possible progress.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

62 By the end of the Foundation Stage, children have made good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and exceed the standards expected for children of their age. The quality of teaching for this area of learning is good and all adults have high expectations of the children. Children settle quickly and show a good understanding of daily routines as a result of the good induction systems and relationships that are established. They sit quietly and listen attentively during registration and when adults are talking. They have good relationships with each other and the adults who support them, including parents and visitors. They talk readily about themselves and their play and join in with class and group discussions about events and experiences both at home and in school. They play happily together and share apparatus and equipment without fuss or argument, showing consideration for each other's feelings and intentions. They tidy up sensibly when asked and have a good understanding of where materials and equipment are stored. Their behaviour is very good. They are well able to make careful choices about what activities they wish to follow. They persist at all these self-chosen, teacher-directed tasks and free play activities, showing good levels of sustained

concentration and perseverance. They readily take daily responsibility for recording the planned activities they want to do and select appropriate resources to support their planned learning. There are well-established rules for behaviour in the Reception classes and these, together with the good role models provided by the adults, make a positive contribution to the children's very good behaviour. The teachers successfully encourage children to take responsibility for looking after themselves, for example undressing and dressing themselves.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

63 By the end of the Foundation Stage children have made good progress and exceed the standards expected of them in this aspect of their learning. Teaching is good overall. Children's speaking and listening skills are developed through carefully structured activities. For example, the children plan and later review their activities, as well as take part in informal conversations that they or others initiate. They listen very attentively to stories and rhymes and respond well in discussions about characters and events during literacy activities. They speak confidently and fluently using complex sentences and many have extensive vocabularies. A strong emphasis is given to the development of early reading and writing skills through well planned activities based on the National Literacy Strategy guidelines. As a result, children are developing a good understanding of phonics by learning the sounds and shapes of individual letters. The majority can identify the individual letter sounds in words and give a range of other words that begin with the same sound. In their writing many can confidently write sentences unaided using their good knowledge of letter sounds to write a wide range of words. They are taught to form letters correctly. Most children can write their own first names legibly and correctly. They understand the role of capital letters and full stops and use these in their writing. They are learning to recognise high frequency words by sight and most are able to read simple reading books fluently. They are beginning to use their phonic knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words. The teachers provide a range of interesting activities to promote children's listening skills. For example children enjoy sharing personal news to which the adults listen carefully and with interest. Children take books home to read with their parents and are regularly heard to read in school with helpful records kept of their progress.

### **Mathematical development**

64 By the end of the Reception Year, children have made good progress in their mathematical development and exceed the expected standards. Teaching is good overall. Planning for numeracy activities is based on the National Numeracy Strategy guidelines and has clear learning objectives. The children know, and enjoy joining in with, a range of number rhymes and can repeat the actions that go with these. As part of their play they spontaneously use counts, estimate, compare and comment on difference, match, sort objects by shape, size and colour and use everyday words to describe position as, for example, when using building bricks to construct models. Role-play in the 'shop' provides good opportunities for handling real money and most children are able to read the prices of items and identify if they had enough money to buy them. Using pennies they were able to count out the correct amounts needed and where more than one item was purchased add prices together to reach a total sum. In play with sand and gardening outside, they begin to understand ideas such as 'full' and 'empty' and 'heavy' and 'light'. They recognise simple shapes and understand some of the differences between these. They can count forwards and backwards and recognise numbers to ten and beyond. Many can write numbers to ten and beyond correctly. They understand the concept of addition and can record the addition of unequal sets. The staff's use of correct mathematical language and appropriately challenging questions help children to make good progress both during adult-structured and free play activities.

## **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**

65 By the end of the Foundation Stage children have made good progress in this area of learning and exceed the standards expected for children of this age. The quality of teaching is good overall and the provision made for the children is characterised by the provision of a wide range of interesting and motivating activities. In their planning linked to the theme of ‘growing’, the teachers make good links between the different areas of learning and, as a result, the children’s learning is enhanced. They have studied how plants grow through planting bean seeds. Outside they learn about the conditions needed to help plants grow as they prepare the soil and plant vegetables and flowers in the school garden. They develop a good understanding of their own growth and the need to eat healthily. As they work outside they notice and talk about different weather patterns. They understand the need to vary their outdoor clothing to suit different weather conditions. In conversation they talk readily about themselves, their families and events in their lives and understand how they have changed since they were babies. They have drawn simple personal family time lines. They are beginning to develop a good understanding of different countries in the world and some of the significant features of the life and customs of people who live in them. In role-play, they act out the occupations of different people in society as well as those of family members. The children explore the properties of a wide variety of materials such as play dough, water and sand and learn how different materials behave. They have a good understanding of how technology supports everyday life through making models of such items, as tape recorders and cameras and use computers to support their learning confidently and with enjoyment. They are aware of the role of electronic messaging as a means of communication. Their thematic work makes a good contribution to their literacy skills.

### **Physical development**

66 By the end of the Foundation Stage, children have made good progress and exceed the standards expected for children of this age. The quality of teaching is good overall. In the hall, children are able to invent, explore and refine a range of movements in response to musical sounds with good control. They use tools and equipment purposefully and safely. They respond quickly to any instructions. They are beginning to learn about their bodies and use space well showing good awareness of others around them. They play outside at playtimes very well. They use a variety of tools including pencils, crayons, brushes, glue spreaders and scissors with good control. The Reception class does not have a separate secure outside area where the children can enjoy opportunities for vigorous independent physical activity. However, the teachers use every opportunity to take them outside, for example for gardening and number games.

