

INSPECTION REPORT

RODMERSHAM SCHOOL

Sittingbourne

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118346

Headteacher: Miss J A E Parkhurst

Reporting inspector: Chris Warner
20935

Dates of inspection: 13 – 16 June 2000

Inspection number: 193503

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Rodmersham Green Sittingbourne Kent
Postcode:	ME9 0PS
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Chair of governors:	Mr D Roche
Date of previous inspection:	13-16 January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Chris Warner	Registered inspector	English	How high are standards? The schools results and achievements.
		Information and communication technology	How well is the school led and managed?
		Design and technology	
		Geography	
		History	
		Provision for children under five	
Pauline Morcom	Team Inspector	Mathematics	How well are pupils taught?
		Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Religious education	
		Art	
		Physical education	
		Music	
		Special educational needs	
David Ashby	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school cares for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?

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Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Rodmersham School is a primary school for boys and girls aged from 4-11 years. At the time of the inspection, there were 73 pupils, of whom four were under the age of five. Since the last inspection, the number of pupils has steadily increased, and is set to rise to a maximum of about 80 pupils in September 2000. A feature of the school has been the small size of the year groups, with less than ten pupils in most recent cohorts. There are, for example, only five pupils in the current Year 6 group. Eighteen pupils (about 25 per cent) have special educational needs, a figure close to the national average. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs in any year group varies greatly, and this has a big impact on the performance of the group in national tests. Overall, pupils' attainment on entry to the school is typical of that found nationally. Currently less than three per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is far lower than the national average. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school achieves satisfactory standards in most aspects of its work. Nearly all pupils are keen to learn. All the teaching is at least satisfactory and much is good or better. The staff are always seeking ways to improve their contribution. The school has developed a sound curriculum that meets the needs of individual pupils and provides opportunities that benefit them all. However, the curriculum for the under-fives is not built around any nationally recommended guidance. There are sound arrangements for the support and care of all pupils, and the school has a good partnership with parents and carers. The management of the school is sound. It is aware of its strengths and where its weaknesses are and how to improve them. It has made a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good;
- The headteacher is strongly supported by a committed and hard working staff team;
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and the progress they make are good;
- Pupils are keen to learn, behave very well and enjoy very good relationships with one another and with the staff;
- The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good;
- The school's close partnership with parents and the community promotes pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- Standards in science are below what is expected of pupils nationally;
- The school does not use its monitoring of the quality of teaching to check its effect on the progress that pupils make and the standards they achieve;
- The curriculum for children under five is not related to nationally recommended guidance;
- Important features of the accommodation are poor and this has an adverse impact on areas of pupils' learning.

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 January 1997. It has made a satisfactory response to the key issues for improvement noted in the last report:
 - The role of the co-ordinators have been developed so that they give sound leadership and management to the subjects of the National Curriculum;
 - A sound structure for the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning has been put in place;
 - There are sound procedures for assessing pupils' achievements;
 - Planning takes account of pupils' different abilities, including the needs of the more able pupils. However, within lessons, there is scope for higher attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4 to be further challenged.
- In addition to the above points, the school has significantly improved:

- The overall quality of teaching;
 - The provision for pupils with special educational needs;
 - Standards in religious education and in information and communication technology.
- Overall, the school is soundly placed to achieve further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	A	C	E
Mathematics	A	B	D	E
Science	B	C	E	E*

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

In 1999, the results of the National Curriculum tests and assessments for eleven-year-olds at the end of Key Stage 2 were in line with the national average in English, below average in mathematics, and well below in science. The results in all three subjects were lower than those achieved by pupils in similar schools.

The much lower results in 1999 than in previous years can be attributed to a difference between the small year groups in pupils' prior attainment. In 1999, a far higher proportion of the year group were pupils with special educational needs than in earlier years.

When the results of National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds from 1996 to 1999 are taken together, the school's performance is well above the national average in English, just above in mathematics, but below in science. Taken together, the trend of the school's results in the three core subjects in the last four years is broadly in line with the national trend.

Evidence from the current inspection found that the five Year 6 pupils achieve at very different levels from one pupil to another. Taken together, the group achieve standards broadly in line with the national average in all aspects of English and in mathematics. However, as in Key Stage 1, standards in science are pulled down by weaker development in investigative and experimental aspects of the subject. The previous inspection report came to similar conclusions about standards in English and mathematics, but found standards in science to be higher than is currently the case.

Standards in information and communication technology are in line with the national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. The inspection shows that standards in religious education at the end of both key stages are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In history, pupils make good progress throughout the school.

There was insufficient evidence on which to make a judgement about pupils' progress in art, design and technology, geography, and physical education. In music, pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to the school and to their work in lessons. They are interested and involved in their work. They respond well to praise and want to do well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. There is no evidence of oppressive behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils have very good relationships with staff, adults and with one another. They take full advantage of opportunities that extend their personal development.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. The trend is just below the national average. A small number of parents take their children on holiday in term-time and prevent the school from achieving very good or higher levels of attendance and punctuality.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory in all lessons with over 75 per cent of teaching judged good or better. It is satisfactory in 24 per cent, good in 57 per cent and very good in 19 per cent of all lessons.

The teaching of the under-fives in the Reception class is always good or better. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 and 2 is satisfactory or better in all lessons. Seventy per cent of teaching in Key Stage 1 and 2 is good or better. The focus on learning basic skills properly is seen in different subjects, often supporting literacy and particularly effective in numeracy.

Strengths in teaching include the effective management of pupils and the good use of time, support staff and resources. Minor shortcomings include the need to develop a planned approach to assess and record children's learning in the under-fives, and the need to give clearly understood work for pupils to complete at home in Year 6. Teachers need further support in order to fully meet the need of pupils, especially the more able, in Years 3 and 4.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and for religious education. However, the curriculum for the under-fives does not relate to nationally recommended guidance and this is a weakness.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision is good. Pupils are well supported both in and out of the classroom and, for this reason, they make good progress throughout the school.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There are sound arrangements for pupils' personal, social and health education. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	<p>The school provides effective all-round care for its pupils through sound monitoring procedures. Specific issues of health and safety, already identified by the school, need to be fully resolved. In some cases this requires the attention of the local education authority.</p> <p>Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are sound. Data from tests and assessments is properly collected and analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses amongst groups of children and in different subjects. However, this information is not used enough to lead to practical steps aimed at improving pupils' achievements.</p>

As at the time of the last inspection, the absence of a suitably equipped hall means that the school cannot meet all the requirements of the programme for physical education. Nonetheless, every effort is made to promote all other aspects of the subject.

The way the school works in partnership with parents is good. The links with parents, through information provided and the open access of all staff to all parents, are good. The impact of the contribution of parents to children's learning is good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is well supported by all the staff in providing sound leadership and management of the school. Staff have a sense of common purpose and are working hard to improve what the school offers its pupils. The improved ways of monitoring the quality of teaching and of standards of pupils' achievements need to be more closely related so that the school can judge the effectiveness of its efforts.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body effectively fulfils its statutory duties and is increasingly influential in shaping the direction of the school. Governors are very supportive of the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Governors know about the work of the school through visits and a good flow of information. They are aware of the most important strengths and weaknesses. There is a need to sharpen the monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance, particularly in relation to pupils' achievements.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes effective use of its resources and has begun to look at ways of judging its effectiveness in relation to measurable targets, particularly around pupils' achievements.

The school buildings and site provide a poor standard of accommodation that, overall, has a detrimental effect on important aspects of pupils' learning. The shortcomings include: restricted space indoors, a barely adequate playground for the number and age of pupils, and no designated outdoor space for the under-fives.

The school has suitably qualified teachers and support staff to meet the needs of all aspects of the curriculum apart from the under-fives. In the longer term, the lack of trained staff with a knowledge and understanding in this stage of learning makes it very difficult for the school to meet the requirements of any nationally recommended curriculum.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like coming to school • Teaching is good • They are pleased with the progress made by their children • Behaviour is good • They feel comfortable in approaching staff • The school works closely with parents • Classroom assistants make a valuable contribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework • Being informed about how their children are getting on • The range of activities outside of lessons • Playground opportunities other than the use of the village 'common' • The condition of the children's toilets • Aspects of leadership and management; in particular clear communication.

Inspectors fully support the parents' positive comments about the school. The school has a welcoming ethos for all who visit and work in it. Relationships are very positive for almost all parents.

The inspection found that homework provides a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning. However, parents do not always find that the expectations for homework are consistent or clear. This is particularly true in relation to pupils in Year 6.

Inspection evidence shows a good level of information to parents about how well their child is getting on at school. The school plans for the forthcoming parent consultation evenings to be offered in the same way as at other times of the year.

In the usual event, the school offers a good range of activities to pupils outside of the classroom. However, unforeseen staff absences have reduced the level of provision. There are plans to rectify this position in the coming school year.

Parents are right to be concerned over the lack of suitably sized play area and the unacceptable condition of the toilets. The governing body is very aware of these issues and plans are well advanced to improve these, and a number of other accommodation concerns.

The leadership and management of the school are sound, and both the communication within the school and from the school are found to be good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. When children enter the school into the Reception class, their attainment is broadly in line with that expected for their age nationally. Children under the age of five make at least satisfactory progress and, by the time they are five, most of them reach the nationally expected levels in all areas of learning. They exceed the expectations in language and literacy and in their personal and social development. Boys and girls achieve similar standards. The inspection found that children make similar, good progress in the Reception class to that noted in the inspection report of 1997.
2. Poor accommodation has an adverse impact on learning opportunities for the under-fives. The indoor area is cramped and, although the class has access to the playground, it is not a planned and resourced outdoor area in which children can extend and enrich their learning. In spite of these limitations, the children in the class make at least sound progress because:
 - Teaching is consistently good;
 - The Literacy Strategy has been successfully adapted for the younger children;
 - What resources there are, including support staff and help from parents, are used effectively;
 - There are good, planned and spontaneous opportunities for children to grow in independence and to develop their initiative.
3. The results of the school's National Curriculum tests and assessments for seven and eleven-year-olds, from 1996 to 1999, fluctuate considerably from one year to the next. Two factors contribute to this:
 - The small number of pupils in the end of key stage groups (particularly in Key Stage 2);
 - The different proportions of pupils with special educational needs in any year group.
4. The results in the 1999 Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests and assessments were below the national average in reading, average in writing, and well below average in mathematics. In science, the results were below the national average gaining Level 2 and in line with the average for those reaching the higher level, Level 3. Results in reading, writing and mathematics were lower than those reached by pupils in similar schools. However, the results in 1999 were very different from previous years. For example, in 1998, pupils reached high standards in reading and mathematics, in contrast to the performance of pupils in the following year's tests. A closer analysis shows that the results relate closely to the proportion of special needs pupils in each of the small year groups.
5. When the results of National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds from 1996 to 1999 are taken together, the school's performance in reading was close to the national average, in writing was just below, and in mathematics below average. This is true for both boys and girls, except in reading where girls achieve above, and boys well below average. The uneven numbers of boys and girls in each of the small year groups makes it difficult to draw conclusions from their performance in the tests.
6. There is evidence of higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics among the current Year 2 group than achieved by pupils in the 1999 national tests. The inspection found that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are close to the national expectations for seven-year-olds. The school's recent emphasis on literacy and numeracy has helped raise standards. Even so, the dominant factor remains the lower proportion of special needs pupils in the current year group compared with 1999. The inspection found that standards in science were lower than in other subjects because of weaknesses in the experimental and investigative aspects of the subject.
7. The inspection found that pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress. All of the teaching is at least satisfactory, and in Year 1 it is consistently good. Both average and more able pupils make sound progress, and so there is scope for greater challenge, particularly in aspects of science. The good provision for pupils with special education needs means that they make good progress in relation to their prior achievements. Even so, the low starting point of some pupils means that they are working below the expected levels for seven-year-olds.

