

INSPECTION REPORT

HARBOUR SCHOOL

Elms Vale Road

Dover

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 119046

Headteacher: Mr T Berresford

Reporting inspector: Mr I McAllister
2593

Dates of inspection: 20th-24th March 2000

Inspection number: 193699

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | Special |
| School category: | Community Special |
| Age range of pupils: | 5 – 16 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Elms Vale Road Dover Kent CT17 9PS |
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| Appropriate authority: | The Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr K Benn |
| Date of previous inspection: | 13 th May 1996 |

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| Mr M Lyons | Lay inspector | | The school's results and pupils' achievements |
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| Mr D Hughes | Team inspector | Special educational needs Design and technology Physical education | |
| Mr I Tatchell | Team inspector | Science Information and communication technology Religious education | |
| Ms D Drury | Team inspector | Art Music | Pupils' welfare, health and safety |
| Ms M Jeavons | Team inspector | History Under-fives | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development |
| Ms K Campbell-Platt | Team inspector | Equal opportunities English as an additional language Geography | Partnership with parents and carers |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Harbour School is a day special school for boys and girls who have moderate learning difficulties. There are 132 pupils on the roll of the school aged between 5 and 16 years, all of whom are the subjects of statements of special educational need. The school meets a wide range of complex needs, including pupils with significant behavioural difficulties. There is an eight place Nursery attached to the school with 18 pupils attending part time, most of whom are placed in mainstream settings at the age of five. The attainment of the pupils on entry to the school is below national expectations. There are two pupils in the school from traveller backgrounds, and one pupil with an Afro-Caribbean heritage. There are no pupils at the school for whom English is an additional language. The school admits pupils from a wide catchment area which makes accessibility more difficult for some parents.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Harbour School is a very good and very effective school with many strengths. Within the context of a special school, the majority of the pupils achieve well in most subjects. Achievements in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, physical education (PE), religious education, music and geography are good, and they are very good in art. The headteacher provides strong leadership, and gives clear direction to the work of the school. He is ably supported by senior management and the governors, and there is a strong sense of teamwork amongst the staff. Everyone is valued within the school. The strong positive ethos supports the pupils in their learning, and the staff in their professional development. The school has worked positively since the last inspection to make improvements, and is now well placed to continue in its development. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- There has been a significant improvement in teaching since the last inspection. Teaching is now good overall with much that is very good, and some that is excellent.
- Pupils achieve well across the curriculum, but particularly in English, maths, science, design and technology, PE, geography, music and religious education. They achieve very well in art, which has improved still further from the last inspection and remains a strength of the school.
- The planned curriculum is very good in many subject areas, and in relation to the pupils' needs. It is particularly notable in Key Stage 4, where pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education, and achieve an impressive array of externally accredited qualifications.
- The learning support assistants make a significant and positive impact on pupils' learning.
- The Nursery provision in the school is good. It makes a positive contribution to the pupils' learning, which gives them a secure foundation on which to build.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership, and gives clear direction to the school, and this has a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The senior management team are highly effective in their support to the headteacher, and this has a direct impact on the standards attained by pupils in the school.
- Relationships with adults and between pupils are very good.
- Partnership with parents has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now very good.
- All staff are generally very well supported in their roles in school. Induction for all staff and governors is excellent.

What could be improved

- The school could further raise the quality of teaching and learning through more effective

monitoring and evaluation of curriculum delivery across all key stages by the curriculum co-ordinators.

- The existing, highly developed management systems could be better used to further support the co-ordinators to undertake this more complex and demanding role.
- The school development plan is extensive and detailed, but it is not yet sufficiently focused to give all parents, governors and staff a clear view of the few main developmental thrusts within the school.
- Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum is not yet sufficiently developed to provide adequate opportunity for all pupils, and in order to impact on their learning, progress and achievement in all subjects of the curriculum. There is no technician support available in school.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 1996. Since then it has improved teaching and as a result pupils' achievements are good in relation to their abilities, and they make good progress. Both the achievement and progress of the pupils is better than at the last inspection. The school has made good use of the National Literacy Strategy to improve reading and writing across the school. Pupils have improved access to an appropriate curriculum including religious education, which is more closely matched to individual needs. Better use is made of assessment to inform the planning of future work, and there are now sufficient and appropriate resources to teach the curriculum. The school has done much to improve partnership with parents and the Parent, Teacher and Friends, Association is very active. Transport arrangements have been reviewed and safety belts are fitted to all vehicles used to transport pupils to and from school. The school development plan now identifies longer term targets and provides clear costings.

Overall, the improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

| Progress in: | by age 5 | by age 11 | by age 16 | Key | |
|--|-------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|---|
| speaking and listening | A | A | A | very good | A |
| reading | A | B | A | Good | B |
| writing | A | B | A | Satisfactory | C |
| mathematics | B | B | A | Unsatisfactory | D |
| personal, social and health education | A | A | A | Poor | E |
| other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs* | B | B | B | | |

* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

The school sets appropriately challenging targets for all pupils in English, mathematics and personal and social development. Pupils make good progress towards them in English and mathematics, and very good progress towards them in personal and social development. In

particular pupils also achieve good standards of work in physical education and excellent standards in art. In both subjects the teachers have a very good subject knowledge and a clear insight into the needs of individual children. In other subjects, standards are good in science, design and technology, history and music, and satisfactory in geography, information and communication technology, French and religious education.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. They work hard and are keen to do their best. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | In general, behaviour in and out of classrooms is good. There are strong support systems in place which ensure that pupils get appropriate guidance from staff on the correct way to behave. |
| Personal development and relationships | Relationships with adults and between pupils are very good. The pupils take advantage of the many opportunities offered to them to take responsibility and to contribute positively to the school community. |
| Attendance | Attendance is very good. Pupils generally arrive at school on time. |

The school has a strong positive ethos which encourages good behaviour and sound relationships between all members of the school community. This makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils: | Aged up to 5 | Aged 5-11 | Aged 11-16 |
|----------------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Lessons seen overall | Good | Good | Good |

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

Teaching is good in English, mathematics and science, and very good in personal, social and health education. There is some excellent teaching in art where there is detailed planning and the identified learning objectives are shared with the pupils. Literacy and numeracy are well taught and all staff support the development of communication skills in the pupils in the majority of lessons in all subjects. The school meets the needs of the pupils very well. Teaching is good or better in 72 per cent of lessons and satisfactory or better in 99 per cent of lessons. In only 1 per cent of lessons is teaching unsatisfactory when the poor behaviour of a few pupils adversely affected the learning of the majority, and the behaviour policy of the school was not applied effectively.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum with relevant learning opportunities for the pupils. These include a good range of extra-curricular activities. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Overall, very good. The school is a highly moral community. All the pupils know right from wrong, and they develop social skills very well. Provision for the pupils' spiritual development is good, and is enhanced through high quality assemblies. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school is very caring and ensures that the complex needs of the pupils are met. The teachers assess the needs of the pupils effectively. The medical and other professional staff provide very good support to the pupils. |