### **Creative development**

67 By the end of the Foundation Stage children have made good progress and exceed the standards expected for children of this age. The quality of teaching is good overall. The teachers provide a rich range of activities that allow the children to express themselves creatively. They enjoy singing simple rhymes and songs as well as opportunities to play untuned percussion instruments. They listen to music and are able to make personal responses to what they hear. They have daily opportunities to draw or paint pictures from their own imagination, as well as participating in adult-directed activities as when they learn how to mix paint for themselves. They are beginning to be aware of how other people use paint and colour to create a particular image as, for example, their study of Van Gogh’s painting of sunflowers, and to use this experience in their own work. They are able to look carefully at objects, such as fruit, and record their observations through drawing. They have regular opportunities for imaginative role-play where they can act out different characters and events within a given theme. They use tools, such as pencils, brushes and scissors, with good control

68 The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the needs of children in the Foundation Stage and this is reflected in the Early Years policy document as well as the curriculum provided. There is an action plan in place to guide developments. Resources are regularly monitored and are satisfactory overall. Parental involvement is encouraged and supported and parents were observed to be relaxed and confident when approaching and talking to all staff or supporting activities in the classrooms. Positive liaison activities have been established with local playgroups and these positively support the school's induction procedures.

## ENGLISH

69 In the national tests for pupils aged seven in 2000, the school's results were well above the national average in reading and above average in writing. In comparison with similar schools, standards in reading were above average and writing standards were broadly in line with the average. In the national tests for eleven-year-olds, the school's results were above average and broadly average against similar schools. These results followed the general trend over the last four years. Inspection evidence indicates that this is set to continue in the 2001 tests. At the end of both key stages, a significant number of pupils are working above the standards expected for their age group. A minority do not quite reach these expectations. Speaking and listening skills are generally good throughout the school. Most pupils express their ideas clearly using quite complex sentences and correct language constructions. In Key Stage 1, most pupils make steady progress and this speeds up as they move up through the school. By the end of Key Stage 2, more than half have progressed beyond what could have been predicted from their Key Stage 1 results.

70 By the age of seven, many pupils can write their own structured stories with a recognisable narrative. Some make a good attempt at different forms of writing, including factual writing, informative work and limericks, which show an understanding of the requirements of the particular style. Some are beginning to inject a sense of humour into their work, which adds to the effect. Work is usually titled and dated but presentation is variable. A few attempt to join up their handwriting but most can form the letters correctly. Most spell simple words accurately and a few use their phonic knowledge to build up letter blends. As a result, words spelt incorrectly are usually phonetically plausible and recognisable. However, the work of a few is very difficult to decipher. Most remember to use capital letters, full stops and some make an attempt at speech marks. When reading, most are able to tackle texts of an appropriate level of difficulty with some confidence. In higher attaining pupils, unfamiliar words are attempted using a variety of strategies based on phonic lessons. Most understand what they are reading and some can suggest the meaning of new words from the context of the story. Appropriate notice is taken of punctuation to make sense of what is being read. Most pupils of this age are aware of the function of the author, illustrator or 'blurb' on the cover of a book.

71 As they move up through Key Stage 2, the presentation of work becomes more consistent. By Year 6, most pupils join up their letters correctly, write in ink and give their work a title and date. There are occasional slips in grammar and punctuation. They mostly spell commonly used words accurately. Most pupils make good progress in their use of descriptive language. By Year 4, most pupils can draw up character sketches which create clear pictures, for example '*an aggressive, bulky man with frowning features whose large belly wobbled like a jelly*'. By the age of eleven, some write stories and poetry with striking imagery and pleasing spiritual content '*I am the silent wind flying in the sky*'. Some of the poems show a remarkable maturity and even self-criticism such as '*The cloud that floats above my head is a cloud of guilt*'. Most are able to write in a variety of different styles, such as diaries, fantasy or persuasive argument. Many can identify the main aspects to look for when identifying different types of writing and can compare and contrast these. There is evidence of drafting and planning work to improve the content and accuracy. Some Year 6 pupils can write in the first person and can see both the advantages and drawbacks of this approach. Most eleven-year-olds are confident in their reading skills in texts of an appropriate level of difficulty and some read with good expression to add to the impact of the story.



72 Since the previous inspection, standards have remained above the national average at the end of Key Stage 1. The attainment of eleven-year-olds has improved. In the last inspection, pupils' attainment and progress were judged to be generally sound in English but many pupils are now attaining at an above expected level and making good progress overall as they proceed through Key Stage 2. Speaking and listening skills remain good at both key stages. Drama now plays a more important part in the curriculum but there is room for this to be further strengthened. The quality of teaching has improved. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed and it is now good overall at both key stages. Effective assessment procedures have been put in place and the information this gives helps to shape future planning. Systems for monitoring and evaluating standards are now used effectively to chart pupils' progress through each key stage and to predict where they will be at the end of Key Stage 2. Information and communication technology continues to be well used to support pupils' work and to open up opportunities for different styles of presentation through word-processing. Some software is used effectively to strengthen pupils' spelling, grammar and comprehension.