8. By the age of seven, at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils listen attentively to their teacher and to each other. They respond reasonably well to questions and closely follow instructions given to them by an adult. Although they are learning to join in discussions, many of them find it difficult to express their own ideas, as in explaining why something happened and in suggesting what they think will happen next.
9. Nearly all seven-year-olds read with reasonable fluency, confidence and understanding for their age. They get off to a good start in Year 1 because there are very clear and structured opportunities to share books in small groups or as a class. By the end of the key stage, pupils use a range of strategies to tackle new words and challenging texts. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from a good level of support and carefully planned activities. They are making good progress, even though they may not be reading at the expected level for their age.
10. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in writing are close to the expectations for seven-year-olds. They write legibly and with reasonable standards of grammar, spelling and punctuation. They write in well-structured sentences. The more able pupils write independently and with a good choice of vocabulary to make their work more interesting. However, other pupils find it more difficult to plan, develop and evaluate their writing.
11. By the time the pupils are seven, their attainment in mathematics is close to the national average. Pupils have a sound knowledge of shape and use appropriate terms, such as 'angle' and 'face' to describe the properties. They can identify patterns, such as odd and even numbers, and have a sound understanding of place value.
12. Pupils' attainment in science at the end of Key Stage 1 is below the national expectations for seven-year-olds. Pupils have a sound scientific knowledge and understanding, and are developing their skills reasonably well. However, they are less adept at making predictions, and describing and explaining features of an experiment. The lack of attention given to investigative skills pulls down pupils' achievement in science. This was clearly the area of weakness in the 1999 National Curriculum assessments for science. At the same time, this means that the subject is not making the contribution it should to the development of pupils' speaking and listening in English.
13. Evidence from the inspection shows that pupils' attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is in line with the expectations for seven-year-olds. Standards are not quite as strong in the control aspects of the subject, such as working with controllable robots and Logo, as they are in other aspects of ICT. Nonetheless, all round standards represent a significant improvement on those noted in the last inspection, mainly because of additional resources, a well-developed curriculum, and greatly improved levels of staff competence and confidence.
14. In 1999, the results of the National Curriculum tests and assessments for eleven-year-olds at the end of Key Stage 2 were in line with the national average in English, below average in mathematics, and well below in science. The results in all three subjects were lower than those achieved by pupils in similar schools.
15. The Key Stage 2 results in national tests were lower in 1999 than in previous years. For example, standards in English were well above the national average in 1998 in contrast to the average levels in the following year. This can be attributed to the very different proportions of pupils with special educational needs in the small year groups.
16. Because the school has introduced a clear and accurate tracking system, it is easy to relate individual pupils' achievements to previous attainment in national and other standardised tests and assessments. For example, it is clear that the 1999 results often actually represented good rates of progress for individual pupils. The small numbers of pupils in the Year 6 groups (never more than eleven and as few as four) means that comparisons between years should be treated with caution. An additional feature in Key Stage 2, has been the movement of pupils in and out of the school and in specific year groups, making an impact on results. For example, of the present Year 6 cohort, three of the more able pupils left at the end of Year 5, and two new pupils have since joined the group.
17. When the results of National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds from 1996 to 1999 are taken together, the school's performance is well above the national average in English, just above in

mathematics, but below in science. Taken together, the trend of the school's results in the three core subjects in the last four years is broadly in line with the national trend.

18. The statistics from the last four years suggest that eleven-year-old boys perform better than girls in English, mathematics and science. The small year groups and the imbalance in the number of boys and girls in each year group means that comparisons should be treated with caution. There was no compelling evidence from the inspection to suggest a significant difference in performance or opportunity in any one subject between boys and girls.
19. Evidence from the current inspection found that the five Year 6 pupils achieve at very different levels from one pupil to another. Taken together, the group achieves standards broadly in line with the national average in all aspects of English and in mathematics. However, as in Key Stage 1, standards in science are pulled down by weaker development in investigative and experimental aspects of the subject. The previous inspection report came to similar conclusions about standards in English and mathematics, but found standards in science to be higher than is currently the case.
20. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress. All of the teaching is at least satisfactory. Over the past school year, the unforeseen absence of the class teacher for older Key Stage 2 pupils has meant that they have been taught by a number of different members of staff, with inevitable breaks in continuity. Average achieving pupils make sound progress through the key stage. More able pupils were found to make good progress in Years 5 and 6, but less so in Years 3 and 4 where there is scope for greater challenge. The difficulty for the teachers here lies in the wide spread of ability and age in the classes and, in the case of the Year 2/3 class, the additional challenge of teaching across two key stages. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported both in and out of the classroom.
21. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' speaking and listening skills are sound although, as in Key Stage 1, their discussion skills, such as the ability to frame questions and give explanations, are less well developed. In some subjects, notably history and religious education, there are good opportunities for pupils to learn how to speak in different contexts, adapting what they say and how they say it. Other subjects, notably science, do not make such a significant contribution to extending pupils' speaking and listening skills.
22. Standards in reading and writing are broadly in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. There is a wide range of achievement within the year group, but it is clear that the Literacy Strategy is beginning to make a positive impact, for example in developing pupils' research skills using books and Internet sources. The support many parents give to their children at home contributes to their fluency and understanding in reading. Written work is well presented and most pupils have a good understanding of punctuation, spelling and sentence construction.
23. Throughout the school, there are not enough opportunities (including those derived from other subjects) for pupils to develop their writing through planning and drafting, and to write in an extended form.
24. By the age of eleven, standards in mathematics are broadly in line with the national average. The numeracy session is clearly beginning to make an impact on standards. Pupils undertake mental calculations with reasonable speed and accuracy. Pupils have a sound recall of number facts and have developed a range of personal strategies for tackling problems. They know and use correct terms to describe the properties of three-dimensional shapes. They produce bar and line graphs to compare results and use the computer to create spreadsheets.
25. In science, most pupils across the ability range are achieving well below average standards in experimental and investigative science, although achievement is higher in other aspects of science, including physical processes. Low achievement in one aspect is pulling down pupils' overall level of achievement in the subject.
26. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with the national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. As in Key Stage 1, the subject is better resourced, and staff have more confidence than three years ago. Growing links with other subjects support work in information and communication technology, to create graphs and pictures, and to write music, poems and stories, and access information.

27. The inspection shows that standards in religious education at the end of both key stages are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This is an impressive improvement on the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be satisfactory.
28. Pupils make good progress in history in both key stages and the subject has improved its standing since the last inspection.
29. Standards in both religious education and in history have significantly improved because:
- Clear management of the subjects is well established and has had time to influence and improve the quality of teaching;
 - Resources, including those from the local community, are used to add interest and to involve pupils in their learning;
 - Overall, the curriculum has been strengthened to place greater emphasis on learning through enquiry and this helps pupils' understanding.
30. In art, design and technology, geography, and physical education, there was insufficient evidence in either key stage on which to make a judgement about pupils' progress. In music, pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school.
31. The lower results of boys in the national tests appear to reflect the higher number of boys on the register of special educational needs. The school prefers to allow all pupils to access the National Curriculum and its associated tests, on the basis of equality of access and opportunity: given the small cohorts and the sometimes high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, this practice is praiseworthy but does affect annual results.
32. The school carefully monitors the achievements of individual pupils. It carries out a range of focused assessments, in addition to the end of Key Stage 1 national tests. It has made a start in analysing results and other performance data in relation to specific groups of pupils, such as year or gender groups. The information is gathered and presented in a form that is increasingly useful to staff and, to a lesser extent, to governors. In English, mathematics and science, each pupil is 'tracked', and this leads to the setting of realistic and sufficiently challenging individual targets. However, the small size of the present Year 6 cohort, and the movement in and out of the group in the last twelve months, have rendered the school's originally well-founded high targets for the national tests unrealistic.
33. There is no evidence of under-achievement by pupils with special educational needs: they make good progress in relation to the targets set for them. Close scrutiny of work samples for pupils with special educational needs indicates that work is set correctly both in class for whole class and group sessions, and during withdrawal sessions, when pupils work with classroom assistants. The targets set in individual education plans are frequently reviewed and progress is clearly indicated. There are no pupils with statements. The special educational needs co-ordinator effectively sets targets for individual education plans for pupils. Class teachers are beginning to set their own targets in consultation with the co-ordinator.
34. Pupils achieve sound standards throughout the school in relation to their prior attainment on entry to the Reception class. However, in important aspects of science pupils do not make satisfactory progress. With this exception, pupils make sound gains in understanding equivalent to their development of skills and knowledge.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

35. Since the last inspection, pupils have maintained their very good attitudes and behaviour. Pupils of all ages and abilities have very positive attitudes to learning. They are eager to come to school, join in with enthusiasm and enjoy their lessons. They respond well to adults and to one another. Older pupils 'look out' for younger ones; boys and girls play and work well together. Pupils are well motivated and work with enthusiasm. They co-operate well with each other in classroom activities and this results in them valuing each other's work and contribution to the lessons. Nearly all pupils sustain good levels of concentration and can work well individually.
36. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good and has a positive impact on pupils' work and concentration. Pupils respond well to the expectations of teachers, support staff and adults

for pupils' behaviour. School rules and conventions are clearly understood by pupils and by parents. The result is a positive climate for learning with no evidence of aggressive or racist behaviour. Misbehaviour is infrequent and when it occurs it is dealt with promptly and effectively. It has little negative impact on learning. Exclusions do not occur.

37. Most pupils with special educational needs are making good progress. The school carefully considers the needs of all pupils and ensures that provision closely matches the needs of each individual. Adults, including the dedicated and well-trained learning support assistants, notice and celebrate the achievements of pupils with special educational needs. This is much appreciated by parents who correctly understand how much this contributes to the personal happiness at school of their children. The valuing of all pupils in this way contributes to the attitudes, values and personal development of all children at the school.
38. From an early age, pupils establish very good relationships with staff, with adults and with each other. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are included as part of a well cared for community that copes confidently with their daily work and play. For example, children under the age of five learn how to get resources out, use them carefully and to put them away, sometimes on their own and often with a partner. Pupils have good opportunities for personal development and they engage in these with enthusiasm and confidence. They are involved in a good range of extra-curricular activities, including sports activities and computer club. There are no residential visits, but there are a number of trips to places of interest that help pupils to gain in confidence and independence. Pupils take part in new activities with enthusiasm and determination. Pupils of all ages show a genuine sense of pride in their own achievements and are pleased to praise the efforts of others.
39. Attendance is satisfactory. There is very little unauthorised absence. The authorised attendance rate is slightly below the national level, and a little down on the rate at the time of the last inspection. All but a very few pupils are punctual in arriving at school and getting into class for lessons. This ensures lessons to get off to a prompt and effective start. Some parents take their children away from school during term-time for holidays, and it is this that stops attendance from being good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

40. The quality of teaching in the school is good overall. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Twenty-four per cent of teaching is satisfactory, 57 per cent is good and 19 per cent is very good. Teaching in the under-fives is always at least good. All of the teaching in both Key Stages 1 and 2 is at least satisfactory, and 70 per cent is good or better. Teaching for pupils in Year 1 and in Years 4, 5 and 6 is always good or better.
41. Overall, the quality of teaching has significantly improved since the previous inspection, where 24 per cent of teaching was less than satisfactory. This is to the school's credit.
42. A key issue identified in the previous inspection report was: to take account of pupils' abilities in mixed age classes, set appropriate programmes of work and to ensure adequate provision for higher attaining pupils.
43. The school has worked hard to address each element of the key issue. The introduction of the frameworks for numeracy and literacy, and nationally recommended guidance for the other subjects, has contributed to the improvement in the way that pupils are taught in the mixed age classes. The problems that remain relate to actual organisation: the fact that one class bridges two key stages, and that the other contains three year groups. Programmes of work are appropriate, although further staff training is needed to fully implement part of the science scheme. The sound assessment systems introduced by the school have gone a long way to better meet the needs of higher attaining pupils. Even so, the organisational challenge in classes with Years 3 and 4 pupils, means that there is still scope for further improvement.
44. In the lessons seen for children in the Reception class who are under five, the quality of teaching was always at least good. This is achieved in spite of the fact that its curriculum is not planned around nationally recommended guidance. The good quality of teaching, therefore, reflects more upon the individual skills of the teacher than upon the long-term provision established by the school. Indeed, the fact that the school does not have a secure curriculum for the under-fives is a weakness that makes the task of the teacher very difficult.