The school fosters strong links with parents and keeps them well informed about how their children are progressing. The school provides very well for the complex needs of the pupils. The curriculum offered is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of the pupils, and meets all statutory requirements. The school has good arrangements for child protection.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher provides strong leadership and, together with the senior management team, ensures that the work of the school is directed towards improving the way in which it meets the needs of the pupils, and this enhances their quality of learning. |
| How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities | The governing body carries out its duties effectively and plays an important part in the life of the school. They support the headteacher in giving clear strategic direction to the work of the school. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The governors and staff of the school work well together in order to evaluate the progress being made by the school towards its aims. The staff as a whole is aware of what the school does well, and where they need to make further improvements. |
| The strategic use of resources | The senior management team use all staff well to meet the needs of the pupils. In particular, the learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to the learning of the pupils. The existing unsatisfactory accommodation is well used by the school, but valuable time is lost when pupils have to move from one temporary hut to another, and in and out of the main building. Most pupils are taught a long way from the lavatory facilities, and access to the temporary accommodation would be extremely difficult for pupils with physical disabilities. The financial planning is thorough and expenditure is directed appropriately to support the work of the school. |

There are sufficient teaching and non-teaching staff in the school. Staff are generally well qualified, but the staff is offered an excellent induction programme which enhances the capacity to fulfil roles within the school effectively. The provision of medical and other

specialist support is good. The school is well led and managed, and applies the principles of best value for the services it uses.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils are happy in school and are keen to attend. Relationships are very good.• The positive atmosphere in school helps learning.• The 'Contact Books'.• The Literacy Programme has improved reading standards considerably.• Communication with school is good. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are no significant concerns about the education provided by the school.• Parents are concerned about the amount of temporary accommodation in which their children are taught. |

The inspection fully supports all the positive comments made by parents, either through the questionnaire or at the meeting with the Registered Inspector. The inspection finds that about seventy per cent of pupils are taught in temporary accommodation. This is unsatisfactory and has a detrimental effect on the pupils' progress and achievements. Pupils in those buildings have to go outside in order to access the lavatories. There is no access for physically disabled pupils to any of the temporary buildings.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. It is inappropriate to judge the standards of the pupils for whom the school caters in relation to the National Curriculum. The standards the pupils achieve are below national expectations, but they achieve well in relation to their capabilities. The inspection reports on the achievement of the pupils and on what they know, understand and can do. Judgements about the pupils' achievements take account of information contained in pupils' statements of special educational need and annual reviews.
2. Children under five achieve well. They are learning to take turns and to share their toys. In language and literature they listen to stories, enjoy books, and most learn that print conveys meaning. In mathematics they are learning basic colours and can count to five. They can move safely around the playground using large toys, and can follow instructions in physical education. They enjoy music and art lessons.
3. In English, pupils achieve well. In Key Stages 1 and 4 they make very good progress. In the other key stages pupils make consistently good progress in reading and very good progress in speaking and listening. By age 7, they enjoy listening to stories being read to them, they understand that some words rhyme and they can read single syllable words such as 'Put me down'. By 11, they continue to enjoy stories and a few read simple text fluently. Some pupils, with help, look up vocabulary in personal wordbooks and simple dictionaries. By 14, almost all are keen to read aloud, and some can read fluently with good expression. Higher achieving pupils write simple narrative, but others need a considerable amount of help to do this. By the end of Key Stage 4 a very few pupils read independently for information and for pleasure. All ask and answer questions appropriately in class and make good oral contributions to lessons, for example when acting scenes from Romeo and Juliet, when they took appropriate roles to modernise the play.
4. In mathematics pupils' achievement is very good in Key Stage 1 and good throughout the rest of the school. Standards on entry at age 5 are very low and teachers work hard through the National Numeracy Strategy to achieve early initial progress. At the start of Key Stage 1 the pupils have little or no knowledge of number shapes or names. By the end of the key stage they can relate numbers to groups of objects. In Key Stage 2 the pupils continue to build their knowledge of basic number and they begin to relate mathematical knowledge to practical aspects of their lives. Good progress is made in Key Stage 3 with the further application of mathematical skills and knowledge to practical situations. By the end of Key Stage 4 the pupils are secure in the four rules of number. There is appropriate extension into other aspects of the subject which allows pupils to gain accreditation for the subject at the level of Certificate of Achievement.
5. In science, achievement is good across the school. Standards in relation to national expectations have risen over the past three years. A few pupils achieve Level 4 at the end of Key Stage 3. The teaching is based on good subject knowledge which extends the challenge to pupils to work at higher levels. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils know the names of different materials, and are beginning to learn about forces. At the start of Key Stage 3 they learn that plants need nutrients, water, light and warmth to grow. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils have a good grasp of a range of appropriate topics including work on chemical reactions, light and forces. They relate science to everyday situations. They record work carefully and construct tables of results based on their observations. They continue to develop their knowledge and understanding of forces and energy in Key Stage 4, with higher attaining pupils being able to label magnetic and

electrical forces correctly. Teaching in all key stages is good and mostly taught by a specialist science teacher. Leadership in science is good. The curriculum is being developed to ensure all pupils have increasing access to good quality provision.

6. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in their personal, social and health education. The school is very successful in ensuring that the pupils become increasingly more independent and confident as they move through the school. All staff, including medical and associated professionals, make an important contribution to this aspect of the pupils' education.
7. Pupils' achievements in other subjects are good, and in some subjects they are very good. Pupils achieve high standards in art, and many are successful in their GCSE work.
8. Overall, the pupils make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. These are monitored closely and provide pupils with challenges which the majority are able to meet.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. At the last report attitudes to learning were satisfactory or better, behaviour and relationships were good and attendance and punctuality were quoted as good.
10. This report represents an improvement. Attitudes, personal development and relationships as well as attendance are judged to be very good with behaviour judged as good.
11. Children under five have good attitudes to school life and are beginning to develop independence. They are becoming aware of the needs of others and what is right and wrong. They take turns and are learning to share their toys.
12. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils are eager to come to school, have very good attitudes to learning and are well motivated. Relationships are very good. Pupils listen attentively, both to their teacher and their peers and their behaviour is good. They are keen and interested in all activities and are proud to tell you of their involvement.
13. Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 also have very good attitudes to learning and are involved in many activities. They have very good relationships with their teachers and each other and are very keen to tell you about visits they have made and things they have learned. They are polite and greet visitors. While behaviour is usually good, there are occasional episodes of disruptive behaviour. When these are dealt with consistently and effectively by staff they do not impede the learning of others in the lesson.
14. Pupils engage in a range of activities according to age, such as school productions, music festivals, sporting activities, outdoor pursuits and residential trips, including a trip to France aboard the Kent Barge. These activities greatly enrich their educational experience and enhances their learning.
15. The school has a clear behaviour policy and rules are displayed in all classrooms. Pupils who have particular behaviour problems have individual targets which are regularly reviewed. This leads to improved behaviour and raises achievement. Pupils have a well developed sense of right and wrong and know the rules well. Overall pupils are polite, pleasant and courteous and care for the feelings of others.