73 The overall quality of teaching in both key stages is good and ranges from satisfactory to very good in each key stage. Where teaching is most effective, the lessons start briskly and there is a high expectation that pupils will behave well. There is mutual respect between pupils and teachers, ensuring that there is an appropriate atmosphere in which pupils can learn. Learning objectives are made explicit to the pupils. Most teachers have a sound subject knowledge, which ensures that they ask probing and often challenging questions, which makes the pupils think more deeply about their answers. Many teachers use mature language and terminology, which extend the pupils' ability to express themselves more accurately. Teachers use well chosen texts and often read these with expression to add to pupils' understanding and appreciation of the scene being described. Pupils are encouraged to think up ways in which this can be extended as, for example, by the use of sound effects in the reading of 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin'. The work set for each group usually takes account of what they have previously achieved and provides an appropriate challenge to progress further. Teachers usually bring the class together at the end of most lessons giving an opportunity for the teacher to assess what progress has been made and to extend that learning, for example how they can improve their writing by evaluating either their own work or that of others. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of small group teaching and effective support.

74 Occasionally teaching methods are less successful. Sometimes inappropriate behaviour goes unchecked and this can distract the other pupils and diminish levels of concentration. Where pupils are kept too long on the carpet area, they can become uncomfortable and restless and some begin to 'switch off'. Occasionally reproductions of text are of poor quality. As a result, some pupils find it difficult to decipher the words and an opportunity to raise confidence in reading skills is lost. The work set for groups is not always appropriate, being either too easy for some or too difficult for others. On these occasions, pupils do not feel that they have achieved much. Sometimes important teaching points are not sufficiently emphasised and the pupils do not retain what they have been studying. Inadvertent mistakes on the part of the teacher in grammar or spelling are not always corrected and this can confuse pupils.

75 The subject is well managed and the co-ordinator is well aware of her role. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has been effective in raising standards of work. The in-service training modules have increased confidence in teaching literacy skills among the staff. Assessment procedures are thorough and regularly applied. Pupils' work is regularly compared against national expectations for that age group. The information gained from this exercise is reflected in the short-, medium- and long-term planning and in the targets set for each pupil. Progress of each pupil is tracked as they move up through the school. This helps to identify any areas which require further consolidation. This is exemplified in the school's realisation that writing skills needed development.

76 Regular observation of teaching to monitor standards takes place and to ensure that all pupils are being given equal opportunities. However, sometimes these appraisals lack further development points, which would help teachers to improve their techniques. Marking of pupils' work often contains constructive comment but this is not consistent across the school.

77 Resources are appropriate for the different aspects of teaching literacy and have been updated to meet the requirements of the National Literacy Scheme. Library provision has recently been reviewed and new books purchased but it lacks a system to help pupils select books and information easily. Library skills are taught, but many pupils were rather vague when they were asked to find specific information. Homework is used effectively throughout the school and particularly in Years 5 and 6 to consolidate pupils' learning. The teaching of literacy skills is strengthened through cross-curricular links with geography, history and information and communication technology. History in particular gives many opportunities for extended writing.

## **MATHEMATICS**

78 The results of the 2000 national tests for seven and eleven-year-olds indicate that standards in mathematics are above the national average in Key Stage 1 and close to the national average in Key Stage 2. In comparison with similar schools, standards were below average for the school's seven-year-olds and well below the national average for its eleven-year-olds. The end of Key Stage 1 cohort in 2000 contained several pupils with learning difficulties. Inspection evidence indicates that, overall, standards are above expectations by the end of both key stages. Pupils achieve well and this is a direct result of the good quality of teaching throughout the school and the good management of the subject. The setting of pupils into ability groups works well and enables the pupils to make good progress in lessons. Current standards are better than reported previously in Key Stage 1 and similar in Key Stage 2.

79 The school, although not a pilot school, started the National Numeracy Scheme early and all teachers have undergone relevant numeracy training. This has led to well organised lessons with clear learning objectives. Consequently all pupils understand what they have to do. Teaching is well matched to pupils' prior attainment through the teaching arrangements that are made. Within groups, pupils who are of higher ability are frequently presented with more challenging work. Those of lower ability or those who have specific educational need are taught in smaller groups and presented with tasks, which reinforce similar mathematical concepts but are simplified to their need. Pupils in both key stages enjoy mathematics and respond well to the challenges set for them. By the end of Key Stage 1, building on prior work, they are able to calculate number bonds to 20 and make up their own horizontal sums from given numbers. They also make sums with multiples of 10, for example  $40+60=100$  and higher attaining pupils quickly produce a long list of numbers, which take their answers to over 100, for example  $80+80=160$ . In another group, pupils consolidate the 'inverse' rule and recognise with glee that  $3+4=7$  and  $7-3=4$  and  $7-4=3$ . When working alone, higher attaining pupils apply this operation to higher numbers, for example  $24+35=59$ ,  $59-35=24$ . Scrutiny of work indicates that pupils have covered a wide range of work appropriate to their needs. Particular attention is being paid to the use and application of mathematics, an area in which many pupils have not consolidated well previously. Pupils' numeracy skills are well developed in other subjects throughout the school, for example the interpretation of data in geography and in investigations in science .

80 In lessons teachers have high expectations, learning objectives are identified and instructions are clear. Most lessons proceed at a good pace and time is well managed so that pupils are challenged, motivated and kept on task. They provide relevant resources and include a good variety of strategies to involve pupils. In one lesson the teacher introduced the concept of changing fractions into decimal fractions and back again well so that all pupils were able to do this. In another class,

pupils discussed probability and the teacher added interest and fun by using the presence of a bumble bee in the room ‘what are his chances of... ?’ Pupils work neatly and quietly and most eleven-year-olds can represent an answer as a ratio, fraction or percentage and know the formulae for calculating area and perimeter. Good attention is given to matching work to pupils and extending the challenge for higher attaining pupils. The pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively. Good progress is made and pupils clearly understand the concepts. Pupils continue any unfinished work for homework.