45. Against this background, there are a number of reasons why the teacher in the under-fives still manages to teach individual lessons well. Basic skills in mathematics are taught well, and very well in English. The staff, including the classroom assistant, work well together, helping to create a secure and positive learning environment. They get on well with the children and have high expectations of behaviour and achievement. For these reasons, the children under the age of five make good progress in their personal and social development, growing rapidly in independence and confidence.
46. Opportunities to assess the children under five in their lessons, and to note how they are getting on, are largely informal and do not help in planning the next stage in the children's learning as much as they should. This is made all the more difficult because the school has not used nationally recommended guidance as the basis for its curriculum for the under-fives.
47. The school meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs well. The special educational needs co-ordinator, supported by the learning assistants, assesses the educational needs of pupils very carefully when they enter the school so that their needs are well known to all staff. Assessment, planning and target-setting in English is satisfactory and in mathematics it is strong. In general, the good teaching skills among the staff ensure that individual education plans are well monitored, reviewed and targets are set appropriately. Support staff are well briefed and provide a supportive mixture of challenge and help to pupils. They record progress towards targets set and take great pleasure in celebrating pupils' achievements.
48. There are no pupils in the school for whom English is a second language, nor are there any pupils identified as being from travelling families currently in the school.
49. The small number of teaching staff work hard to share their subject expertise with each other. All teachers teach at least two age ranges and one teacher teaches across Key Stages 1 and 2. This means that class teachers have to undertake their medium-term and daily planning on their own. This is particularly significant in science where this lack of opportunity is reflected in the low level of teaching of investigative science. In mathematics and English, the recent introduction of the national frameworks has provided good support that teachers have used well. The policies on spelling, handwriting and reading provide support for the methods to be used and clear guidance on the school approach to reading and writing. Where the school uses nationally recognised schemes of work and the Numeracy Strategy, there is clear planning and good questioning. Teachers are beginning to develop their skill in defining learning objectives and, in some cases, are linking these to assessment indicators. Good examples were seen in the classes for the oldest pupils in English, mathematics, history and some aspects of science.
50. With the exception of some parts of the science curriculum, teachers' subject knowledge is at least satisfactory. The weakness in science has been identified by the co-ordinator and urgent action has been taken to gain places on a local authority sponsored course designed to raise standards in science. The teaching arrangements for physical education and religious education, where one teacher has responsibility for all teaching in that subject across both key stages, is a sensible use of time and skills although may pose a problem if staff decide to move on. A visiting specialist takes the pupils for music.
51. The teaching of phonics in reading is satisfactory. Some teachers have a good understanding of phonics and are technically competent and know how to devise interesting and challenging activities for pupils.
52. Teachers' planning is satisfactory. At best, as in the classes for the oldest and youngest pupils, teachers set clear learning objectives that serve as a strong guide for the direction of the lesson. In a few lessons, learning objectives are not so precise and this affects the pace and sense of purpose.
53. Good teaching challenges and inspires pupils through well-chosen work: pupil response to work on the Narnia books and "Horrible Electricity" show this aspect of teaching coming into play. The three ability based reading groups in the Year 4/5/6 class were full of enthusiasm for their group readers.
54. The texts were appealing and well-chosen, and as the children said, "Really hard, but after we talk about it, we can see what's happening and why." With the exception of investigative and experimental science, teachers' expectations of the standards of work for different subjects are satisfactory.

55. Where teaching is very good in mathematics and English at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are inspired and challenged to overcome their difficulties, and achieve standards far higher than they personally have done in the past. Unfortunately, this broad approach to education is not always reflected in the national tests, which have a narrower focus.
56. A range of teaching methods is used across the school. All teachers make use of grouping for different activities. Groups differ in literacy and mathematics reflecting teachers' accurate use of day-to-day assessment. Setting is not used, although there are "booster" classes for English and mathematics in Year 6. These classes are voluntary and held after school. Pupils of lower ability are generally well supported as teachers set them different tasks and give carefully-thought-out support. Appropriate use is made of questioning to find out what pupils already know, and what they are learning as the lesson progresses. Good links are made across the curriculum between history and English, and between mathematics and ICT.
57. Pupil management during lessons is very good. Expectations of good behaviour are high. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and the atmosphere in class is nearly always positive. On the very few occasions when there is inappropriate behaviour from a small minority of pupils, teachers handle the situation well.
58. Time was used very effectively in most of the lessons seen. Lessons are usually divided into sections for whole class teaching, individual or group activities and final sessions to bring the class together to discuss important points. In a just a few lessons, teachers spend too long on the initial session leaving insufficient time for the activities planned. Teachers use support staff well.
59. Marking and assessment is good. In all classes, helpful comments are made on pupils' work indicating success and giving pointers for improvement. Marking follows school policy and helps pupils to improve their work.
60. With the exception of Year 6, homework is satisfactory in both key stages. This is because the current school policy does not reflect recent change in practice. The problem in Year 6 is that, although pupils have homework books, these are not used consistently. Parents are concerned about this very point. The policy for homework needs to include requirements for homework in Year 6. This should effectively prepare pupils for their move to secondary school. Homework set for Year 6 in science and mathematics during the inspection was rightly more demanding than for Years 4 and 5, but because it was not written down can lead to some uncertainties.
61. During the inspection it was noted that good teaching is helping pupils to practise and extend their skills, particularly in English, mathematics and history. Pupils' skills in English, mathematics and science are improving at a steady pace.
62. Pupils work hard and, with a few exceptions, try to reach their teacher's expectations. They use their skills very effectively when they respond to very good teaching in mathematics or English, but where lessons have less focussed learning objectives they do not have the chance to show what skills they can apply.
63. Pupils of all abilities are taught together for class sessions. When it is appropriate, pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn for group or individual sessions where they have carefully differentiated work. They return for the plenary sessions. At other times, pupils are supported during class sessions by assistants, but are then encouraged to work independently or with their peers during the group tasks.

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

64. The previous inspection report noted shortcomings in the curriculum;
 - Curriculum planning not fully addressing progress through year groups and key stages;
 - A lack of hardware prevents the school from delivering the ICT programmes of study;
 - Pupils' independence of learning not sufficiently planned for.

65. The current inspection finds that the school has made good progress towards the first and second point, and some progress towards the third. There is still some room for improvement in relation to preparing pupils in their final year for their secondary school experience.
66. The curriculum provision for children under the age of five is unsatisfactory, because it has not been built around nationally recommended guidance. This makes it difficult to ensure progress and continuity over the longer term, and to plan and teach the full range of activities needed to support children's early development. This is a weakness that should be addressed as a matter of priority. To provide more effective learning opportunities, the curriculum for the youngest children should be designed to meet the new Foundation Curriculum required from September 2000.
67. The curriculum for pupils in both key stages is suitably broad, meets statutory requirements and reflects the aims of the school. However, the curriculum is not completely balanced. This is due to poor accommodation for gymnastics: the school makes praiseworthy efforts to provide an interesting and challenging range of opportunities for physical education, but the lack of proper fixed equipment and a school hall prevent delivery of the programmes of study that are required. The teaching of investigative and experimental science needs to be given greater emphasis.
68. Although sufficient time is allocated to the teaching of English and mathematics, there are not enough opportunities provided for pupils to use and develop their literacy skills in extended writing across the curriculum. In particular, opportunities for extended writing are insufficient both in English lessons and in other subjects. This adversely affects pupils' progress and attainment in writing. By contrast, pupils are provided with good opportunities to use numeracy skills in other lessons, such as in science, when they measure and plot heart rate or when they measure as part of a design and technology project. Science is timetabled appropriately, although the school has no secure method of ensuring that all pupils undertake sufficient work in investigative science. Teaching of information technology and time for pupils to use information technology skills in other subjects is now appropriate. There is also sufficient emphasis on religious education. The school's intention is that some religious education should take place in assemblies with themes being followed up by class lessons and this process was observed during the inspection.
69. The literacy and numeracy frameworks have been introduced effectively and are contributing to recent progress. All pupils have a daily lesson in mathematics and in English based on the recommendations. Some intelligent adjustments are made in the class for older pupils to ensure that the level of differentiation and challenge for older and more able pupils is appropriate. The current class organisation makes it difficult to ensure that pupils in Years 3 and 4 are always sufficiently challenged and gain the full benefit from plenary sessions.
70. Provision for extra-curricular activities has been good: this year, the illness of the teacher in charge has meant that many customary activities have been discontinued temporarily. However, until recently a wide range of exciting and stimulating activities have regularly been offered, and plans indicate that this situation will be resumed shortly.
71. Provision for pupils' personal and social development is satisfactory with good features. There is a policy for drugs' awareness and appropriate teaching takes place to promote awareness of the misuse of drugs. Arrangements for sex education comply with the statement as set out in the school prospectus.
72. The community makes a useful contribution to pupils' learning and development. Members of the police visit pupils in both key stages regularly to discuss drugs use and misuse at an age appropriate level. Older pupils attend local business forums that help them develop skills to deal with emergencies; what to do when a room fills with smoke, for instance. Pupils found this type of practical exercise both challenging and useful.
73. The school makes good arrangements to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school makes very good provision for moral and social education and sound provision for the spiritual and cultural education of its pupils. This is in line with the findings of the previous inspection.
74. The provision for spiritual development is sound. Acts of worship are of satisfactory quality and take place every day as required. Assemblies are carefully planned at an appropriate level for all pupils. A reasonable time for quiet reflection on a spiritual theme is provided in most assemblies. Other

good examples of opportunities for spiritual development were seen when pupils were watched footage of man's first landing on the Moon. Different curriculum areas make a contribution to spiritual development but there is no planning or structured approach to spiritual development throughout the school and curriculum areas such as art and music are not fully exploited to support pupils' spiritual growth.

75. There is very good provision for moral development. Assemblies are used well to support awareness of appropriate behaviour. Religious education lessons are used to reinforce the moral messages given in assemblies. The school behaviour policy is implemented and teachers are vigilant and sensitive in seeing that it is followed. Pupils are very aware of their own responsibilities with regard to others. For example, when asked how she had acquired unusually detailed knowledge of how to use the reference library, one younger pupil explained that she had asked an older pupil who explained the system carefully and then made time to help her locate books on several subsequent occasions. Pupils discuss their actions during 'circle time' and consider their consequences. All staff in the school stress the importance of fairness and honesty and pupils understand that if they are sincerely sorry for a bad action, a fresh start is possible. A good example is set by all adults to support pupils' moral awareness.
76. Very good provision is made for pupils' social development. The pupils have respect for themselves, each other and for adults. Staff work hard to encourage positive attitudes and good relationships. Assembly is used appropriately to praise pupils' achievements. Pupils are given opportunities to work independently and in small groups. Although the school is small, great pains are taken to ensure that pupils have plenty of frequent, purposeful opportunities to take responsibility. There has been no residential trip this year for Year 6, but the plan for next year includes the possibility of an overseas visit for older pupils.
77. Cultural provision is satisfactory. Music and art make a sound contribution to pupils' understanding and appreciation of their own and of other cultures. Even so, there is scope to extend the pupils' experience and appreciation of non-western European art and music. The staff has worked hard to develop resources related to different cultures and increasingly makes use of the contributions from individual members of staff. Through a well-planned religious education programme, pupils learn systematically about different faiths and customs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

78. The school continues to provide sound all-round care for its pupils. Staff and adults in the school are vigilant, sensitive and supportive of the pupils in their care. Monitoring, promotion and practice of its support, safety and security arrangements are shared by the headteacher, staff and governing body.
79. Child protection is a well-established practice in the school. For example, staff are aware of the need to keep the co-ordinator informed of any concerns. Formal training for all staff has recently been provided and additional guidelines are soon to be included in the staff handbook. Appropriate local agencies are effectively consulted and involved when there are specific needs.
80. The health and safety policy contains clear guidelines and procedures. Governors and staff have properly reviewed and made checks to the buildings and grounds to ensure the learning environment is safe. The staff are well informed about safety issues and are aware of, and follow, the procedures relating to any concerns. The school has identified relevant issues as requiring the attention of the local authority and await a response. There are proper arrangements for safety checking school electrical, fire, security and physical education equipment. The standards of care of the premises and grounds are very good. Staff work hard to maintain a clean attractive environment, which adds positively to the atmosphere of the whole school.
81. The promoting and monitoring of behaviour continue to be very good and ensure staff, pupils and parents are very clear about the school's expectations. This underpins the caring atmosphere and sense of community enjoyed by the school, and ensures aggressive or racist outbursts are unlikely to occur. The school has good guidelines for dealing with any behaviour issues should they occur. Monitoring of attendance continues to be good through the use of effective school systems and vigilant staff. Promotion of attendance and punctuality is not so effective. Some pupils and parents are not clear about what the school expects for attendance and punctuality. The staff promptly follow up any unexplained absences and most parents are clear that they have to inform school to give a

reason. The link with the educational welfare officer is as and when required, and occurs infrequently although when it does occur it is very effective.