16. Pupils respond very well to the school's provision for their personal development, which is good, and enjoy the opportunities provided to assume responsibility. For the younger pupils this includes tidying up activities and taking the registers to the office. Older pupils show parents and visitors around the school and at social events will handle the car parking effectively and introduce productions with confidence. The oldest pupils organise the leavers' disco and also as part of their studies have to give presentations before quite large audiences of other mainstream school pupils.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. Teaching is a strength of the school and has improved since the last inspection. There is now a greater proportion of teaching that is good or better. Teaching is very good or better in 27 per cent of lessons and is good or better in 72 per cent of lessons. Teaching is unsatisfactory in only 1 per cent of lessons.
18. Good learning in lessons and over time mirrors the good and very good teaching. Good learning and progress in Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 is supported by sound learning at Key Stage 3 where there is an influx of pupils new to the school. The good teaching results in children developing good learning skills and being able to stay on task, concentrate on their work and develop to their full potential. These improvements in teaching since the last inspection have had a direct impact on children's learning and on their progress. They respond well, share their thoughts and expertise with others and work independently. They listen carefully, are keen to participate, are confident and are developing high esteem.
19. Skilled use of teachers' questioning has resulted in children being able to understand the work and the reasons for it and enables them to take some responsibility for their own learning. They enjoy being at school and on the whole make good progress.
20. Teaching is good for children under five. The activities planned are well matched to the needs of the children. Teaching is good in all areas and hence children make good gains towards early learning goals. The enthusiasm, knowledge and understanding which the adults have of the children is instrumental in ensuring progress.
21. In English pupils learn well because they are well taught. Teachers have a good knowledge of pupils' requirements, and they plan lessons carefully to take account of all levels of ability. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy and this helps them to plan lessons in which pupils improve their reading and writing. All teachers support pupils in order to develop their communication skills effectively.
22. Mathematics is taught well. Teachers in the primary department are implementing the National Numeracy Strategy effectively and this is already enabling pupils to improve their knowledge and understanding of number. Numeracy is being introduced into Key Stage 3 and there are many instances of teachers using numeracy in their lessons in both Key Stages 3 and 4.
23. Teaching of science in all key stages is good and mostly taught by a specialist science teacher. The teachers' excitement communicates itself to the pupils and helps them make good progress. Good subject knowledge allows the teachers to re-phrase explanations and provide the right support to enable all pupils to succeed.
24. In art the quality of teaching is good in Key Stages 1 and 2. At Key Stages 3 and 4 it is very good or excellent. Teachers are confident and competent with the subject matter. There is detailed planning and careful preparation of lessons, which are extremely well organised, with materials and tasks flexibly matched to pupil need.

25. Improvement in geography since the last inspection has been very good. The very good progress made by pupils at Key Stage 4 is supported by specialist teaching.
26. In physical education the teaching is good or very good throughout all key stages. Lessons are well planned and the teacher displays not only very good subject knowledge, but clear insights into the needs of individual pupils, and this results in high and positive results for all pupils.

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

27. Since the last inspection, there has been a very good level of improvement. Curricular opportunities in the Nursery are now very good. French has now been introduced at Key Stages 3 and 4. Proper attention is now paid to individual reading in English. Delivery of the curriculum is now better adapted to the range of ability in each teaching group, so that all pupils are able to make the best possible progress. Weaknesses in planning for continuity and progression have been improved and plans are well advanced for further development. The regularity and consistency of the setting of homework, however, still requires further attention.
28. The school curriculum is very good for pupils at all key stages and good in the Nursery. It is broad, balanced and relevant. Curricular opportunities are appropriate for the pupils as strong emphasis is placed on pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Literacy is further supported by additional lessons for those who have great difficulty in learning to read and write. There is also a very good supplementary course for pupils who find speaking in social situations difficult. All pupils are taught the National Curriculum. Statutory requirements are fully met. Some children do not attend the Nursery full time. Four out of five pupils are re-integrated into mainstream education at the age of 5.
29. The curriculum is rigorous in that it reflects the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils in the school learn the same subjects as those in mainstream education. It is highly relevant to pupils' requirements because of the well structured and sympathetic way in which the subjects are taught. A strong feature of the curriculum is the introduction of specialist teaching as early as Key Stage 2, where specialists teach PE, ICT and music. In the later key stages, all subjects are taught by specialists with very few exceptions. Lessons are interesting, practical and fully meet pupils' needs.
30. The curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 is very good. Pupils' needs continue to be met through a broad and balanced early years curriculum enhanced by the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.
31. The curriculum in Key Stage 3 is very good. French is taught at this key stage and pupils move around school from their tutor base to receive lessons taught by a team of appropriately qualified specialists. Pupils are guided in their choice of a very limited range of optional subjects at the end of the key stage, which they study in Key Stage 4.
32. The curriculum in Key Stage 4 is very good. It is well and intentionally designed to prepare students for careers and for the next stage in education. It provides a rich and stimulating range of learning experiences, a significant proportion of which lead to an externally validated qualification. Students successfully follow a GCSE course in art and design. They study for the Certificate of Education examinations in English, mathematics, science, ICT, design or food technology, geography or history, and art for those not taking the examination at GCSE level. In addition to National Curriculum subjects, students undertake a well structured and externally validated series of

challenges to help them prepare for life after school. All students receive an accredited National Record of Achievement at the end of the key stage.

33. Although no children in the school are statemented as having a special educational need, other than that of moderate learning difficulty, several pupils have secondary educational difficulties. These children are well cared for by the school and are able to participate in full in the life of the school. All pupils have an individual education plan which is reviewed and modified each term, and these, with the establishment of a key worker for some children ensures that individual needs such as those for speech and language therapy, or physiotherapy are met.
34. The school takes advice from relevant professionals and provides suitable programmes for each child. The co-ordinator has developed a language development programme (SULP) to assist pupils in developing acceptable language patterns and this is run in withdrawal groups for pupils identified at the child's Individual School Review. Staff are well trained to meet these extra needs including the administration of drugs, and the control and monitoring of additional medical problems such as epilepsy and diabetes. Children with additional special needs therefore, make good progress in school.
35. Speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and play therapy are effectively used in the school to promote pupils' development, and enhance their self-esteem, and ensuring a good match between assessed needs and planned action. Very good, effective and appropriate literacy and numeracy teaching based on the national numeracy and literacy initiatives are a strong feature of provision for every pupil.
36. Information on the misuse of drugs forms part of the health education given to pupils. The governors have approved the sex education policy, which is delivered as part of the very good PSHE curriculum. The school's provision of work-related education including careers education and guidance is an excellent feature of the curriculum. Many aspects of provision involve helping students to make guided choices and realistic decisions as to their future. In Key Stage 4, students all have two work experience placements. Opportunities exist for them to help in a local leisure centre, undertake hotel work, help in stables or tackle employment in nationally known chains of shops. Pupils have access to a careers database. All have interviews with specialist careers advisers. An action plan for each student is agreed and this is monitored regularly. There are strong links with local colleges of further education, which provide courses post-16, and pupils visit all of them. There is an additional one week link course at Canterbury college. This provision allows students to make an informed choice when considering their further education. All students embark on college courses post-16 if they finish their time at the school.
37. The curriculum is enhanced and supported by a good programme of extra-curricular activities, mainly in the summer term, when a good variety of sporting activities is possible. Pupils also take part in drama, ICT, photography and archery during this period. Throughout the year there is a small homework club in which a support assistant helps pupils. Those who have difficulties speaking in social situations are well supported at a daily club where they eat their midday meal together. Year 8 pupils embark on a day trip to France. Pupils take part in the Kent special schools music festival. All pupils have good opportunities for residential experience during their school career, some of it under canvas. Pupils have a lively programme of sporting fixtures with other schools throughout a school year and additional opportunities for such activities as trampolining and ice-skating.
38. The school provides a good level of equality of opportunity. Pupils are, however, removed from the same foundation subject lessons every week to develop their social use of language, and there are no agreed procedures to help them make up the