81 Scrutiny of pupils’ work books and of teachers’ planning indicates that National Curriculum Programmes of Study are fulfilled. In their books pupils have individual attainment targets related to National Curriculum levels. They refer to these regularly and are aware what they need to consolidate. They are involved in discussions with their parents and their teacher about their attainment and progress. Good use of on-going whole class assessment was seen during the inspection when a teacher altered her lesson plans to give pupils more practice in applying addition and subtraction to everyday problems.

82 The management of mathematics is good. The co-ordinator is well informed and well organised and aware of her responsibility to teachers and pupils. Lessons are monitored and constructive feedback is given. Pupils are set progress targets from Year 1 to Year 6 and the co-ordinator monitors these with teachers to ensure pupils achieve appropriately. Tests results are analysed to identify where individual pupils have problems and where a whole group have encountered difficulties. This information is then used to inform planning. Resources are adequate.

## SCIENCE

83 In the past few years, the attainment of eleven-year-olds in science has fluctuated from the national average to below it in national tests. In 2000, results were below the national average and well below the national average against similar schools. The percentage of pupils gaining the higher level in 2000 was below the national average. The Year 6 cohort contained a few pupils with moderate learning difficulties. The percentage of seven-year-olds obtaining the expected level, as judged by teacher assessments, was below the national average. This was largely due to poorer attainment in investigative science. Against similar schools, the proportion of pupils obtaining the expected level, including investigative science, was well below average, although above average for the percentage gaining the higher level. Key Stage 2 boys have been doing better than the school’s girls and as well as their national gender counterparts but girls have performed less well on average than the girls nationally over the past three years. There are signs that standards in science are beginning to improve. Inspection evidence indicates that the pupils’ knowledge is often good but their skills in investigation are not yet sufficiently matched to their capabilities. Currently, standards in pupils’ knowledge are in line at the end of both key stages and about one-third of the pupils at the end of each key stage are attaining above expectations.

84 Overall pupils make sound progress in the subject in both key stages. Progress is good in their acquisition of knowledge in both key stages and satisfactory in both their development of skills in investigative work and in written communication, although better in their oral communication. Pupils’ achievements are generally appropriate. They apply themselves well in lessons, although sometimes significant amounts of time were lost during the inspection at the beginning of lessons, caused by movement between classes and late start to lessons.

85 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know that sound can travel in all directions. They understand that a simple electric circuit can contain a power source, such as a battery, wires and a bulb. They know that a candle and the sun are sources of light. They appreciate that the heart rate increases after activity and that some foods are more healthy than others. They can sort objects into

different categories, such as plastics and metals. Pupils know how their capabilities change with age from being a baby to becoming a child. They understand something about fair testing but their understanding is still insecure; for example when experimenting with the direction in which sound travels Year 2 pupils had written 'we will use a tambourine because it has bells on and that will keep it (sound) at the same level.'

86 By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils understand the difference between solids, liquids and gases. They know the difference between living and non-living things, the categories of food types and the effect on the body. They understand the concept of resistance, gravity, push and pull movements and the balance of forces. They know that some metals are magnetic and others non-magnetic. They appreciate the theory behind the water cycle. They predict with good levels of accuracy the likely effect of putting food types in different places. They show good knowledge, and can give examples, of reversible and irreversible changes. However, they have some misunderstanding about what burns when a candle is lit. They can give their own examples, such as the burning of wood into ash as an irreversible change. They know terms such as permeable, impermeable and micro-organisms and have a good understanding of molecules and how they can be tightly packed in ice or more spaced out in liquids.

87 The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. It is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2 the quality of lessons observed ranged from good to unsatisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers have very good subject knowledge and include references to health and safety. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the teacher reminded the pupils that they must never experiment without knowing what the substances are. In Key Stage 1 pupils are made aware of the dangers of electricity. Good use is made of the application of science. Year 6 pupils were taught about the preservation of food and the means by which the risk of infection from micro-organisms can be kept to a minimum. Class management is good and the use of good, brisk questioning checks pupils' understanding and depth of knowledge. Correct terminology is used for equipment. The lessons are well prepared, well structured with a good balance of discussion, activity and explanations. However, in all lessons pupils work together in separate gender groups and, as a result, the girls are not benefiting in small group discussion and practical working situations from the overall more enthusiastic attitude to the subject and depth of knowledge which the school's boys have. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, the lesson was delayed by pupils arriving both late and noisily, some inappropriate behaviour and too much content. As a result, important concepts were glanced over inconclusively and important discussion on the controls in experiments omitted.

88 Overall, the content matches pupils' ages in the mixed-age classes because teachers often, but not always, set a higher challenge for the older pupils in the set. In general however, the challenge of work in the same class or set is similar. Pupils with special educational needs receive extra teaching support or are given a less demanding text which enables them to manage the work. Pupils make appropriate use of tables to record their work. Pupils' presentation of their work is satisfactory overall but with considerable variation in the quality of handwriting and neatness. Some use is made of mathematics through measuring and graph work, although graphs are sometimes not drawn accurately enough.

89 The quality of marking is satisfactory. It is up to date but there is no assurance that comments made on pupils' books are followed up. For example, requests for pupils to label their work and write up their conclusions are rarely fulfilled. There is not yet a record of pupils' progress in the subject.

90 Pupils are interested in science and enjoy the work. They persevere with their tasks and usually co-operate effectively in small group work. Good use is made of prediction.