82. The school follows the usual procedures for preparation for transfer to secondary school: pupils visit their new school, the teachers visit them at their current school. However, the cohorts are often very small, and the school sends pupils to different secondary schools. Sometimes, only one child from Rodmersham will be moving on to a particular secondary school. In this unusual situation, it is important that the school imaginatively considers strategies that will ease the transition.
83. The procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress and personal development are satisfactory. The staff have a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in all aspects of pupils' work and personal development. Teachers keep track of pupils' progress that helps them to support their learning and personal development. Good use is made of the baseline assessment of children entering the school in the under-fives as a starting point to gauge individual development. However, although staff in the Reception class make many informal assessments of the children, these are not yet supported by regular, planned observations that can be used to help in planning the next stage of learning.
84. In 1999, there were some notable discrepancies between the assessments of pupils' achievements made by teachers and the results in national tests. The school identified this as an issue and, with the help of in-service training, set to establishing a stronger consensus about different levels of achievement based on the National Curriculum, particularly in English and mathematics. As a result, a sound start has been made to improving the accuracy of teachers' assessment and the use that is made of it to support pupils' learning.
85. The previous inspection identified the need to improve the quality of assessment procedures so that they regularly informed curriculum planning as a key issue for action. The school has made a satisfactory response. Nationally recommended guidance for assessment has been adopted for most subjects. The guidance is used to ensure continuity and progression in the mixed aged classes. In all subjects, except English and in aspects of science, there are consistently applied approaches to making use of assessment information. In English, assessment makes a satisfactory contribution to planning aided by the introduction of the Literacy Strategy and a 'rolling programme' of assessments. However, in the investigative and experimental area of science, teachers' assessment skills remain under-developed and do not sufficiently support this weaker aspect of pupils' achievement.
86. In most areas of the curriculum, assessment information is recorded in a form that is reasonably manageable to maintain, readily accessible and useful to staff. The assessment policy, introduced in response to the last inspection, is helpful in creating greater consistency in practice between subjects and classes. It has led to the common practice of teachers reviewing samples of pupils' work particularly effective in literacy and numeracy. Nonetheless, some further work remains necessary, particularly in respect of meeting the needs within classes of mixed age pupils. Here the difficulty is to plan and assess more closely in relation to specific groups of pupils. For example, a lack of exactness in planning to meet the needs of different age and ability groups makes it difficult to assess their progress. In turn, assessment makes less of a contribution to planning the next stage of learning.
87. The school collates clear and accessible information from the results of national tests and assessments. It analyses the data and even identifies weaknesses of different groups and, in particular, subjects and aspects of subjects. Although the school has begun to use this information to help improve some areas of pupils' achievement, such as spelling, in general it has not taken full advantage of its analysis to tackle shortcomings in a rigorous way.
88. There are good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. The staff know the pupils well and are aware of their strengths and needs. As pupils get older, they are increasingly involved in discussions about their own progress, achievements and needs. For example, they are involved in setting their own targets. Throughout the school, parents are involved in how well their children are getting on at school, especially in literacy and numeracy. This is especially true in the case of pupils with special educational needs, where parents feel particularly included in reviewing their children's targets, including those relating to their personal and social development. When and where appropriate, outside agencies are involved in giving support and guidance to the school, parents and to the child.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

89. The school continues to enjoy good links with parents. The successful partnership is supported through a good flow of information regularly passed on to parents. There are opportunities to meet the staff at three parent meetings as well as at any convenient times should a conversation be needed. Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning and are supportive to the school. These links have a positive impact on pupils' learning. There are high levels of parent interest, and parents and carers are satisfied with most aspects of their children's education. Nearly all parents feel that their child likes coming to school.
90. Parents indicate that this is a good school. There is a good, regular core of parental help in classrooms, on educational visits and in support of various activities, such as swimming. Parents have a strong commitment to the school through the support they provide. They are good at attending school activities such as assemblies, literacy and numeracy 'taster sessions' and through the school Parent Teacher Association. 'Friends of Rodmersham' organise school fund raising and some social events involving staff and parents, although this is not so strong as it has been in the past. The interest taken by parents in supporting the school has a positive impact on pupils learning.
91. There are well-established links between staff and parents, which reassures parents that the school is open and welcoming. Staff get to know and understand the pupils and their families very well. The impact of parents' involvement in the school and what it is trying to achieve is good. They respond well to calls to work with the school to maintain high standards of behaviour. They strongly support the 'home school' agreement, which clearly sets out the respective responsibilities of the school, the family and the pupils.
92. Most parents encourage their children's learning by supporting their work to do at home. Although most parents are happy with the amount and nature of work their child is expected to do at home, some feel that the children are not always clear about what they have to do. The inspection found that, because the tasks for homework are not always written down, there are some misunderstandings, especially among pupils in the Year 4,5 and 6 class.
93. The good quality of information provided by the school about each pupil's progress has been maintained since the last inspection. Some parents do not feel sufficiently informed about how their child is getting on at school. Pupils' annual school reports are good and clearly tell parents about the achievements their children make. They are good indicators of what pupils can do and what pupils should improve on next term. These reports and pupils' profiles are reviewed with parents, such that parents can understand how their children are making progress. The reports are supplemented by an individual profile folder with samples of the pupils' work indicating the level of the work in relation to the National Curriculum. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the review process.
94. The prospectus and annual governors' report to parents provide straightforward and useful information to parents. There is a good quality and quantity of information for parents and their children about all aspects of the school's work and the achievements. However, some parents would like to know more about what their children are going to learn. Newsletters, numeracy, literacy, reading and other leaflets and notices are good examples of the information provided for parents.
95. Liaison between parents and the special educational needs co-ordinator is good, although not all parents take advantage of all that the school has to offer. Teachers keep in close touch with parents whose children have special educational needs.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

96. The headteacher provides sound leadership and management, and is strongly supported by all the staff, working as a team committed to the well-being of the school. She earns the respect of staff, parents and governors for the way she leads by example and is fully involved in the day-to-day management of pupils and the staff. The partnership between the school and parents remains, as at the last inspection, a strong feature.
97. The staff share a common purpose and have welcomed steps to make their work more effective. This is to the school's credit when seen against a background of staff changes and unforeseen

absences. The staff have a clear understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and have worked hard to improve on the average standards achieved. Both teachers and support staff carry out their responsibilities in a professional way, and are keen to learn from one another and to share ideas. Since the last inspection, good management structures have been introduced that have helped tackle the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection and to put the school in a sound position to make further improvements.

98. The clearly stated aims and values of the school give equal attention to pupils' well-being and academic achievement. Most parents agree that the school is a secure and purposeful learning environment promoting positive attitudes, relationships and behaviour. This is strongly reflected in the day-to-day work of the school. Although there is a positive ethos for learning, the school's obvious efforts to raise pupils' attainment should feature more clearly as a priority.
99. The previous inspection noted, as a key issue for improvement, the need for subject co-ordinators to carry out their roles with greater effect. The school has taken this on board, so that staff now give sound leadership and management, carrying out their duties with energy and purpose. The management and leadership in some areas, such as special educational needs, ICT and mathematics, is clear in its intent and rigorous in its pursuit of higher standards.
100. The previous report also noted weaknesses in the school's procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and the curriculum. The school has rightly made this issue a priority, seeing it as a means to improve the previously noted weaknesses in teaching. The improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection is, in part, evidence of the effectiveness of the school's monitoring, evaluation and support. This work needs to continue in a clear and structured way, in particular by relating the quality of teaching to a closer analysis of pupils' performance.
101. There is a special education needs co-ordinator in post and two qualified learning support assistants. The co-ordinator manages the aspect well and provides good leadership. She is currently looking at the recent steady rise in the number of special needs pupils in order to review the school's response and make it even more effective. Additional support through a speech and language therapist and an educational psychologist is readily available when needed.
102. Governors are supportive of the school and are increasingly involved in working with staff to improve the average standards. The governing body meets its statutory responsibilities. The failure of information and communication technology to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum in the 1997 inspection has now been rectified. There is a good working relationship between governors and staff, and a growing sense of common purpose.
103. The governing body has extended its role in strategic planning through a sound sense of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the challenges it faces. Through regular visits to classrooms, discussions with staff and a flow of relevant information from the headteacher, governors are aware of the main issues for attention, although this is less so in relation to pupils' performance.
104. Through their increasing awareness of the work of the school and its efforts to improve, governors have started the process of appraisal of the headteacher's work. They have set her appropriate targets that are due for review before her departure from the school at the end of the school year. Similarly, effective arrangements are in place for the appraisal of teachers, linked to a programme of professional development. This has already led to specific support, for example, through in-service training and advice from the co-ordinators.
105. Since the previous inspection, the governing body has rightly sought to play a greater part in implementing, delivering and monitoring the curriculum. A sub-committee structure has been put in place that contributes to the development of the curriculum, including the introduction of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. Priorities for improvement have rightly focused on the issues raised in the last inspection. The governors are active and keep themselves well informed about what is going on in the school and how it affects the pupils. After making a visit to the school, they report back to the full governing body.
106. The governors are aware of the need to refine and structure their monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance, particularly in relation to pupils' achievement.

107. The monitoring and evaluating of teaching has included a sound programme of support for the newly qualified teacher and the effective implementation of national strategies for literacy and numeracy. However, the current approach to monitoring and evaluation, although useful, is not established as a regular feature of the school. In particular, it is difficult for the school to relate what it knows about pupils' achievements to the quality of teaching. Without this close link between the two areas of monitoring, it is difficult for the school to be in a position to know what of its provision is effective and what needs to be changed. Because a good working approach to monitoring and evaluating both teaching and pupils' achievements is in place, the school is well placed to bring the two together.
108. The school development plan gives due priority to maintaining and improving pupils' standards of achievement. It gives enough attention to short and long-term goals and appropriately includes national priorities, such as the full implementation of the numeracy strategy. The school has successfully tackled issues for improvement in several previously targeted areas. The headteacher and other staff now regularly report to governors on standards, quality and school improvement. In some relevant cases, the criteria against which the school can check its efforts to improve are clearly related to measurable targets. However, this is by no means always the case, and some priorities are not set against quantifiable targets. This makes it difficult for the impact of actions taken on standards and quality to be assessed in an easy and effective way.
109. Educational priorities are soundly supported through the school's financial planning. The school budgets systematically so that all spending relates sufficiently to its priorities for improvement. Pupils benefit from thoughtfully targeted spending decisions, such as increasing the number of learning support assistants' hours. The school secretary is very efficient in keeping records and in ensuring a flow of relevant information between the headteacher, finance committee and full governing body. Administrative procedures are sound and the governors exercise a satisfactory level of financial checks and controls.
110. In many areas of expenditure, the school is very aware of getting best value, for example in carrying out audits of resources before making purchases. Seeking best value is less apparent in relation to spending to bring improvements in standards. The school has started to make use of detailed analysis of assessment results to target spending on support for individuals and groups of pupils. It has begun to consider ways to monitor and evaluate best value in terms of measurable performance, for example in considering the value of its own spending on Additional Literacy Support in terms of pupils' progress.
111. The school has a team of suitably qualified teachers and support staff to meet the needs of all aspects of the curriculum apart from the under-fives. In day-to-day teaching terms, the quality of provision for the under-fives is good. However, in the longer term, the lack of trained staff with a knowledge and understanding in this stage of learning makes it very difficult for the school to meet the requirements of any nationally recommended curriculum.
112. Learning support staff are very hard working and committed to the well being of the pupils. Staff make an added contribution to pupils' learning when they undertake additional training to extend their roles. In information and communication technology, a previously unsatisfactory level of knowledge and understanding in the subject has been turned a round, through well-targeted training and a lot of personal initiative on the part of staff. At present, the school frequently uses staff meetings, both to pass on newly acquired subject knowledge and to review and moderate work, in order to ensure continuity and progression in the curriculum. During the last year, unforeseen and unpredictable staff absence has affected one class in particular. The school gave effective support to the pupils and member of staff and, with the recent appointment of a permanent teacher, stability and continuity have been restored.
113. The school makes effective use of new technologies, and the teaching staff are at least reasonably confident in using them. Several computers now include a CD-ROM and the school has access to the Internet.
114. Specific grants received by the school, such as funding for staff training and for additional support for pupils through the government-funded 'Additional Literacy Support' project, are being used effectively and for the specified purpose.