knowledge missed. Parents give permission for those on intensive literary programmes to be withdrawn from assemblies. Although there is an equal opportunities policy, annually monitored by the governors, the school has no formal procedures to evaluate its bookstock for racial stereotypes and negative images, although from time to time this takes place on an informal basis. The school does not report to parents on the success of its equal opportunities policy. The school is unable to report annually to parents on the admission of disabled pupils because two thirds of lessons take place in temporary huts, which are not wheelchair accessible.

39. The learning of the pupils is enhanced by a number of links with the local community. Links with the local primary schools are strong. Some of the younger pupils remain in mainstream schools for at least one day a week, and there is good liaison. The school exchanges information and experience with other schools. Support assistants have been exchanged with mainstream schools to widen and deepen their experience. The school has explained its social use of language programmes to other schools and successfully offered ICT training to them. Satisfactory links with the community enable the school to foster its various good work experience links. Pupils have made presentations on Team Enterprise to other schools and partnership members at Dover town council chambers. Another strong link is with the church. Clergy and even the bishop have paid a visit to the pupils to help them to learn religious education. The police, coastguards and fire service are among visitors to the school.
40. At the last inspection spiritual, moral and social development was reported as good with cultural development needing improvement. The school is maintaining the good standards for spiritual development and has improved its provision for pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions and the richness and diversity of other cultures. It has improved still further its moral and social development of pupils.
41. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral and social development and good provision for spiritual and cultural development. Spiritual development is promoted through acts of daily worship and in religious education lessons. Pupils are taught the values and beliefs of the Christian faith as well as learning about other major world faiths. The Kent approved syllabus of religious education is taught throughout the school. Through subjects of the curriculum pupils experience moments of awe and wonder, particularly in art. There are good opportunities for spiritual reflection for all pupils in lessons, although this does not always occur in the daily corporate act of worship. The good provision for pupils' cultural development is supported through religious education lessons and opportunities to study the work of famous artists as well as celebrations of religious festivals of their own and other cultures. Pupils also visit museums and music festivals to further enhance their cultural development.
42. The school clearly teaches pupils right from wrong. The application of the behaviour policy and moral teaching in lessons helps pupils develop a clear set of values. The staff provide good role models and encourage pupils to behave well, show respect for others and develop a sense of what is just.
43. Pupils' social development is seen daily in the interactions between pupils and in opportunities to work together and help each other. Opportunities to take responsibility also support this and increase as pupils move through the school. Popular extra-curricular activities, including sport and residential trips, outdoor pursuits and music festivals provide further opportunities for pupils to work and play together. The accredited achievement in work experience and career programmes in Key Stage 4 prepares pupils very well for adult life. The school also raises money for various charities.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

Pupils' welfare, health and safety, including the school's arrangements for child protection

44. The school cares well for its pupils.
45. The school has a good health and safety policy. Risk assessments are carried out at the school and before educational visits and work experience. All statutory checks are regularly carried out. The governor's health and safety committee monitor arrangements and the caretaker deals promptly with any maintenance required. There are a number of minor health and safety issues outstanding which the headteacher and governors are addressing. Transport arrangements are well managed. There is daily liaison between school and transport staff. The transport vehicles are clean and well maintained and seat belts are fitted.
46. Child protection procedures are good. The senior teacher is the named officer and the school has good liaison with the supporting agencies. First aid provision is good. First aid kits are strategically placed around the school and are available for sports events and educational visits. There are two staff qualified in first aid.
47. The level of attendance is very good, when compared to schools of a similar nature. This is a reflection of pupils positive attitudes to school life. Unauthorised absence has been significantly reduced, due to initiatives taken by the school to obtain the co-operation of parents and rigorous monitoring by the school. The authorised absences of pupils are in most cases for medical reasons. Lessons start on time.
48. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good. The education welfare officer has effective systems for monitor attendance and good links with the teachers. The level of unauthorised absence has improved since the last inspection. The school has a behaviour policy and staff consistently apply the procedures. Overall the behaviour of the pupils is very good. There is a bullying policy and parents comment that there are few incidences of intimidating behaviour. When serious misbehaviour does occur the senior management take firm action. There have been two permanent exclusions and four-fixed term exclusions in the last year. This helps maintain the positive atmosphere within the school which enhances the learning of the majority of pupils. Generally there is an ethos of mutual caring and respect. Pupils present as happy and relaxed and readily talk to visitors about their positive experience of the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. Overall parents are very pleased with the work of the school.
50. The school has made very good progress since the previous inspection in exploring ways in which parents can become more actively involved in the school and pupils' work. However, the school continues to work within the constraints arising out of its location where most pupils live far from school and travel to school by bus or taxi. This makes it harder for some parents to visit the school on parents' evenings or at other times to discuss the progress of their child.
51. The school has set whole-school targets for improved parental involvement in a wide range of its activities. These targets are monitored regularly by the headteacher resulting in very good communication with parents. This results in parental views informing many significant developments in the school and also enhancing their contribution to whole-school planning and to their own children's learning at home and at school. The impact of what the school does is evaluated through a process of feedback

from parents. For example, the school seeks parents' views through questionnaires to improve attendance at poorly attended meetings such as reviews. Improved communication has also resulted from personalising the school's correspondence with parents.