91 The science co-ordinator manages the subject well. She has very good skills, good subject knowledge and her personal enthusiasm and techniques in the teaching of the subject a good example to others. Her enthusiasm is infectious and is helping to develop the quality of work in both key stages. Resources for the subject are good. The National Curriculum Programmes of Study are

fulfilled. There is a good structure to the pupils' work throughout the school. The Reception teacher does very good work in extra-curricular activities with reference to the environment, ecology, conservation and recycling.

92 There has been a significant improvement in the quality of work in science since the last inspection because of the co-ordinator's work. The quality of teaching has improved. Pupils use their own words when writing up their work and there is less board copied work. Pupils have more opportunities for investigation and they are making better progress in the subject and acquiring more secure concepts and understanding. There remains much scope for improving pupils' understanding of investigative techniques.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

93 During the inspection period five lessons of art were observed, two in Key Stage 1 and three in Key Stage 2. A very limited amount of work was presented for scrutiny and there were no sketch books. Other evidence was gained from displays, talking to teachers and pupils and looking at portfolios and photographs. Although there were some examples of very good work in both key stages, overall the standard of art work does not meet expectations for pupils at ages seven and eleven, representing a decline since the last inspection.

94 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are beginning to work in clay. In connection with history and English they are making bears. They are able to explain that the clay must be 'banged' to remove any air bubbles otherwise these will explode when heated. They were delighted as they beat their lump of clay to do this and it transformed into a cube. They know how to use slip and join the bear's limbs to his torso. Expertly guided by the class teacher they take note of the shape of body, limbs, paws and snout and use tools correctly to smooth or create texture. Following the teacher's example, throughout they attempt to use correct terminology. The result is some splendid bears of which they are justly proud. Similar work was observed in Year 4. However because clay work is not yet taught continuously, these pupils were only at a similar learning stage and as the teacher rightly suggested, would have benefited from more experimental work to understand the facets of clay. Similarly in Year 6 pupils were attempting to illustrate rivers in textile work. Although the teacher had introduced the work well with good illustrative displays and many ideas, pupils did not have a sufficient bank of skills, for example in sewing, weaving or pattern making to develop their imaginative ideas. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have painted some delightful cameo landscapes to illustrate travel guides. Throughout the school, where art has a cross-curricular theme, the concentration on developing artistic skills is sometimes forgotten. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop brush control, or have continuous experience of the developmental skills needed for a wide enough variety of media. For example, only isolated examples of media like charcoal, pastel, drawing pencil, three-dimensional materials and varying textiles and threads were presented.

95 The quality of teaching observed varied from very good to unsatisfactory but is unsatisfactory overall because of the lack of a skills structure. Where teaching was not successful, the lesson was intended for a two-year age range and an even wider range of ability, even though the teacher had introduced the topic well. The strategies did not take the varying needs of younger or less able pupils into account. Moreover, as sound and consistent assessment procedures for art are not yet in place, the teacher was not fully aware of pupils' prior learning or attainment on which to base work. Where teaching is particularly successful, lessons are carefully prepared to ensure that at each stage, skills were consolidated, correct vocabulary was emphasised and materials and equipment were used correctly. At the end of the lesson work was evaluated well and problems and successful features were identified.

96 The art and design co-ordinator has only recently been appointed. She has a sound personal and curriculum action plan. She has already drawn up a new long-term curriculum plan, guided by national documents to try and overcome the current problems. She is aware of the limitations of resources and has itemised what needs to be made available to staff to provide a more exciting and enriching curriculum. Resources are adequate.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

97 Because of the way in which design and technology is blocked within the timetable, it was not possible to observe lessons in Key Stage 1. Judgements are based on lesson observations in Key Stage 2, a scrutiny of pupils' work in books and on display, photographic evidence and teachers' planning. On the basis of this evidence pupils' attainment in design and technology is in line with expectations by the end of both key stages and all pupils make sound progress including those with special educational needs. Standards are similar to those reported at the previous inspection.

98 Planning shows a sound balance of experiences chosen from the National Curriculum. Pupils' study structures, mechanisms, textiles and food technology and their work involves a range of materials and a variety of tools. The design element is fully incorporated in the process, as is evaluation. Skills are taught systematically. Work undertaken takes account of other curriculum studies, enabling pupils to make good links with other subjects and to use their mathematical and literacy skills.

99 Key Stage 1 pupils have made musical instruments and mobiles of satisfactory quality using a variety of materials and joining techniques. They produce careful plans, labelling specific features and indicating the materials they will use. Their written evaluations include an analysis of what did not work as well as what worked well. In Key Stage 2, pupils work collaboratively with enthusiasm and excitement and persevere at solving problems. For example, in one lesson Years 3 and 4 pupils worked well designing and making monsters, using a pneumatic system to control movement. They tried out various methods such as balloons, tubing and pumps and were prepared to rethink their plans when a method proved to be unsuccessful. Years 5 and 6 pupils followed recipes to make different types of bread showing good persistence and willingness to overcome difficulties. When one group added too much liquid in error, they undertook additional kneading to compensate for having to add extra flour and worked very hard to achieve good quality dough that rose successfully. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. No judgement can be made on Key Stage 1 since no teaching could be observed.