115. The school buildings and site provides a poor standard of accommodation that, overall, has a detrimental effect on important aspects of pupils' learning. There are a number of particular shortcomings:
- The restricted space indoors makes movement of pupils and staff in and between classes difficult;
 - The playground is barely adequate in size for the number and age of pupils, especially when the adjacent common ground cannot be used;
 - The under-fives have no designated outdoor area which restricts aspects of their curriculum;
 - The unacceptable condition of the children's toilets makes it inappropriate to use the adjacent lobby area.
116. The inadequacies in accommodation are all the more of a concern bearing in mind the anticipated increase in the number of pupils in the autumn term, 2000. Overall, the school has adequate resources for learning. It is reasonably resourced in all areas of the curriculum, including ICT, literacy and numeracy. Resources in the under-fives are satisfactory. There is a satisfactory ratio of computers to pupils, and these are sufficiently used. Resources are generally well organised and as accessible as can be, given the limitations on space for pupils and staff. The school makes good use of the immediate environment and of resources further afield to support learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

117. In order to build on the existing strengths of the school and to improve the quality of pupils' learning and the standards they reach, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- Raise standards in science by:
 - Giving greater attention to the investigative and experimental aspects of the subject;
 - Ensuring that teachers are given appropriate training to raise their confidence and competence in the area;
 - Monitoring and evaluating efforts to improve pupils' achievement.
(paragraphs 12, 25, 68, 170, 171)

 - Ensure a secure long-term curriculum for the under-fives by:
 - Developing a curriculum related to national recommended guidance;
 - Ensuring that all staff working with under-fives are confident in teaching and supporting children through the recommended curriculum.
(paragraphs 66, 111, 118)

 - Make the best use of the school's procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and of pupils' performance by:
 - Closely relating its analysis of pupils' progress and achievements to its monitoring of teaching and learning
(paragraphs 87, 107)

 - Improve the school's accommodation and its impact on the quality of learning by:
 - Making the best use of the existing playground so that it can be used to extend the opportunities for children under the age of five to learn through activity and play;
 - Improving, as a matter of urgency, the condition of the pupils' toilets;
 - Continuing to explore all possibilities for an additional area for outdoor recreation.
(paragraphs 2, 114, 115, 118, 219)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	21
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	19	57	24	0	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)		72
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		18

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	8	5	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	6	5
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	9	10	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69	77	69
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	5	6
	Girls	5	4	4
	Total	13	9	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100	69	77
	National	82	86	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
	1999	5	5	10

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	2	4
	Girls	3	3	3
	Total	6	5	7
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60	50	70
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	4	4
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	7	8	8
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70	80	80
	National	68	69	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	72
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.8
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	38

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	164,461
Total expenditure	163,592
Expenditure per pupil	2,273
Balance brought forward from previous year	10,737
Balance carried forward to next year	11,606

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	72
Number of questionnaires returned	22

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	32	0	0	4
My child is making good progress in school.	64	32	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	47	0	0	12
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	32	16	0	4
The teaching is good.	64	32	4	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	32	16	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	32	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	28	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	41	55	4	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	40	40	20	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	36	4	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	50	16	0	4

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

118. Children enter the Reception class full-time at the start of the autumn or spring terms depending on the date of their fifth birthday. Of the nine Reception year children in the class at the time of the inspection, all but four were already five years old. The children share the same teacher and classroom as the 15 pupils in Year 1. Although sharing many activities, the 'under-fives' of the Reception year often work as a distinct group, supported by the class teacher or part-time classroom assistant.
119. Nearly all of the children in the Reception class have had at least some part-time, pre-school experience. For most of them, what they know, understand and can do on entering the Reception class is broadly in line with the expected levels for this age group. They make at least satisfactory progress in all areas of learning during their time in Reception. The children's progress in language and literacy and in personal and social development is good.
120. The provision has a number of limitations that affect the overall quality of children's learning:
- The accommodation is well used, but is restricted in space, especially in poorer weather when it is not possible to use the playground;
 - The playground is easily accessible and well used, but has not been developed as an outdoor area of learning specifically for the under-fives;
 - The curriculum has not been built around the nationally recommended guidance which makes it difficult to ensure a balance and breadth of learning experience;
 - The staff are not specifically trained in education for children of this age; although they have many skills to interact and support children, these need to be developed further, for example, in assessing children's learning so that the next steps in learning and teaching can be planned.
121. Against these constraints, it is of credit to the teacher that the quality of learning is good. This is because the teaching is consistently good and effective use is made of the available space and adults (including help from parents). In the short time since her appointment, the teacher has successfully adapted the strategies for literacy and numeracy to meet the needs of the younger children. The need for the school to review its curriculum is made all the more necessary by the introduction of the 'foundation stage for children' in September 2000, and its related national guidance.

Personal and social development

122. The provision for children's personal and social development is very good. They learn to take turns and to recognise right from wrong, and their behaviour is very good. The good links with the pre-school settings and a supportive induction programme help parents and their children to soon feel at home. Children soon settle into the smooth routines of the class, responding well to the purposeful and secure environment. The staff know the children well and handle any minor difficulties with good sense and care. The adults have high expectations of behaviour and politeness and they serve as good role-models for the children to follow. Children concentrate well and like to persevere with more challenging tasks, such as completing a difficult number pattern. There are good opportunities for them to learn in groups or on their own. The children are encouraged to treat books and equipment with care and respect and they willingly help tidy away at the end of sessions. Often, learning is related to the environment and this helps children to think about treating living things with sensitivity and care, such as handling caterpillars and other small creatures. There are also good opportunities for children to develop their independence. They are encouraged to put on and take off their own clothes and shoes for physical activities, and to put their work away and to wash and dry their own hands.
123. By providing children with a range of new experiences, such as observing 'minibeasts', staff help to foster experiences of awe and wonder. Although some children are more confident than others, most are willing to join in new activities, such as the adapted literacy session. By the time they are five, they have made good progress in their personal and social development and are likely to reach or exceed the expectations for their age.

Language and literacy

124. Children in the Reception class make very good progress in their language and literacy skills, and most reach the national expectations in reading, writing and in speaking and listening by the time they are five years old.
125. Through good opportunities to talk with the staff and with each other, children develop their speaking and communication skills well. They talk with increasing confidence and detail about their families and their experiences at home, and about their activities in school with clarity and enthusiasm. Most listen well to instructions and are growing in confidence to ask and respond to questions. In their imaginative play, they begin to make up their own stories and take on the role of different characters, such as an assistant in the shop.
126. Literacy skills are further developed through the daily literacy sessions, based on the Literacy Strategy ideas and materials. Children sharing a 'big book' story of 'In the pool' know the difference between a book's cover, pictures and writing, and talk about the plot of a story, and predict what will happen next through their understanding of the text. Children regularly take books to share with someone at home. They learn the sounds that letters make and can think of words that start with the same sound. They enjoy finding rhyming words in a text.
127. Children are making good progress in the development of their writing skills. Most can form at least some letters independently, attempt to write their own name, and copy an adult's writing. They are encouraged to write through a good range of activities that motivates them to express what they see, do and imagine. However, there could be more opportunities for children to write informally, as and when they wanted to, such as in the shop to record notes of orders or to send messages in their role-play. Most children are likely to reach or even exceed the national expectations for five-years-olds in their writing.
128. There are many good activities planned to promote children's language and literacy skills, including the adapted literacy session. The quality of teaching in the session is very good with staff and parents supporting the teacher well. All staff give effective support in group and individual story-telling sessions, sharing books and encouraging children to express their ideas and to ask their own questions.

Mathematical development

129. Children make satisfactory progress in their mathematical development and are likely to reach the national expectations by the time they are five. Many children in the class can count and recognise numbers up to ten, and most can count out the correct number of objects to match a given number. They know the names of common two-dimensional shapes, and are beginning to use language such as 'side', 'straight' and 'smaller than' to describe shape and size. Nearly all join in simple counting games and number rhymes. They are encouraged to recognise and write numbers in the same way as letters. More able children can count in two's and fives.
130. A good range of planned activities promotes the sound development of children's mathematical skills and understanding. The daily session, built around the format of the numeracy strategy, provides regular opportunities for children to develop their awareness of number through structured practical activities.
131. Staff are aware of the need to extend opportunities to develop children's mathematical language and understanding outside the mathematics session. Activities, such as cooking and playing with sand and water are increasingly being used to involve counting, adding and taking away, comparisons, and tackling simple problems.
132. The children's progress is enhanced by the range of activities in which mathematics features, such as using money in the imaginary shop and through interactive games on the computer.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

133. The provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory, and promotes aspects of learning, including information and communication technology, science, history and geography.

Good use is made of the village locality to observe buildings, talk to people, and think about similarities and differences. Children talk about their families and homes in considerable detail. They are curious about the past and ask questions, such as, 'what was that used for?' when looking at old household artefacts.

134. The staff deserve credit for improving the opportunities for children to use the computer and other technological resources, such as the programmable floor robot and tape-recorder. Even the youngest children have developed the necessary confidence and skills to work simple programs, such as one that supports a reading scheme. By the age of five, they use the keys to make directional moves and recognise parts of the computer, such as the mouse and space bar.
135. Children make sound progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world through activities often planned around a theme, such as 'our senses'. A range of occasional activities, such as sand and water play and construction sets, allows the children to experiment and try things out. However, the role of the adult in getting the children to ask questions about why things happen and how things work is not so well developed. The staff are aware of this, and of the need to improve their assessment and planning procedures to give them a clearer idea of the next stage of learning and how it can be best promoted.
136. Although the easily assessable playground provides useful additional space, it is not a designated area for outdoor learning where children can explore, experiment, talk and think from first-hand experiences, such as planting and growing seeds.

Physical development

137. Children make sound progress in developing their physical skills, so that by the age of five they are close to meeting national expectations. Good use is made of the playground and adjacent field to develop skills with small apparatus and to move with growing confidence and awareness of space. However, the children do not have access either to a hall equipped with large apparatus, or to an outdoor area with resources, such as climbing frames, tree trunks or wheeled vehicles. This limits the children's opportunities to exploit physical skills in a regular and adventurous way.
138. There are suitable opportunities for children to develop their fine motor skills. Staff are aware of teaching new skills and developing children's use of equipment. Children handle scissors, brushes and materials safely and with growing control. Most children hold and use a paintbrush correctly and make strokes without the help of an adult. They used paints, sponges and scrap materials to make a delightful collage. However, there is no evidence of the use of woodwork tools, such as hammers.

Creative development

139. Children make sound progress in their creative development so that, by the age of five, they reach the expected level for their age. They have a satisfactory introduction to sound when they use the musical instruments and experiment with different objects to see which produce a good sound in their homemade 'shakers' and 'strummers'. The children have good access to activities that encourage them to use colour, texture and shape in their work. They use recycled objects for modelling, and they use different techniques for painting, effectively working in two and three dimensions. The current topic work around 'The Senses' gives the children a good opportunity to respond by using taste, smell and hearing and relates creative development to early scientific understanding. The class provides a range of suitable resources to encourage imaginative play. There were some opportunities for role-play to take place during the inspection, and planning shows themes such as 'a café', and 'a travel agents', having taken place earlier in the year.

ENGLISH

140. Standards in English are close to the national average at the end of both key stages. This reflects a similar picture to the findings in the previous inspection report. Inspection evidence indicates higher levels of achievement among the current Year 2 and Year 6 groups than reflected in the 1999 National Curriculum tests and assessments. The small size of the year groups gives rise to considerable annual fluctuations in pupils' achievement. This is particularly relevant given the very different proportions of pupils with special educational needs from one year group to another. This factor contributes largely to the differences in achievement, in relation to expectations for their age, between year groups in the school
141. Results in the 1999 national tests for seven-year-olds were below the national average for reading and average in writing. In both reading and writing, the results were well below average when compared with similar schools. However, when the results of tests for seven-year-olds over the last four years are taken together, the school's performance in reading is close to the national average, and just below for writing. Over the same period, the results show a marked difference in the achievement of boys and girls in reading, but far less so in writing. In reading, boys were well below, and girls well above average.
142. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils currently in Year 2 are achieving at higher levels than pupils achieved in the 1999 national tests, although the small cohort size means that year-to-year comparisons should be treated with caution. The uneven proportions of boys to girls from year to year, makes it difficult to draw conclusions from the differences in their performance in reading. No further evidence from the inspection was forthcoming to add to this feature.
143. The inspection findings show that by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in reading and writing are broadly in line with the national average, although the very small (five) size of the year group makes it difficult to be accurate. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests were just above the national average, although well below the average for similar schools. An important feature of the 1999 and of other recent Year 6 groups in the school, is the significant level of pupil mobility, with pupils leaving before Year 6 and others joining after Year 2. Invariably, this meant that more able pupils left the school and a high proportion of special needs pupils came into Key Stage 2. Given this mobility and the small cohort size, the four-year period of results provides more telling evidence. Taken together, the results show that pupils achieved well above the national average from 1996 to 1999. Given the difference in achievement between boys and girls in Key Stage 1, it is noticeable that the reverse is apparent in Key Stage 2, where boys are well above, and girls above average in English. However, as in Key stage 1, the uneven proportion of boys and girls within very small year groups leads to big fluctuations in performance between years and makes any comparisons unreliable.
144. Progress through Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and in speaking and listening is sound, and for pupils with special educational needs it is good. Pupils in Year 1 get off to a good start in the key stage because of the very good quality of teaching. In Key Stage 2, progress in Years 3 and 4 is steady, although more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Progress picks up well as the pupils get into Years 5 and 6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in all aspects of the work. Teachers plan lessons and organise their classes so that these pupils have appropriate work and adequate support whilst taking a full part in all activities. When they are withdrawn from lessons, pupils with special educational needs have good support.
145. Standards in literacy across the curriculum are satisfactory, with some good features. The strengths are in the presentation of work, the quality of handwriting, particularly in Key Stage 2, and growing accuracy of spelling. The school has introduced a helpful approach to spelling, often incorporating work at home, that is beginning to have a real impact on raising standards. There is evidence that the school is increasingly aware of using basic skills in literacy across the curriculum, for example in history and religious education. As a result, pupils' writing, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2, shows more creativity, use of precise vocabulary, and awareness of audience. However, there remain too few opportunities in any subject for pupils to write in an extended form, such as in an on-going narrative or descriptive passage.
146. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils speak clearly, with reasonable fluency and growing confidence. The effective use of the literacy session and growing opportunities for discussion in other subjects make positive contributions. Similar opportunities in Key Stage 2 allow pupils to make sound

progress. There is evidence from other subjects, but notably science, of pupils' not getting enough experience in investigations and experimentation. This helps to explain why pupils who can readily answer a question in a straightforward way, are not so confident in predicting, questioning, explaining and discussing ideas and issues in an extended way. From entering Key Stage 1, and throughout the school, pupils listen attentively, although some need more help in responding through questions of their own, and in making comments.