52. Links with parents, for example home-school agreements, have been established to support pupils' achievement. The school now provides regular half termly newsletters for parents which up-date parents on pupils activities and achievements and also provide a channel for requesting parents' responses to school developments, for example policy changes.
53. Parents are provided with a very good range of information about pupils' progress including detailed termly reports on progress made in each area of the curriculum. Key targets for the term are shared with parents at the beginning of the term. Termly reports enhance parents' knowledge of their children's behaviour outside the classroom by including progress made by pupils in this social area of learning. However, the very useful advances that pupils make in their non-verbal communication skills through literacy are not included yet.
54. Annual reports for parents at Key Stages 3 and 4 are detailed and informative. However, those at Key Stages 1 and 2 are variable in the clarity of information on pupils' attainment and progress. Termly and annual reports are followed up and discussed at annual review meetings where parents views are incorporated in the target setting process. The school also provides end of key stage reports to parents. These include reporting on National Curriculum levels attained by pupils in core and other curricular areas based on teacher assessments.
55. The school development plan includes targets for the further involvement of parents through an enhanced range of workshops reflecting that it sees parents as a rich resource to support pupils' learning. The school has sound plans to enhance the current range of workshops which includes the literacy and numeracy strategies, careers information, an induction and choices workshop for parents of children in Year 9.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The headteacher provides strong leadership and gives clear direction to the work of the school. The deputy head and the senior management team ably support the headteacher. The quality of teamwork is good and helps the rest of the staff achieve a shared commitment to raising standards. The very good quality of leadership has succeeded in creating, and maintaining, a learning environment where relationships are very good and pupils feel that they are valued, and that staff care about them. This is the basis of the very positive ethos of the school where the individual needs of pupils are met and all pupils' efforts are celebrated, and has a positive impact on learning and achievement.
57. The management of the school have responded well to the last inspection and a number of significant improvements have been made. All the key issues from the last inspection have been addressed successfully. The recent appointment of a deputy head with responsibility for the whole curriculum has improved further the overall quality of pupils' curricular experiences. The school has constructed a very detailed and comprehensive school development plan. It contains too many identified priorities, each with appropriate timescales and success criteria and cost. In addition, each subject has its own development plan and these, along with the school development plan, are closely linked to the school budget. The effectiveness of the plan would be further

enhanced if it were more focused and made clear to all which were the few main priorities that were to drive improvement forward during the lifetime of the plan.

58. The governing body are very active in their support of the school. Governors visit the school regularly and observe the working of the school on a day-to-day basis. They make a good contribution to the running of the school and are committed to maintaining standards and raising them further. The chairman of governors has a very clear understanding of the work of the school and works closely with the headteacher to achieve the aims of the school. There is clear direction for the school which ensures that strategic decisions determine educational and financial planning.
59. The school knows its strengths and areas for development. It has its own, well developed strategy for improvement. A particular strength of the school is its staff induction programme and staff development activities. The school has gained the Investor In People award which recognises the commitment the school has to developing all staff. Further development of the role of the curriculum co-ordinators, to increase the monitoring that they carry out of the delivery of the curriculum throughout the school, would improve curriculum continuity and raise standards still more.
60. Staff meet regularly, both formally and informally, to discuss curriculum matters, pupils' individual education plans and wider issues such as the future role of the school. Staff use their time and professional expertise well to support one another and to ensure that the school improves. They target their professional development on priorities identified within the subject development plans. Good use is made of existing resources. In spite of the unsatisfactory nature of many aspects of the accommodation, staff are able to minimise its impact on teaching and learning. The school is very efficient in its strategic use of resources. Financial planning and control are good. The headteacher and governors take responsibility for the monitoring of the school budget with the headteacher effectively exercising day-to-day financial control within agreed limits. The day-to-day financial controls, procedures and administration of money are very good.
61. The school has sufficient teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum, including areas of learning for the under-fives which is provided by nursery nursing staff. The teaching staff is well deployed and, in the main, appropriate responsibilities are delegated in line with their interests and expertise. All teaching staff have been trained in the implementation of the literacy strategy. Learning support assistants are well trained, very committed and work in harmony with class teachers in the best interests of the pupils. This leads to very effective learning for all and makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved. The kitchen staff make a very positive contribution to the ethos of the school and the lunchtime arrangements for the pupils enhance their general educational experience within school. The school is particularly clean and is well maintained. This reflects the school's attitude to the pupils and makes a positive contribution to their personal and social development. Detailed job descriptions are in place. Staff are clear about their roles, and as a result staff morale is high and reflects the strong team spirit that is a characteristic of the school.
62. The costs to educate pupils are lower than the national average. The school provides good value for money and is well placed to continue the improvements since the last inspection and implement future initiatives.

Staffing

63. The school has sufficient teachers for the numbers of pupils on roll, given the wide range and complexity of learning needs. All teachers are suitably qualified or experienced in the teaching of pupils with special needs. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in linking phase training and teachers' specialist skills to

class and subject responsibilities. Each teacher has subject co-ordination responsibilities. The overall deployment of staff is satisfactory and has a positive effect on teaching and learning.

64. Each class has support assistants who are fully involved in working with pupils. Their varying backgrounds, qualifications and experience make a valuable contribution to the education of the pupils. Learning is enhanced by the collaboration between teachers, support staff and therapists which is good in relation to planning and management of pupils.
65. There is an excellent planned programme of induction for all new staff and governors. Arrangements for appraisal are being revised and an appraisal cycle is in place. Provision is made for staff development which now has a higher profile through the link with the Investor in People scheme. Teachers take the opportunities to attend a variety of courses on aspects of their work. In-service programmes are provided for support staff and include child protection, behaviour management and the City and Guilds 'Basic Learning Support' course. The in-service programme is linked closely with priorities in the school development plan.

The strategic use of financial resources

66. The school currently makes good use of financial resources and has good procedures to ensure that best value is obtained from school development. The previous inspection noted financial planning was mainly undertaken by the headteacher in consultation with the senior management team. Since then the role of the governing body in determining financial targets and effectively monitoring expenditure has been strengthened by their classroom visits, monitoring the school's provision and quality of education provided.
67. The day-to-day running of the school accounts is good and there is secure financial control and effective procedures for informing the headteacher and governors of the current financial situation. The school office works well and good use is made of information technology to handle and improve routine communication and essential office tasks. Clerical and administrative staff have good relationships with pupils, staff and parents providing a welcoming interface between the school and the community. Specific grants made to the school for professional development are used and administered appropriately.
68. Governors and senior managers are fully involved in school development planning and aware of budget implications and trends over time. As a result sufficient funds are made available for secure development to take place: this year the school has produced a series of action plans linked to the school development plan and school budget to improve the quality of education provided. The finance committee provide good regard to strategic planning and ensure school development priorities match the budget available.
69. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. There is good leadership and strategic management of school finance. The governing body also provides good evaluation of best value.

Learning resources

70. The school has adequate learning resources to deliver the full National Curriculum together with religious education; these are used effectively. There is a very good range of materials for art and for music. There is a small but up-to-date library, a considerable range of equipment for the delivery of physical education, including new table tennis tables and archery equipment. New computers arriving in school will enhance the

school's provision and enable not only the information technology room to function well, but put a working computer in each classroom. This is a great improvement since the last inspection and addresses one of the key issues in that report.

71. The school uses its resources well, including the well kept grounds, but there is a lack of large play equipment for younger children to use during breaks and playtimes although there are a number of tricycles and so on available. The large playhouse in the primary area enhances children's experiences and the audio equipment in the hall adds to pupils' enjoyment of such activities as assemblies.