100. The coordinator has just undertaken responsibility for the subject. She has reviewed and revised the policy to take account of the revised National Curriculum and an action plan is in place, developed in consultation with all the staff. The school has adopted national guidance as its scheme of work. There are sufficient resources to support the current topics being undertaken and these are readily available.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

101. Standards of work for pupils at the age of seven are broadly in line with what might be expected for their age. At the age of eleven, the work of the majority of pupils is above expected standards. In Key Stage 1, work is often based on the locations, which will be most familiar to the pupils. For example, they draw plans of their local area or the area around the school and this helps them to develop mapping skills and a visual awareness of the layout of roads, shops and houses around them. The local area is used effectively for fieldwork, for example on traffic surveys. From

this, most pupils can work out which roads are the busiest both from volume of vehicles and numbers of parked cars. This leads on to some being able to suggest how the area round the school could be made safer for the pupils. Many are able to display the results of their survey in bar graph form. In the course of this survey, many of the pupils begin to build up a bank of words and terminology associated with traffic such as vehicles, panda crossing and traffic lights.

102. As they move up through the school, many pupils begin to be able to locate major towns and physical features in Britain and then in the wider world. Most pupils develop an awareness of how mankind affects the environment. For example, some produce striking posters to deter litter dropping. Most are able to understand how the weather affects lifestyles both from personal experience ('It was cold in the Isle of Wight so we had to wear warm clothes') and in places they have not visited. Following from this, many can draw up suggested clothing lists for different holidays like safari, exploring Greenland or visiting Egypt. Many pupils make appropriate travel brochures persuading people to visit places in England or abroad showing a good understanding of different and contrasting locations. Many can understand some of the effects, both positive and negative, which result from tourism. By the age of eleven, some are able to carry out quite detailed research into observed phenomena like erosion in the school playground resulting from the winter floods. Many can extend the knowledge gained from this study into independent research into erosion in other places like the River Usk and how this will affect the people living nearby. Year 6 pupils use mature and appropriate geographical vocabulary like meander, deposition, or sediment when writing up the results of their research. Most pupils write their own paragraphs from the information they glean but a few are still simply copying from other text word for word. From using three-dimensional models of the course of a river, they are able to deduce the factors which must be taken into account when people decide to live near the river, like protecting crops from flooding or finding the most appropriate area for grazing different animals and building villages. The model of a river flood plain brings home the difficulties facing the people of Mozambique or Bangladesh. Many pupils are able to discuss with remarkably mature perception the dilemma between personal safety of the inhabitants, who are constantly threatened by impending natural disasters, and the need to maximise the fertility of the land the river deposits bring.

103. Since the last inspection the provision of geography has improved. Attainment continues to be appropriate for pupils aged seven but by eleven, many now exceed the national expectation for the end of Key Stage 2. Progress is good throughout the school and very good in some classes, particularly in Years 5 and 6 and by age 11, their achievements are good because of the good teaching. Worksheets are used much less frequently than before and the work set is generally more challenging. Teachers now have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve at both key stages and many of the upper junior pupils are encouraged to extend their learning beyond what might be expected of their age group. Resources have been reviewed, atlases updated and software purchased to offer an appropriate range of sources from which pupils can carry out individual research. Computers in classrooms are all linked to the Internet, which adds a vast new area from which to gain information. The policy has been updated in line with the latest national curriculum. Assessment procedures remain less well defined.

104. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection week, of which one was judged very good and one outstanding. Overall judgements about the quality of teaching are based on these plus scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with staff and pupils and lesson plans. Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to ask challenging questions, which encourage deeper thought and understanding of the issues being discussed. The work set is mostly well matched to what pupils have previously achieved, which ensures that all are kept busy during the group work sessions. Clear explanations of group work help each pupil to realise what is expected. Occasionally the whole class does the same exercise, which does not always allow higher attaining pupils to achieve their full potential. Planning is sound and gives the lesson an appropriate structure and teachers discuss what is to be studied so pupils know where it is leading. Most staff use mature vocabulary and correct terminology, which extends pupils' language development and adds to the accuracy of their answers. Pupils are well managed and gently reminded that oral answers sometimes need editing to keep

discussions to the point. Teachers often use their own personal experiences of travel to add depth to the discussion. Pupils gain greatly from being able to ask pertinent questions first hand. The three-dimensional river model is very well used to illustrate the benefits and disadvantages of living in that kind of area. Pupils are asked to justify their location of villages, grazing land and crops, which improves their logical thinking and develops observational skills. It also intensifies their insight into problems many of the world's people face on a regular basis. The teachers' enthusiasm for the subject conveys itself to the pupils who enjoy the lessons and talk confidently about what they are learning.

105. The subject co-ordinator has only taken over the post very recently but she has good knowledge of, and vision for, the subject. Planning has been updated in line with the new curriculum requirements and is largely based on suggested government guidelines. Cross-curricular links have been strengthened to allow the opportunity for pupils to develop skills, which apply across all the subjects like using information and communication technology and adding depth and expression to their writing. Long-term planning is discussed with each teacher and checked for appropriate coverage of the programmes of study. The planning encourages research skills throughout the school but particularly in Years 5 and 6. The blocking of topics in a two-year cycle, giving many hours to each topic, allows them to be studied in considerable depth. Members of staff are aware of the need to push enquiry skills further for the older pupils in mixed-year groups. Assessment systems are still being developed. It has not been possible to monitor teaching quality recently. Resources have been audited and updated of late to improve their effectiveness and the school is able to borrow from local organisations to add to these. Many of the staff are able to provide artefacts and pictures from their own travels and this injects an extra dimension. The Internet is well used and some pupils are encouraged to e-mail friends in other countries.