147. Standards in reading are broadly in line with national averages at the end of both key stages. Pupils make a good start on the way to reading in Year 1, and many read extracts of simple and familiar texts. Virtually all of them enjoy handling books and develop a good attitude to reading. The use of phonic skills, together with other strategies, helps pupils to make sound progress in their reading within the key stage. The more able pupils are reading from a variety of books with relish.
148. The school works closely with parents to help pupils develop a fondness for books and a good habit of reading. By the end of Key Stage 2, nearly all pupils are fluent readers. They read with expression and understanding. More able pupils thrive on the positive environment for reading and are becoming 'critical readers'. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their reading because they are well supported in school and often by an adult at home. There is evidence that pupils have benefited from the deliberately increased range of opportunities to develop their library skills through higher-level research tasks, such as comparing information in one text with that in another. This might also lead to them into comparing their findings with information on the Internet. Library and research skills are good, reflecting some successful teaching of the targets of the literacy framework. The school has been at pains to check the progress pupils make in reading through a good series of diagnostic tests, and this is giving clear targets for individual improvement.
149. Standards in writing are in line with the national average at both key stages. Presentation of work is a strong feature of the school, especially in Key Stage 2, where pupils have a growing pride in their efforts. Spelling is sound by the end of Key Stage 1 and often good by the end of Key Stage 2. Punctuation is systematically taught, and by the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils use full stops, capital letters and question marks correctly. Eleven-year-olds have a sound sense of sentence construction and punctuation, although more able pupils do not apply more sophisticated forms of punctuation. For example, several pupils in Years 5 and 6 are capable of using brackets correctly, but rarely do so other than in set exercises. Pupils' written work is often accurate, well presented and fluent. The school recognises that it needs to find more opportunities for all pupils, but especially the more able, to write at length and in different forms. This includes the need, in both key stages, for pupils to learn to develop their writing through planning and drafting. Of the three lessons in English seen during the inspection, two were very good and one was satisfactory. The features of the very good teaching include strong management of pupils; high expectations of behaviour and achievement; the support given by parents to help their children's reading; and the good use of support staff, especially in relation to pupils with special educational needs. The lesson for older pupils in Key Stage 2 was characterised by very good questioning on the part of the teacher, to assess pupils' understanding and to extend their learning. This was made possible because the learning objectives were clearly understood by the teacher and pupils alike. There were no significant weaknesses in the quality of teaching. The satisfactory lesson would have been more effective if the learning intentions had been clearly identified and pursued more closely by the teacher. The teachers have a good idea of pupils' knowledge and understanding within each lesson. They are aware of pupils' achievements and what they find difficult. However, not enough notice is taken of this information to help the teacher to better plan the next stage of learning, especially in Key Stage 1. The school is aware of this and has begun to address the issue.
150. The management of the subject is in steady hands and the co-ordinator is making a sound contribution to the subject's development. She has been a prime mover in improving handwriting and spelling. The subject is appropriately resourced and the provision of books within the classrooms contributes well to reading standards. Resources for reading have been significantly improved since the last inspection.
151. The school has embraced the structure of the National Literacy Strategy with commitment and enthusiasm, and uses the skills of the learning support assistants to good effect. Improvements in planning since the last inspection ensure that there is good progression within and between classes and key stages. The monitoring of teaching to accompany the launch of the Literacy Strategy has already led to helpful intervention. Improvements to assessment procedures, and the 'tracking' of

progress made by individual pupils, are proving effective in setting targets and deciding on such approaches as levels of individual support to help certain pupils. It is important that the school now brings together its established approach to monitoring the quality of teaching to put alongside its analysis of pupils' performance.

MATHEMATICS

152. The results in national tests for both seven and eleven-year-olds have gone up and down, from year to year, from 1996 to 1999. Results in 1999, at the end of both key stages, were lower than in any of the previous four years. At the end of Key Stage 1, the 1999 results were well below the national average, and the average for similar schools. At the end of Key Stage 2, the 1999 results were below the national average and well below compared with similar schools. The inspection found that the current achievements of both seven and eleven-year-olds is higher than in the 1999 national tests, and is close to the national average. This represents a similar picture to that in the previous inspection.
153. The fluctuation in the results from year to year is largely caused by the very different proportions of pupils with special educational needs between year groups.
154. Taken together, the performance of pupils at the end of key Stage 1 in mathematics from 1996 to 1999 was below the national average. However, by the age of eleven, pupils' performance over the four years indicate that mathematics was above the national average. This suggests that higher standards historically have been achieved in Key Stage 2.
155. The size of the current Year 6 cohort is five pupils, two of whom have only recently joined the school, and a more able pupil was absent for the test. Over the last four years, the performance of boys in mathematics was below the national average, the performance of girls slightly exceeded the national average. Trends over time show that over the last four years pupils' performance in mathematics has slightly exceeded the national average. Evidence from the inspection reflects this picture; it shows attainment to be in line with national expectations at both key stages.
156. The judgement in the previous inspection report indicates that attainment is in line with national expectations. Attainment has fallen, but this is the result of cohort differences and an unusually small group: trends over four years remain positive. Teaching has improved, and the introduction of the numeracy hour has improved the curriculum.
157. Pupils make satisfactory progress over time at both key stages. In lessons pupils make sound progress: progress is good in the Year 4/5/6 classes and in the early years class. In Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress overall: progress in lower Key Stage 2 is sound, it is good in upper Key Stage 2.
158. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils know the sequence of numbers to 1,000 and use two places of decimals when calculating amounts of money. Younger pupils count in 2s, 5s and 10s and use a number line to answer questions. Year 2 and 3 pupils make good progress in understanding time when they take part in a discussion about time and then engage in practical activities finding out how many times they can perform certain actions in a given time. They know numbers get bigger counting forwards and smaller counting backwards and are aware of negative numbers in everyday contexts, such as temperature. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils easily convert millilitres to fractions of a litre and vice versa. Pupils use their knowledge of tables adeptly in quick mental arithmetic; for example, counting in 9s and dividing four figure numbers quickly by 10. They know when to use long division or multiplication but do not check their answers by a quick preliminary estimate using rounding up or down to the nearest unit, ten or hundred. Their books contain work on fractions showing a sound understanding of denominator and numerator, and on volume and area showing a full understanding of the inter-relation of these aspects. They find equivalent fractions by relating their understanding to circles divided into varying segments.
159. In Key Stage 2, Year 3 pupils work out what amounts can and can't be made from a given set of coins: work is well differentiated to match the needs of all pupils. The work scrutiny indicates much work is done in commercially published workbooks which provide insufficient opportunity for pupils to develop their own understanding and use of mathematics. The structure of the numeracy hour

counterbalances this, with its emphasis on practical investigation and group work designed for different ages and abilities.

160. Pupils with special educational needs work towards individual targets, carefully planned by the teacher and the special educational needs co-ordinator. They use smaller numbers, real coins, and attempt more practical activities with simpler recording. Progress in number is satisfactory in Year 3 and Year 4. Teachers use the national framework effectively to achieve sound progress. There are examples of work in data handling, and of work in shape, space and algebra in both key stages. Pupils behave well and show a fascination with mathematics, especially when questioning is lively and tasks relate to their experience. They enjoy challenges, which they answer with enthusiasm, and they respond positively to variety in lessons. When the teacher talks for too long or the pace is too slow their interest wanes. Their initial interest is replaced by feelings of failure when the tasks are too hard for them. Older pupils work well independently, in pairs and in groups. When given the opportunity, pupils readily accept responsibility, such as the distribution and collection of resources.
161. Of the three lessons seen in mathematics, two were judged good and the other satisfactory. Lessons are usually well structured, and follow the numeracy framework. The best lessons include a well focused introduction to motivate pupils, an opportunity to consolidate and extend skills in group work and a plenary at the end of the session to reinforce or check pupils' understanding.
162. Teachers manage pupils well and have clear and high expectations of how they should behave. Occasionally, where expectations of behaviour and independent working have not clearly been established repeated reminders delay progress.
163. Teaching is good throughout both key stages. In the one lesson judged satisfactory there are however, minor weak elements. Where teaching is good or better teachers have good pace: they spend sufficient time in quick-fire questioning to maintain pupils' mental alertness, but do not allow this time to impinge on the class lesson. This gives them daily assessments of pupils' progress, and the pupils' daily practice. Where teaching is satisfactory, the introductory warm-up is overly long, questions are too difficult and the session turns into a teaching exercise and encroaches on the taught lesson. Good planning is a strong feature of most lessons and this contributes positively to progress. Very good teaching includes a variety of tasks which are thoughtfully chosen to provide learning opportunities for the whole ability range. In such lessons teachers draw upon humour and their very good knowledge of mathematics and the interest of their pupils to give tasks greater challenge for higher attaining pupils. Such teachers use support teachers and assistants effectively: they promote the progress of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.
164. Teachers manage pupils well by giving clear directions calmly and with good humour. In otherwise satisfactory teaching, weaknesses relate to slow pace, the failure of teachers to follow their own plans closely, and lack of work matched to the abilities of higher and lower attaining pupils. The more able do more work, which is not necessarily more challenging and calculated to develop their skills and understanding. Lower attaining pupils are sometimes set tasks which are too difficult. There are examples of very good assessment practice in the school among the youngest Key Stage 1 and the oldest Key Stage 2 pupils. Questioning and feedback to pupils is usually constructive and positive.
165. Teachers are sympathetic to pupils' difficulties and recognise and handle misconceptions sensitively. Good use is made of pupils' ideas and this helps them to feel appreciated and valued. The written marking of pupils' work is very good in the class containing older pupils and clearly explains what pupils need to do to improve. The use of homework follows school policy: this is not fully supportive of the needs of Year 6 pupils about to enter secondary education. Current practices such as a homework diary where pupils write down their tasks, so that both pupils and parents fully understand what is required, are often followed but are not part of school policy. In the case of teacher illness, a supply teacher would follow school policy which does not include this practice.
166. The curriculum provides a good coverage of all aspects of the subject. Assessment procedures are very good: the school uses a commercial system which accurately identifies previous gaps in pupil knowledge. These appear to have been most apparent in the early mathematical education of the current upper Key Stage 2 pupils. There is currently an emphasis on number and mathematical methods, as the school closely follows the numeracy framework. Pupils are encouraged to be efficient and organised in arriving at other classes and no time is wasted. The use of computers as a resource for learning is satisfactory throughout the school. Many opportunities are taken to use

computers during numeracy and this supports pupils' progress in all aspects of information technology.