Adequacy of accommodation

72. Since the previous inspection the school has improved the accommodation for art and music with the provision of discrete specialist rooms. The level of maintenance provided by the caretaker is extremely high. The staff ensure that the facilities available are used as effectively as possible and kept in good order. Pupils respect the school environment and there is no evidence of damage or vandalism. The quality of accommodation overall is satisfactory. The mobile classrooms are externally shabby and do not have toilets. Pupils have to go to the main building for toilets and often get cold and wet. There is no disabled access to the huts and no toilet for the disabled in the school. The Nursery does not have secure and safe outdoor play provision.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

73. The governors and staff of the school should:

- i. improve further the quality of teaching and learning by more effective monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum delivery across all key stages by the curriculum co-ordinators;
- ii. further support the co-ordinators, by improving the use of the existing, highly developed management systems to help them to undertake this more complex and demanding role;
- iii. improve further the quality of the school development plan, to give all parents, governors and staff a clear view of the major developmental thrusts within the school by focusing on a few priorities;
- iv. develop the provision for ICT across the curriculum to provide opportunity for all pupils to use it to support their learning in all subjects by providing computer facilities within each classroom.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|-----|
| Number of lessons observed | 104 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 122 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 4.3 | 22.3 | 45.7 | 26.6 | 1.1 | 0 | 0 |

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

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll | 132 |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | 58 |

| 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 | 7 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 5 |

Attendance

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| | % | | % |
| School data | 7.8 | School data | 0.8 |

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

Attainment

Attainment at the end of Key Stages 1 - 4 :

It is inappropriate to report on attainment as measured against national standards at the end of Key Stages 1 – 4 because of the nature of the pupils' special educational needs.

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 1 |
| Black – African heritage | |
| Black – other | |
| Indian | |
| Pakistani | |
| Bangladeshi | |
| Chinese | |
| White | 131 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | |

Exclusions in the last school year

| | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | | |
| Black – African heritage | | |
| Black – other | | |
| Indian | | |
| Pakistani | | |
| Bangladeshi | | |
| Chinese | | |
| White | 4 | 2 |
| Other minority ethnic groups | | |

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y1– Y13

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 15 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 8.8 |
| Average class size | 11.0 |

Education support staff: Y1 – Y13

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 18 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 514 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|------|
| Financial year | 1999 |
|----------------|------|

| | £ |
|--|--------|
| Total income | 755682 |
| Total expenditure | 728978 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 5523 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 17731 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 44435 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 132 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 51 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 67 | 29 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 59 | 33 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 49 | 39 | 6 | 2 | 4 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 41 | 35 | 8 | 6 | 10 |
| The teaching is good. | 65 | 25 | 2 | 0 | 8 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 69 | 25 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 80 | 16 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 76 | 18 | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 53 | 37 | 8 | 2 | 0 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 69 | 24 | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 61 | 31 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 47 | 27 | 4 | 4 | 18 |

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

Areas of learning for children under five

74. At the time of the inspection there were sixteen children on role all referred following an assessment by the pre-school panel of the local authority. Attainment on entry is well below average, three children are in the process of being statemented and one has a full statement. Most children attend the Nursery two full days a week and also have a place in a pre-school playgroup. By the time they are of school age, four out of five usually go into mainstream school.

Personal, social and development.

75. Teaching in this area is good. Pupils make good gains in learning and achieve well. They can take turns and share resources to a degree. For instance when icing birthday cakes they waited patiently for their turn and celebrated each others achievements. They are able to choose their drinks either by speaking or pointing and in P.E. they develop independence by being allowed to choose some activities. Most can sit quietly looking at books, are developing good listening skills and are becoming aware of the needs of others and what is right and wrong. For example one boy willingly gave up his book to an upset child and chose another for himself. Occasionally pupils are reluctant to follow instructions, for example, when they do not want to change tasks, but with skilled teacher encouragement they comply with requests and settle to a new task with enthusiasm. Children play mainly as individuals, or alongside each other, there is very little interactive play as yet.

Language and literacy.

76. The teaching of early literacy skills is good. Adults provide good role models, ask appropriate questions about the tasks they are doing and encourage good communication at all times. Children are beginning to understand and enjoy stories, for example, in one session the children showed enjoyment in making their own big book of Jaspers Beanstalk by selecting the correct sequences of pictures. Most of the children understand the difference between print and pictures and can point to print and 'pretend' read. There are examples of emergent writing as children 'write' out receipts when playing shop. The effective Nursery 'team' are very good at communicating with the children and provide a good range of opportunities for the children to develop and improve in this area.

Mathematical development.

77. Teaching in this area is good. Children make good progress in early mathematical understanding, language and simple use of number. Most can match colours and simple shapes and recite to five. This learning is supported in other lessons, such as creative development where they decorate party hats with shapes and colours being learned as well as matching or counting out Smarties to decorate birthday cakes. They sing and act out number songs and also recite sequences such as the days of the week. Staff make use of the computer to reinforce pupils' understanding of number and concepts such as colour and shape.

Knowledge and understanding of the world.

78. The children are interested in experimenting and finding out about their environment and the natural world. They planted their own watercress seeds, watched them grow and then used the cress in sandwiches for birthday parties. They were intrigued as icing sugar changed from blue to green when yellow was added and on another occasion could tell the teacher how to make green water which they then enjoyed playing with. They make good progress in this area.

Physical development.

79. Children move around confidently and safely using large-wheeled toys. Some can pedal cycles and throw and catch large balls over a short space. In PE they could move parts of their body as directed, for example shoulders, tummy, knee, toe and head, and could follow the teacher's example to jump in different ways. They could follow directions such as high, low, in front of and around and could follow taped instructions. Staff reinforce the language of numeracy and literacy in such situations. Children make good gains towards early learning goals.

Creative development.

80. Staff provide good opportunities for creative development and children make good progress. They experiment with paint, sand, water and construction toys. Children make party hats, decorate cakes and make musical instruments. They point out their paintings and some can identify their named sunflowers displayed in the hall. They role play in the play house and seed shop and well told stories stimulate their imagination.
81. Teaching is good in all areas and hence children make good gains towards early learning goals. The enthusiasm, knowledge and understanding which adults have of the children is instrumental in ensuring progress. Children are happy and respond well to the range of activities provided for them.
82. Children are constantly praised, encouraged and challenged to succeed. The children are managed efficiently and difficult behaviour is handled sensitively. Progress is constantly monitored and assessed and information gained is used to inform planning. Overall the Nursery is run by a good team who provide good role models which encourage respect and consideration for others.
83. While resources are overall satisfactory, the outside play area is unsatisfactory. At the moment the Nursery uses the primary playground for outside play with large toys and has to fit in with the primary timetable. The absence of an area nearby for nappy changing also has negative effects on learning.
84. At the last inspection teaching was judged to be satisfactory or better in 85 per cent of lessons. There were shortcomings in the areas of physical and creative development due to lack of expertise and a narrow range of activities. Therefore this report represents an improvement as teaching is judged to be good in 83 per cent of lessons and very good in the remainder.