## **HISTORY**

106. The work of pupils at the age of seven and eleven is broadly in line with what might be expected for their age and their achievements are satisfactory. Pupils in Key Stage 1 begin to grasp the idea of the passing of time through celebrating regular festivals such as harvest, Christmas and birthdays. Most pupils begin to realise that ways of dressing or the toys children play with change over the years. Most are able to relate these changes first of all to their own immediate experiences and extend this by talking to parents and grandparents about their childhood. From this starting point, many are then able to understand that there have been famous people and events quite outside living memory which have changed the face of history. Through the study at a very simple level of historical events such as Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot or why we celebrate Remembrance Day, many pupils are able to grasp that they are part of a continuing pattern.

107. As they move up through Key Stage 2, many pupils begin to interpret a wider range of evidence. Most are able to understand why settlements grow up where they do. Most can link their knowledge of plans and maps to interpreting old maps or drawing up their own using appropriate keys to identify different factors, such as forests as a source of wood for fuel and building, rivers, crop growing areas or even possible lines of defence. Some pupils are able to demonstrate that they can put themselves in the position of people in the past, for example how the invasion by the Emperor Claudius affected the lives of the Celts in Britain. Many begin to develop more sophisticated historical skills by considering what we can learn from artefacts, such as bones, books and pottery but only a few grasp that our interpretation of past events may not be entirely accurate. By Year 6, much of the work seen matches national expectations for the age group in regard to content, research skills and development of correct terminology. Many pupils are beginning to find out about the past from the internet or other reference sources and not relying solely on information given by the teacher. Some simply copy the information they find but many are able to write in their own words. Study of the reign of Queen Victoria leads many pupils to understand the gulf between the lives of rich and poor and they can think up searching questions they would like to have asked people in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Some are able to use information from the census to build up a picture of the kinds of jobs



people had. The higher attaining pupils are able to evaluate the effect that some of the major innovations had on the lives of people of the time. For example, some realise the coming of the railways allowed people to work away from their immediate home area, gave opportunities for seaside holidays at resorts such as Margate and helped people to learn how their lives varied from those in different parts of the country.

108. There have been considerable improvements since the last inspection. Planning is much more detailed in the long-, medium- and short-term. The requirements of the new National Curriculum have been absorbed into the two-year cycle of what the pupils will study. The curriculum fully meets the statutory requirements at both key stages. Standards of work of pupils aged seven and eleven are securely in line with expectations for the age group. Historical skills are developed progressively from Year 1 upwards. Resources have been thoroughly reviewed and many gaps filled. Assessment systems remain rather imprecise.

109. It was possible to observe only one lesson during the inspection which was judged to be of good quality. Judgements about teaching are based on this and scrutiny of pupils work, discussions with staff and pupils. Pupils are able to talk with obvious enjoyment about the history they have studied and remember the salient facts fairly accurately, reflecting the enthusiasm and effectiveness of the teaching. Good use is made of resources such as photographic evidence or artefacts like toys or household equipment, which highlights how many things have changed over the years. Teachers correctly use their own personal experience to add depth to the pupils' understanding. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions of those who have first-hand information of what they are studying. This brings home to them how toys have changed or the effects of the Second World War on the lives of their parents and grandparents. Visits to museums also give pupils an opportunity to touch, examine and work out the purpose of objects from the past. Pupils are given a wide range of tasks from simple factual recall to writing from a first-hand point of view as they grow older which encourages them to think more deeply about how people feel and how this will then affect what happens next. This helps to develop their skills of historical understanding.

110. The co-ordinator of history has a sound grasp of how history should be provided in the school, which is strengthened by a personal enthusiasm for the subject. In-service training has helped to highlight areas which needed to be developed more fully. Assessment systems are not fully formalised but pupils' work is regularly monitored in class. Teachers are aware of the difficulty of teaching two-year class groups the same topic. Most staff are aware that gender differences can affect each pupils' perspective and they try to take this into account when they are teaching. It is planned to start a portfolio of pupils' work next term, which will make it easier to assess progress over time. At the end of each topic, any problems are discussed and whether the outcome has been as required. Many visits are organised to both local sites, such as historic Tonbridge and further afield to Osborne House on the Isle of Wight to give pupils different learning experiences. There are good cross-curricular links with literacy to extend writing skills and map work in geography. Resources have been greatly improved by the provision of fact files compiled by the co-ordinator of old photographs, pictures and extracts from texts to stimulate pupils' enjoyment and 'feel' for history.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

111. Because the teaching of information and communication technology is currently undertaken by the coordinator and because of timetabling arrangements, it was only possible to observe teaching in Key Stage 2. The judgements draw on additional evidence obtained through discussion with pupils and teachers, scrutiny of teachers' planning and assessment, scrutiny of pupils' work and the observation of pupils using computers in other aspects of the curriculum. On the basis of this evidence, standards are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages and pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Pupils' achievements are sound. These standards are similar to those reported at the previous inspection.

112. In Key Stage 1 pupils use the keyboard, including the function keys and space bar, and mouse confidently and with enjoyment. They can open a variety of programmes, such as educational games and painting programmes and select and use the tools required to enable them to complete the required tasks. By the age of seven they are able to use their developing word-processing skills to compose and type sentences to describe work they have done and save and print out their work. They can use programmable toys to locate 'buried treasure' and record the instructions accurately and with understanding. They use a digital camera to record change occurring to materials during a science experiment. Apart from the specialist teaching in Year 2, pupils across the key stage have regular opportunities to use computers to support work across the curriculum with the support of class teachers and classroom assistants.