167. The school adopted the framework of the National Numeracy Strategy effectively and this has supported the development of the provision for mathematics and prepared teachers and class assistants well for its full introduction. The school has begun to analyse test and assessment data to identify areas for further development but has yet to refine this process with regard to the performance of boys, girls and different ability groups.
168. The subject is managed well, although the co-ordinator's monitoring needs to become more systematic and a feature of the role. The co-ordinator has introduced the new framework effectively and monitors the outcomes of planning as they affect pupil achievement. Monitoring of teaching on a regular basis will contribute significantly to developing continuity and progression so that good practice is uniformly achieved in all classes.

SCIENCE

169. The number of pupils in Year 6 is very low; the number of pupils leaving and entering the school during the school year is high and the abilities of pupils varies very greatly from year to year. This means that statistical data has to be viewed with caution. The absence of one pupil, for example, may cause an apparently precipitous fall in achievement when the standards reached by a particular group are analysed.
170. Findings of the current inspection differ from those of the previous inspection. At that time attainment was judged to be above national expectations. Two important factors have contributed to the different judgement between the two inspections. Firstly, there were far more pupils with special educational needs in the 1999 year group than in the earlier cohort. Secondly, the school recognises that changes in the teaching personnel from one year to the next have had a big impact on the quality of teaching especially, as in the case of science, where, previously, specialist teaching has been a feature.
171. The results of the 1999 teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 indicate that pupils achieved standards in line with national expectations except in the understanding of life and living processes where standards were above the national average, and in materials and their properties where standards were well above the national average.
172. The results in the national tests for science at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 indicate that the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4, the expected level, or above was well below the national average. The percentage reaching the higher Level 5 was also well below the national average. Teacher assessments however, were similar to those for Key Stage 1, and predicted much better results. This discrepancy between teacher assessment and test results is partly due to cohort variation, but is also due to shortcomings in the teaching and assessment of experimental and investigative science.
173. The national test results at Key Stage 2 in 1999 broadly reflect the inspection findings. Most pupils across the ability range are achieving well below average standards in experimental and investigative science, although achievement is higher in other aspects of science, including physical processes. Pupils learn through practical experiences and are beginning to understand about the principles of the subject, such as the need for gathering data through investigation. The main focus of work in the Year 2/3 class during the inspection week was on light. Pupils experimented with torches, mirrors, card and tracing paper. They were not asked to record findings in an evaluative way. Links with fair testing and the creation of hypotheses were not fully exploited, although some mention was made of these aspects. In the Year 4/5/6 class pupils studied the solar system. The pupils were encouraged to develop hypotheses about the initial story, but this topic offers limited opportunity for investigative and experimental science. The oldest pupils were challenged to design and make a model of the lunar orbit, which the teacher plans to use with the younger pupils. This project continued during the week of inspection and provided an appropriate challenge in both science and design and technology. Work books indicate that most pupils show a satisfactory knowledge of topics they have studied in science and write about them using correct terminology when appropriate. Pupils record their findings satisfactorily and in some cases, the heart investigation for example, very well when they draw and then enter values onto a graph showing changes of heart rate. They make sufficient use of literacy skills to write about experiments and use

ICT to record and display results. Books indicate that the amount of investigative work has increased recently, but throughout the school there is insufficient emphasis on the key area of investigative and experimental science. Pupils are not beginning to grasp the basics of scientific modes of enquiry and higher attaining pupils do not always appreciate the need for a fair test when carrying out an experiment.

174. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in lessons and as they move through the school because of the good teaching from learning support assistants. Pupils in Year 1 were making satisfactory progress in developing their observation skills and drawing conclusions from evidence as they examined wheeled toys.
175. Pupils in Year 2/3 enjoy the practical aspects of their science lessons and make good progress in developing their scientific knowledge. This is not paralleled by a deepening understanding of scientific method or evaluation. In Year 4/5/6 pupils were fascinated by video footage of Neil Armstrong's first steps on the Moon, and an atmosphere of breathless anticipation was palpable. Written work from lessons by the science co-ordinator showed that pupils learn best when they are encouraged to predict and are involved in close observations and practical work whilst being encouraged to develop scientific vocabulary. Of the three lessons observed in science, two were good and the other satisfactory. Work and discussion with pupils indicates that this is the case in all aspects of science except the teaching of scientific method. In this area, previous work indicates that it is unsatisfactory. Learning objectives in lessons are clear and good links are made to previous learning. Lessons are well planned, but sometimes the focus on experimental and investigative science is lost and it is not clear what progress pupils are making in scientific knowledge and understanding as opposed to the other elements. The school has not developed a system to help teachers improve their own subject knowledge. Good subject knowledge and an understanding of how to challenge pupils in Years 4,5 and 6 to develop their own ideas and approaches based on their learning about scientific methods enable teachers to respond to pupils' questions and to ask challenging questions themselves. This promotes good progress. Examples of this approach were evident through written work from lessons led by the co-ordinator.
176. Teachers use adult helpers effectively to support pupils working in groups. Teachers place appropriate emphasis on the health and safety aspects of the subject to ensure that pupils become aware of safe working methods. Methods of assessment are based on the recently introduced national guidance and are good. They are used well to inform planning for all aspects of science except scientific method and enquiry. Pupils are encouraged carry out simple tasks to prepare for, or extend, work in lessons.
177. The leadership and management of science are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the development of the subject and has developed systems to ensure that improvements are made in the provision. These are:
 - to adopt an action plan to improve performance and attainment in science;
 - to review current teaching;
 - to review the learning programme;
 - to audit skills, confidence and knowledge;
 - to arrange external advice and support.
178. The school plans to revise target funding to support this and has secured a place on the specialist initiative designed to raise attainment. The implementation of this action plan, or something very similar, designed to raise standards as soon as possible is a necessity.

ART

179. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection and this was as part of a lesson for ICT. However, through discussion with pupils, perusal of school plans and pupil work, it is possible to make judgements about some aspects of the work.
180. Pupils are provided with opportunities to work with a suitable range of media in two and three-dimensions. Even so, pupils' skills would be further developed if more time was given for these activities.

181. The last inspection found that more emphasis was needed on observational drawing and the work of other artists; teacher expectations needed to be raised; pupils understanding of how to improve their work needed to be developed.
182. The inspection evidence suggests that expectations are higher, and that the school follows nationally recommended guidance. This has undoubtedly helped to address the concerns of the last inspection. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 produced attractive pictures of the Millennium Dome after their visit earlier in the week, although they needed more time to finish their work. Year 4 pupils used paint to depict "The Living Island" and suggested that they use spots of paint for the beach, as they had seen in paintings by Seurat. They mixed their own shades carefully to produce an attractive effect. Year 5 pupils began a pencil drawing of the Dome, but did not use different grades of pencil, hatching or shading. Year 6 pupils and one Year 4 pupil used the computers to produce impressive outline drawings of the Dome and the Body Zone respectively. These indicated good familiarity with using computers within the context of art.
183. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of art is soundly developed. They are given appropriate opportunities to look at the work of noted artists, such as Van Gogh, although still more attention needs to be given to this aspect. Pupils are encouraged to use techniques to improve their own original work.
184. Pupils enjoy their work in art. Most concentrate hard, look carefully and strive to do their best. Many pupils persevere to achieve the desired effect and older, higher attaining pupils are beginning to evaluate their own work to suggest how they might improve.
185. The policy for art is based on National Curriculum guidelines and is supported by the availability of nationally recommended guidance that identifies key art skills and knowledge to be taught. The policy and scheme are not fully implemented by teachers because of constraints in timetabling and accommodation. More time could be fairly allocated to art in some classes in order to meet the learning objectives of the school's policy. Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory because teachers successfully teach basic practical skills and motivate pupils well.
186. In the art/ICT lesson seen, the teaching was good. Expectations were high, pupils' attention was very well directed to detailed observation and pupils were challenged to improve. All pupils made good progress. Teachers provide a stimulating visual environment for pupils. Displays around the school are of good quality and celebrate achievement well.
187. The co-ordinator intends to leave shortly. She has influenced standards within the constraints of timetabling, class organisation and accommodation and has made a thorough evaluation of existing provision. There has been a satisfactory response to the last inspection. Resources for making art are sufficient, accessible and of good quality. The school needs to develop its range of reference materials to enable pupils to research and extend their knowledge and understanding about art and artists.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

188. It was only possible to observe one lesson that featured aspects of design and technology during the course of the inspection. However, through discussion with pupils and teachers, a scrutiny of planning, and the examination of a small number of completed models, it is possible to make judgements on some areas of the work.
189. The school has a useful scheme of work and completed policy for the subject. As a result, a programme of soundly planned activities are carried out during the year and linked to achieve a systematic development of basic important skills, such as designing, cutting, shaping, joining, using of tools, finishing and evaluating. This suggests a similar position to that in which the school found itself at the last inspection. The school plans to develop its scheme of work further, to take on board the national guidance now available.
190. Photographic evidence indicates that some pupils have designed and made musical instruments. They sketch out their ideas, proposing the materials and planning step-by-step instructions for making them. Having made the instruments, they then complete sound written evaluations, sometimes pointing out where things could be improved.

191. Pupils are able to talk about making instruments and about designing and making motorised 'bugs' out of household materials. They made gifts for Mothers' Day using pansies planted in pots along with a range of other materials. Here, pupils display sound design skills including plans listing materials and the proposed method of making.
192. There is little evidence of links currently being made with information and communication technology, and the school has not exploited fully the possible cross-curricular links as it has done for some other subjects.
193. The school has adequate resources for design and technology and both boys and girls are keen to be involved in the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

194. During the inspection week, no lesson was timetabled or seen in geography, so there was not enough evidence on which to make secure judgements on pupils' achievement or on the quality of teaching in the subject. Evidence from samples of work seen in topic books and from displays around the school, however, suggests that pupils undertake a satisfactory range of activities. This view is supported by discussions with staff and pupils and by a scrutiny of planning documents. This represents a similar position to that noted in the previous inspection report.
195. Pupils in Key Stage 1 build well on their earlier learning through an emphasis on geographical knowledge, skills and understanding. This is apparent in their recognition and correct use of geographical language in their written work. They correctly use terms, such as 'far' and 'near' when writing about their journey home from school. The school draws on pupils' earlier geographical knowledge and understanding and applies it to new situations. For example, work on islands, based around the story of 'Katie Morag', leads into later studies of St Lucia in Key Stage 2. By the time they are seven, most pupils understand that simple maps and plans need to be positioned correctly, and some pupils are aware of the compass points and how they can be used in relation to map work. A considerable amount of work in Key Stage 1 builds around the immediate locality; the school, its site and the village. Occasionally, studies are appropriately linked to activities in history.
196. In Key Stage 2, pupils are increasingly encouraged to make predictions, ask questions, try out their ideas and offer explanations. In considering features of the village, they offer positive and negative comments. Pupils consider the reasons why some communities are poor. For example, in their discussions, they show a good awareness of how different climatic conditions can affect plant growth, soil erosion and health. They draw on different sources of evidence in relation to a range of geographical themes, such as maps and weather charts. Eleven-year-olds draw and read maps, interpreting features with the help of a key, and learn about scale and the use of map references. They distinguish between different forms of land-use in St Lucia, building on earlier work in Key Stage 1 on the main features of Rodmersham. They are introduced to places and environments beyond the immediate, and can identify oceans and continents on a map of the world.
197. It was not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching because no lessons were observed. However, the quality of pupils' work, and of teachers' marking and planning is satisfactory. When older pupils talk about their work in the subject, they do so with interest and a good recollection of what they have learned.
198. The subject is soundly managed. The recently appointed co-ordinator has a good, early grasp of provision in the subject. Action has already been taken to prepare a revised, three-year programme to ensure continuity and progression. The co-ordinator has rightly identified four points for development to strengthen provision in the subject, and to make it relevant to learning in other areas:
 - To give a greater emphasis to enquiry in geography;
 - To encourage opportunities for pupils to talk, question, explain and discuss in geography so as to support speaking and listening skills;
 - To strengthen the links between geography and other subjects, such as history;
 - To use ICT to help geographical enquiry, for example, using a programmable toy to develop instructions for a route, or using the Internet to find out about different weather information and locations.