ENGLISH

85. Pupils achieve well in the subject. In Key Stages 1 and 4 pupils make very good progress. In the other key stages pupils make consistently good progress in reading and writing and very good progress in speaking and listening.

86. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils begin to listen carefully to the teacher and to each other. They are interested in books and stories and listen intently when a big book is read to them, especially when the tale is embellished by additional storytelling from the teacher. Pupils have sufficient command of evocative vocabulary to describe fear. They understand that some words rhyme, and when verse is read to them, guess what the next word will be. They read sequences of single syllable words such as 'put me down'. Higher achievers can write words by the end of the key stage, and, with help, insert missing words into text to make sensible narrative. Lower achievers successfully copy and overwrite words and letters.
87. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils make good oral contributions to lessons, sometimes with help. They provide vivid adjectives such as 'red, hot, boiling' to describe the sun. Pupils continue to enjoy stories and a few read simple text fluently and with good understanding. Pupils make good progress in independent writing as they copy text correctly or write very simple narrative. Some pupils, with help, look up vocabulary in personal word books and simple dictionaries.
88. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils read marked up scripts in semi-rehearsed performances of 'Little Red Riding Hood'. They ask and answer questions in the rôles of the characters. Pupils collaborate effectively to compare and contrast the information given on cereal packets. Almost all are keen to read aloud, and some can read fluently with good expression. A very few read independently, but their level of understanding varies widely. Pupils look up the vocabulary they need, often with help. Higher achieving pupils write simple narrative by the end of the key stage, but others need a considerable amount of help to do this.
89. By the end of Key Stage 4, students listen carefully to the teacher and each other. All ask and answer questions appropriately in class and make good oral contributions to lessons. Higher achieving pupils are capable of sustained discussion, for example, when identifying the specific events in 'Romeo and Juliet' which make the play a tragedy. They act out scenes from the play taking appropriate rôles to modernise the story. By the end of the key stage, a very few students read independently for information and pleasure. Higher achieving pupils write simple, continuous prose and re-draft their work until it is substantially correct. Others require a good deal of help for this, but students know what they want to say and ambitious pieces are written down for them. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to present their writing by using a word processor, however.
90. The development of pupils' speaking and listening is strength of the school. Pupils use their speaking and listening skills to good effect. In a discussion on smoking in PSHE, for example, Key Stage 3 pupils were able to put forward rational views. In Key Stage 4, students were able to look at such ethical dilemmas as suicide and abortion, refining their views by discussion. Pupils listened very carefully to each other in this debate. All pupils, sometimes with help, can read the simple materials presented to them in lessons. A very few pupils read independently for information and pleasure, but many are content to read magazines which reflect their leisure interests. Pupils' writing skills are adequate but do not always fully support learning. In science, pupils write up their experiments, often copying key words and phrases. In art, pupils' writing skills enable them to support each GCSE module of work by description and justification, using appropriate technical language. Pupils fill in worksheets in history. In English, lower achievers write captions to pictures to help them prepare a first draft of a story. ICT is underused across the school, however, and pupils do not get enough opportunities to present their writing in striking and original ways.
91. Since the last inspection, the level of improvement has been substantial. The quality of teaching is now entirely satisfactory and in almost half of the lessons seen it was very

good. The content of the lessons now shows a good level of awareness of pupils' linguistic capabilities. There is now a coherent approach to the teaching of reading. Pupils with speech and language difficulties are now well served. New Programmes of Study have been developed across all key stages, which fully incorporate the national literacy project objectives. The level of resources has been significantly improved.

92. Pupils learn well because they are well taught. Teachers have a good knowledge of pupils' requirements, and they plan their lessons carefully to take all levels of ability into account. In Key Stage 1 the level of planning of the literacy hour is particularly effective in enabling pupils to make very good progress. A Key Stage 4, planning for students to fulfil the requirements of the externally validated examination is particularly well combined with the National Literacy Strategy guidelines. Lessons at all key stages provide pupils with both challenge and inspiration, for example, the study of 'Romeo and Juliet' in Year 11, which catches students' imagination. Methods are highly appropriate to the needs and interests of the pupils at all key stages, so that class management appears to be effortless and pupils concentrate on the task in hand. Methods are inventive and interesting. Word Lotto was used in a Key Stage 2 lesson to teach high frequency words, for example. Well-trained support assistants ensure pupils receive a high level of individual attention and this helps them to make the greatest progress of which they are capable. Pupils enjoy being in class and make a great effort to do well. Wherever it is appropriate, independent learning is fostered and is apparent in some pupils' ability to read reference books for information, in their use of ICT to help them to read, and listen, to stories, and in their ability to collaborate orally with others and make valid contributions to discussion.
93. Pupils' behaviour is good at Key Stages 1 and 4 and very good at Key Stages 2 and 3. They work hard at their lessons, are prepared to concentrate and thus make good progress. Assessment is reliable, so pupils know what they must do to improve. The drafting process is particularly effective in promoting correct spelling, punctuation and grammar at Key Stage 4.
94. The subject is very well co-ordinated. The national literacy initiative has been very effectively introduced. Provision for some pupils' additional intensive literacy courses is good and fully promotes pupils' progress. Speaking and listening for some pupils is very well supported by carefully planned and highly effective teaching of socially appropriate language. The curriculum is very good and well-informed at all key stages by the national literacy guidelines. There are additional opportunities for all pupils to read independently on a daily basis. The curriculum is enhanced by opportunities for more formal speaking in assemblies. There are opportunities for public performance. Pupils' writing is narrow in range, however, and requires more systematic emphasis. Pupils' use of ICT is inadequate and fails to support the writing curriculum fully at any key stage.

MATHEMATICS

95. The teaching of mathematics has improved since the last inspection.
96. Pupils' achievement in mathematics in Key Stage 1 is very good. In Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 pupils' achievements are good. By the end of Key Stage 4 a few pupils are achieving in line with national expectations in some areas of mathematics. This indicates progress in the subject throughout the school.
97. Standards on entry into the school at age five are very low. By age seven, standards are improving as teachers become more confident with the National Numeracy Strategy. In the better lessons, where teachers are using the strategy effectively, pupils are beginning to recognise numbers and place them in order to complete a number line.

The higher achieving pupils could count up the line naming all the numbers. Most of the class could tell when a number was missing. Group work is used effectively as when a class is divided up into three groups; one group counting objects, another writing numbers and the third group ordering numbers. By the end of Key Stage 1 the more able pupils can count up to ten from zero and back again. They know the days of the week, but still struggle with 'the day after' or 'the day before'. Most children can recognise basic shapes such as a circle and a triangle. With the aid of support materials such as unifix blocks they can perform simple subtraction up to nine. On entry to Key Stage 1 pupils have little or no knowledge of number names or shapes. By the end of the key stage they can relate numbers to groups of objects such as 4 beads or 3 blocks.