113. In Key Stage 2 pupils develop their skills systematically as a result of the specialist teaching. They understand how to control equipment and achieve specific outcomes, such as selecting font styles and using bold, underline and centre to create a title for a poster. They can search a database for information and add to, amend and interrogate stored information. They can open and close files and retrieve personal work. They can use CD-Roms and the Internet to find information. They sometimes use computers across the curriculum to support their learning, as for example, producing a key to accompany work on food chains and word-processing but cross-curricular work is not yet a strong feature of the school's provision.

114. The quality of teaching in the formal information and communication lessons observed was usually good. The teacher has good knowledge and skills and uses these effectively to support pupils in the planned learning. As a result, pupils enjoyed information and communication technology lessons and worked with interest and perseverance. They worked well in collaborative groups.

115. The coordinator is both knowledgeable and enthusiastic. A good policy and scheme of work are in place, reflected in teachers' planning and there is also a good Internet access policy that is fully shared with parents. Because of her specialist-teaching role, the co-ordinator has a good perspective on standards across the school. She also monitors teachers' medium-term planning and where appropriate provides advice and support. A long-term action plan is in place to guide and support future development of the subject. The co-ordinator regularly reviews the action plan and has a clear view of what needs to be done to raise standards. As well as encouraging pupils to undertake personal self-assessment in both key stages, she has initiated formal assessment procedures in Key Stage 2 and this will be extended to Key Stage 1 from the beginning of the next academic year. A portfolio of work is being developed as a further resource for teachers. Over the last eighteen months, the school has invested in the purchase of a wide range of resources including remote Internet access laptop computers and trolley, desktop computers and software. It is in the early stages of developing a computer suite. In addition, the school is to be given twelve desktops that will be placed in the computer suite. Resources are satisfactory. There is a good software resource list that includes brief descriptions of the content, which provides effective support to staff.

## **MUSIC**

116. Two music lessons were observed during the inspection period, one in each key stage. Evidence was gained by talking to pupils and teachers, listening to brief tapes, scrutinising teachers' planning and listening to hymns in assembly. The very limited evidence available indicated that the high standards found at the last inspection have not been maintained and that overall the standards in music now do not reach the expectation for pupils aged seven and eleven.

117. Throughout the school, teachers' planning indicates that pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to learn, practise and develop musical skills progressively. Although younger pupils compose simple rhythms with sounds and un-tuned instruments, their work is not refined and skills are not built upon year by year across key stages. Pupils in both key stages were heard keeping a steady pulse and adding rhythm as they worked. However, their work did not show suitable

progression from one key stage to the next. Moreover some pupils did not show respect for instruments banging them inappropriately. Pupils sang a hymn tunefully in assembly. In hymn singing however, although their singing was tuneful, their diction clear and some attention was paid to pitch, limited attention was paid to posture, breathing, dynamics or timbre. Moreover, although some sang with enthusiasm, some older pupils were inattentive and did not participate fully.

118. The quality of teaching seen was satisfactory in both year groups. Teachers now follow the new National Curriculum for music and consequently are becoming more confident and aware of its requirements of the developmental stages of each musical aspect. However, particularly in Key Stage 2, music lessons are 'blocked' and not taught continuously and this limits progress. Added to this is the fact that assessment systems to ascertain individual pupils' progress are not securely and consistently in place and so teachers do not have a clear knowledge of prior learning or attainment. Resources are limited and stored haphazardly. Some teachers' evaluation of lessons indicates that some instruments, for example glockenspiels and xylophones are not complete.

119. Over the year, pupils have the opportunity to sing in the choir and have recorder and guitar lessons.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

120. By ages seven and eleven, pupils' attainment in physical education, including those with special educational needs, is in line with national expectations and pupils make satisfactory progress. These standards are similar to those reported at the previous inspection.

121. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have satisfactory skills in throwing and catching and can send and receive balls with satisfactory accuracy. Using a range of equipment they can move balls with appropriate control combined with travel. They handle equipment safely and correctly and make good use of space. They work hard and with enjoyment in lessons. At Key Stage 2, pupils' good attitudes to and enjoyment in the subject are maintained. They continue to refine their sending and receiving skills using a range of equipment and understand, and can discuss, the purpose of different throwing actions and when these might be used effectively. They show good levels of perseverance and concentration both individually and when working collaboratively.

122. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have the opportunity to swim and the school operates a 'catch-up' programme for those Year 5 pupils who have not yet learned to swim. The wide range of extra-curricular games activities, that include netball, football and cricket, make a good contribution to the physical education curriculum.

123. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. The management and organisation of lessons are good overall and pupils set out and put away apparatus safely and sensibly. Teachers dress in suitable clothing for physical education lessons providing good role models for pupils. They make appropriate use of praise and encouragement and demonstrate skills correctly, as for example, showing pupils how to transfer their weight to the front foot when throwing overarm. In Key Stage 2 the effective use of pupil demonstration, as well as informative and knowledgeable comments by teachers, encouraged pupils to evaluate continuously their own work and further refine their movements to good effect.

124. The co-ordinator, who has only recently been appointed to lead the subject, is knowledgeable and informed. A sound policy is in place and the school has adopted national guidance as its scheme of work. She has a satisfactory understanding of standards through checking medium-term planning and through informal discussion with staff. There is an action plan in place that includes the development of a formal system for pupil self-evaluation and the observation of teaching and learning across the school. Resources for the subject are currently being audited and are satisfactory.