HISTORY

199. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the school. This represents a similar picture to that noted in the previous inspection. Only one lesson in history was seen during the inspection, but a scrutiny of pupils' previous work along with conversations with them, and with staff, provided enough evidence for judgements to be made.
200. Pupils in Year 1 are introduced to ideas about the past that build well on their earlier learning about their homes and families. Throughout Key Stage 1 they develop a good a sense of history. This is seen in their correct use of such historical words and phrases as 'long ago' and 'past' when talking about their work relating to Victorian times. History in Key Stage 1 is often taught by looking at and talking about first-hand evidence, such as artefacts, or by considering changes in the local environment. Earlier in the school year, younger pupils looked at features in the village, such as the church and some of the houses. Their observational drawings and accompanying writing show a good level of attention to detail and an ability to make comparisons with the present. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are developing a sense of chronology through conversations and by making simple time-lines. Pupils in Year 2 speak knowledgeably and with real enthusiasm about their recent work on the Fire of London.
201. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout Key Stage 2. They recall a lot of detail about previous studies, such as 'Invaders', and show delight about their 'Roman' day. Their sense of chronology is such that most can place major events and periods in history into order, including the Egyptians, Romans, Vikings and the Tudors. They are familiar with language to describe the passing of time, such as 'ancient', 'century' and 'B.C'. Pupils ask questions and offer explanations around a range of historical themes. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 discuss how we find out about the lives of famous people from the past, through different sources of evidence.
202. In the one lesson seen, in Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching was very good. Evidence from a sample of pupils' assessed work and from teachers' planning suggests that teachers have a good understanding of the subject and relate this well to pupils' learning. This view is reinforced by the quality, depth and good presentation of pupils' work, and by their enthusiasm for history. This was brought home by older pupils' recollection of a re-enacted 'Roman Day'. The degree of empathy and thoughtful expression found in many of the accounts suggests that the subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual awareness.
203. The co-ordinator provides good management of the subject so that history has a good status within the school's curriculum. There are some good links with other subjects, especially with English and ICT. There is evidence of considerable use made of history in developing word-processing and research skills, such as using a CD-ROM to explore about famous lives, or of supporting historical enquiry through the use of census database.
204. In order to ensure the continued development of the subject, the school should:
- Extend opportunities for pupils' to write from different historical perspectives and in different styles;
 - Strengthen links between history and other subjects.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

205. The last inspection report did not include a section on information and communication technology (ICT). The reason for this omission may lie in the curriculum section of the report, which noted that equipment was 'outdated and insufficient' to fully meet the demands of the National Curriculum. Although the report did not identify ICT as a key issue for improvement, the school has rightly made the subject a priority in its school development planning. As a result, standards in ICT are now in line with the expectations for pupils' ages at the end of both key stages. This is a significant improvement in provision, and it is to the school's credit that the weakness has been successfully tackled and mainly overcome. In contrast to the previous inspection, ICT was evident in every class throughout the inspection. Pupils were seen working away in pairs or on their own on a range of activities, including sending e-mails, accessing information and supporting other areas of learning.
206. Across the school, pupils have good opportunities to develop their experience of communicating and handling data. Pupils in Year 1 are developing their keyboard skills and mouse control in activities

related to different areas of the curriculum but, in particular, to literacy and numeracy. They recognise different key functions, such as the space bar, return and delete, to write simple sentences. Six-year-olds use the mouse to 'put on teddy's clothes' correctly. With the help of an adult, pupils can write a short story, and word-process short descriptions to accompany their pictures. Most of them know how to use a tape recorder on their own to listen to stories. By the time they are seven, pupils use a mouse to move text around and can type their name and address using capitals and lower case letters. Some of them are using two hands on the keyboard and a thumb for the space bar. Some Year 1 pupils use different fonts and letter sizes to produce attractive, individual name labels. Most Year 2 pupils know that information can be held on a computer. Pupils produced their own bar graphs to record the frequency of numbers thrown on a die. More able pupils can use a simple CD-ROM, for example, to find a picture of part of the body.

207. In Key Stage 2, pupils develop their mouse control and are increasingly familiar with the keyboard and its layout. They use computer-generated pictures, phrases and graphs to communicate meaning. They store their work on the computer, and, by Year 6, most pupils can retrieve, amend and print it on their own. Most eleven-year-olds have developed reasonable word-processing skills. They sometimes use the computer to draft and re-draft creative writing and factual work related to different topics. On the inspection, they knew how to work with different fonts to design an advertisement. They are becoming increasingly confident in using a simple database and in finding and printing out 'in depth' information from programs using the CD-ROM. During the inspection, this was particularly evident in relation to the current topic of 'Space'.
208. While communication and data-handling skills are developed through sufficient access to computers in each classroom and in the library learning area, there is less evidence of opportunities for control technology and modelling. Pupils need more frequent access to using IT to control events, such as programming a sequence of actions for a screen turtle or floor robot. However, there is evidence of pupils in Key Stage 1 being familiar with some electronic devices, such as tape recorders, and of being confident in using them independently. In upper Key Stage 2, pupils do not get enough opportunities to plan instructions and to develop complex sequences, either on screen or through programmable robots. As a result, their understanding of control technology is less well developed than other aspects of ICT.
209. Throughout the school, pupils have suitable opportunities to develop their modelling skills, particularly in Key Stage 2. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have some experience of exploring simple adventure games, solving problems, taking options and looking for patterns through specific programs. In Key Stage 2, pupils are beginning to get opportunities to expand their use of modelling through, for example, music programs, Logo or simulation games. However, this is an area for further development.
210. Information and communication technology is featured in its own right, and as part of several lessons in other subjects in both key stages. Throughout the school, the emphasis was on communication and handling data, and this important aspect was planned well and given good support. Teachers' planning shows that computers are used regularly to develop ICT skills and to lift the provision across the curriculum. For example, in Year 1, pupils worked confidently, both on their own and in pairs, on a language program that also developed their mouse control skills. The teachers are more confident in this aspect of ICT than in control, and this relates directly to the opportunities available within the classroom. Pupils enjoy ICT and have a good understanding of its usefulness in everyday life, although this is mainly related to word-processing, finding information, and entertainment. Overall, teaching assistants make a significant contribution to ICT, especially in Years 2 to 6. Although teachers note and record individual learning, these assessments are not yet consistently used to inform the next stage in their planning. The school development plan recognises that assessment is an area for action.
211. The headteacher is the co-ordinator for ICT and has a clear and relevant job description that reflects the importance the school attaches to improving the provision. Since the last inspection, there has been a big improvement in computer resources making it much easier for pupils to gain regular access. This has helped to significantly improve standards, particularly in communication and handling data. Growing links between ICT and other subjects are in evidence in every class although more so in some subjects than in others. In Key Stage 2, pupils have used the CD-ROM to find out about famous characters from history, such as Neil Armstrong. However, greater emphasis needs to be given to the control aspects of the subject. In a short time, the school has made a good start in developing the role of the co-ordinator to include a clear approach to monitoring and evaluating

provision. Throughout the school, there is a strong will to develop all aspects of the curriculum and to take on board new skills and concepts. As a result, the school is well placed for further improvement in the subject and looks forward to being part of the National Grid for Learning to further extend its provision.

MUSIC

212. Two lessons were seen during the inspection. Evidence was also gathered through discussion with staff and pupils, perusal of school plans and discussion with the specialist teacher. Throughout the school, progress in music is sound.
213. The school has maintained the satisfactory quality of teaching reported in the previous inspection. The curriculum is has been re-structured and is now better planned. The situation is broadly the same as it was at the previous inspection.
214. In Year 1, pupils make simple sound patterns using tambourines, tambours, scrapers or hollow boxes. They echo one another's pattern satisfactorily. In Years 2 and 3, pupils know the names of most untuned percussion instruments and some possible ways of using them to make a variety of sounds. In Years 4, 5 and 6, many pupils play the recorder, read simple standard notation effectively and sustain a steady beat. They know tonic sol-fa and simple time signatures. Pupils work well together in small groups. They take turns, share ideas and understand how to change speed and how to develop a melody.
215. There are currently no pupils learning individual instruments apart from the recorder. The school has recently acquired a keyboard, which is used effectively along with the glockenspiels and xylophones to teach older pupils the early stages of reading music. In assembly, pupils sing well together with enthusiasm and expression. They are familiar with the words of well-known hymns and religious songs.
216. Of the two lessons seen in music, one was judged sound and the other good. Lessons are well planned and prepared. The activities are appropriate although sometimes too few pupils are active participants. In the lessons observed there were not enough opportunities for pupils to evaluate and improve their work.
217. The pupils are attentive and interested. They listen to one another's compositions with interest. They make helpful and constructive comments, for example, by suggesting that the duration be extended or the speed changed.
218. Music makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning about other cultures, particularly European ones. The curriculum is delivered by a specialist teacher and the links with other areas of the curriculum are not as strong as those usually found. It is also difficult to organise much use of ICT in the teaching of music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

219. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection. Evidence was also gathered through discussion with staff and pupils, perusal of school plans and discussion with the co-ordinator.
220. The previous inspection noted the accommodation difficulties facing the subject. Attainment was judged to be unsatisfactory. Otherwise the report was generally favourable, except that specific skill development was recommended. This, however, was judged to be the result of the limitations of accommodation. Accommodation remains the same, although the school has done much to improve resources. It also has plans to gain access to an appropriate grassed area for games.
221. By the end of both key stages, standards are currently sound overall, although there is great variation between different aspects of the subject. Although the school does as much as it can to overcome them, shortcomings in the accommodation hinder progress in gymnastics. In other elements such as swimming, where there are not these problems, progress is good.
222. In Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in swimming. They swim further, improve their skills and techniques well, so that most swim using an effective front stroke. Older pupils make sound

progress in games in cricket, with an advisory teacher. Their progress this year has been restricted by the lack of opportunities. In gymnastics the school has made great efforts to equip the neighbouring village hall to a satisfactory level so that pupils may use apparatus that is suitably challenging, especially for the eldest. The limitations of the accommodation still affect standards in gymnastics significantly and pupils' progress is insufficient.

223. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they are given at the specialist facilities: they go skiing, play netball and in general sample the opportunities available. In many ways, this a more sophisticated approach to encouraging pupils' interest in physical education than is normally found at primary level. The richness of this experience in the spring term goes a long way to counterbalance the limitations of the village hall for gymnastics in the autumn term.
224. One teacher is responsible for physical education across Years 2 to 6. Pupils respond enthusiastically to questions about physical education and clearly regard physical activity as an interesting and worthwhile activity.
225. The school makes imaginative provision for the subject, given the limitations imposed by the accommodation. Good use is made of expertise, such as instruction for swimming and cricket, to develop the strands of physical education that are taught to good levels. The staff deserve credit for the enthusiastic way in which they have taken up the opportunities of the 'TOPS' skill-based programme. They have received useful training and make good use of new resources. The teacher in charge wishes to become the co-ordinator and has produced a good development plan for the subject which attempts to remedy the deficiencies caused by accommodation.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

226. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection. Evidence was also gathered by looking at pupils' work and through discussion with staff and pupils. Work indicates that standards are above those expected by the locally agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages. This is an improvement on the last inspection when standards were judged to be sound. During the lesson seen, the pupils were fascinated by the information about Judaism given to them by the parent assisting the teacher. The re-enactment of part of the Shabbat meal was respectful, creating an atmosphere of solemnity and wonder. It provided a good opportunity for pupils to reflect on the similarities and differences between Christianity and Judaism.
227. Pupils make good progress in the different strands of religious education in both key stages. Pupils in Key Stage 1 know that Jesus is the Son of God, and are familiar with New Testament stories. Pupils in Key Stage 2 know about Hinduism and Islam. They compare the customs and symbols of different religions.
228. In the lesson seen, covering both key stages, the material was well chosen. The parent delivered her explanation clearly and in a lively way that brought the different way of life in strict Jewish communities to life for the pupils. Work in pupils' books at the end of the key stage indicates good use of literacy in the teaching of religious education. Work on the Easter story and the death and resurrection of Jesus shows a careful adherence to the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Circle time (when pupils have opportunities to talk and think about their feelings and views in a quiet setting) gives good opportunities for reflection about behaviour and the impact of one's actions on the feelings of others. Assembly contributes well to learning in religious education by encouraging children to reflect on the importance of considering the needs of others. The teacher for both key stages uses the recommended systems for assessment and is considering the newly introduced systems that are being recommended for use by schools. Pupils show very good attitudes to learning during religious education. They listen attentively to staff and parents, reflect on what they have heard and ask thoughtful questions. They listen to each other and show respect for customs and life styles different from their own. They take care with the presentation of their work, which is generally of a satisfactory standard, at a level expected for particular age groups.
229. The co-ordinator has been in post for only a short time and has been working with the headteacher to develop the school's understanding of the new locally agreed syllabus and the new nationally recommended guidance for religious education. The co-ordinator plans to leave in the near future. Current good standards need to be maintained by the school in this core subject: the appointment of a new co-ordinator and the assimilation of the new guidance that is about to take effect should be carefully considered.