98. In the numeracy lessons in Key Stage 2 the pupils learn to tell the time and use money. They relate their learning to their life in school as when they match start and finish times to playtime, lunchtime, PE lesson and science lesson. By the end of the key stage pupils can count on using number squares as support. They know odd and even numbers and they can accurately perform simple addition including money, and simple subtraction of number. The more able pupils are working on the times tables using grids to look for patterns of 2, 3, 4 and so on up to 10. There is ample repetition of basic number to help pupils consolidate their learning. Symmetry is introduced in Key Stage 2, as are simple angles such as a right angle. Less able pupils need a great deal of support with these topics, and individual support is given using learning support assistants. Generally, pupils' knowledge of number develops well in Key Stage 2, and they begin to use mathematics in other contexts.
99. Good progress is made in Key Stage 3 and pupils build effectively on previous learning.. Pupils move from basic number concepts to more practical applications of skills and knowledge. By the end of the key stage pupils know the cheapest and most expensive items on a list. They can work out pocket money, and the most able pupils can successfully work out decimal/fraction equivalence. Less able pupils use number squares to produce number patterns that are then related to the times tables. They produce number sentences and explore simple fractions. All pupils learn how to use practical equipment to investigate volume. The school has moved towards the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy based approach to mathematics in Key Stage 3, and improvements are already appearing. Appropriate mathematical language is used in all classes such as 'digit', 'multiply' and 'calculate'.
100. By the end of Key Stage 4 the pupils are secure in the four rules of number. They can name common geometrical shapes, use block graphs and bar charts, and the more able can interpret them and gain information from them. The higher achieving pupils can use timetables to plan a journey. They can tell the time using both analogue and digital clocks. They are able to recognise square and prime numbers and identify factors. Less able pupils can identify number patterns. There is extensive work on basic number, including simple fractions, and they begin to investigate probability. There is clear progression from Key Stage 3 throughout Key Stage 4, but the more able make more progress than the less able.
101. Pupils' attitudes to learning in mathematics is generally good, sometimes very good and occasionally excellent. On very few occasions is behaviour poor. When behaviour is less good the learning support assistant is not proactive in giving individual attention and the teacher does not give clear direction to them. In most lessons there is very effective use made of the learning support assistants and this greatly enhances the learning of the pupils.
102. The subject is well co-ordinated. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable in the subject. There is good balance between subject specialism and the special educational needs of

the pupils. Planning is consistent throughout the school. Appropriate priorities are set and documentation and guidance meets the day-to-day needs of teachers when planning their lessons. The senior management carries out monitoring of mathematics teaching and learning. However, there are insufficient opportunities for the co-ordinator, particularly in lessons for pupils aged 5 to 11, to monitor directly the work in classrooms. Co-ordination across all the key stages could be improved by more monitoring and in service by the co-ordinator. Teaching of the subject would benefit by the provision of more practical equipment to support learning at Key Stages 3 and 4. Standards would be improved throughout the school by the provision of ICT equipment in the classrooms to support learning in mathematics.

SCIENCE

103. Achievement in science is good across the school, and in comparison with similar schools. Standards as shown by performance in national tests have risen over the past three years and continue to rise, with a few pupils attaining Level 4 at the end of Key Stage 3. In lessons seen during the period of the inspection much of the Key Stage 3 work in physical process and materials was pitched at a demanding level. Creative and purposeful teaching with frequent opportunities for consolidation, ensure that most pupils acquire good levels of knowledge and understanding. The Key Stage 4 curriculum is driven by the Welsh board syllabus, which provides accreditation to Levels 1, 2, & 3 and teaching based on good subject knowledge extends the challenge, providing work at higher levels. All pupils undertake experimental work and high expectations of their independence and competence raises achievement in this aspect of science.
104. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils know the names of materials such as wood, glass, metal and plastic, using the correct words to describe materials, and sorting various items into sets of plastic or wooden objects etc. They are also beginning to learn about forces, and through experimenting with different surfaces and slopes, know that their model cars go faster and travel further when travelling down the steepest of three ramps.
105. Pupils at the beginning of Key Stage 2 plant spring bulbs inside and outside the classroom using a variety of soils, noting the different rates of growth of the bulbs and demonstrating their knowledge of the plants' need for water, light and warmth to grow.
106. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils have a good grasp of a range of appropriate topics. For instance, they have a good technical vocabulary relating to chemical reactions and can say that a chemical change that cannot be changed back is irreversible, that light is reflected by a mirror and measure forces in Newtons using a force meter. They learn about materials suitable for parachutes – higher attaining pupils apply their knowledge successfully and predict that lightweight nylon material will make a more effective parachute than one made from paper. They compare the speed of runners, joggers and walkers and produce a graph of the results, calculating the different speeds. They record work carefully and construct diagrams and tables of results based on their observations, the teachers' models or occasionally their own research.
107. During Key Stage 4 they continue to develop their knowledge and understanding on forces and energy, with higher attaining pupils able to label magnetic and electrical forces correctly. They learn to complete electrical circuits and to measure electrical currents using an ammeter. Their discussions of changes during puberty and human reproduction demonstrate they have knowledge of life processes and can label male and female reproductive systems accurately. They carry out experiments to separate materials from a mixture using the processes of filtration and evaporation. The higher attaining pupils are able to complete their experiments independently and write out their

methods and results. Lower attaining pupils are able to carry out the same experiments with some support. Some pupils are able to speak at length about planets. Recently a group spoke on local radio about our endangered planet.

108. At the last inspection it was reported that pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4 'are achieving standards that are high for their abilities'. The school has continued to raise standards by introducing the Welsh Certificate in Education course to Key Stage 4 pupils. Additional resources and new appointments have raised the level of staff expertise in the subject, effectively raising standards and promoting progress across all key stages.
109. Teaching in all key stages is good and mostly taught by a specialist science teacher. In the best lessons, subject knowledge is very good. Excitement communicates itself to the pupils and they are motivated and involved in the detail of the investigations, which helps them make good progress. During the experiment on forces the youngest pupils were fully involved and could talk about the results and make a simple record of the outcomes. Older pupils enjoy the challenge of working scientifically: for example they investigate which materials make the best thermal insulators. Good subject knowledge allows the teachers to rephrase explanations and provide the right support to enable all pupils to succeed.
110. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is well embedded with opportunities for learning definitions, spellings and to take measurements and record methods and results. Pupils are well managed and good behaviour of difficult groups is often achieved by their desire to participate in interesting learning activities.
111. Sometimes the range of learning opportunities could be enhanced by the use of information technology to capture and display this information. For instance in several lessons pupils were observing and recording results such as temperature, which could have formed the basis for a computer-generated table or graph of results.
112. Leadership in science is good, with the recent appointment of a subject specialist the curriculum is being developed to ensure all pupils have access to good quality provision. However, there is a need to include planned opportunities to show how computers can be used to aid learning. The science laboratory is well resourced and the school recognises the need to provide technical support, so that teaching and learning in science can be improved further.

ART

113. Overall the quality of pupils' learning in art is very good. The detailed scheme of work helps to ensure that they achieve well and make good progress. At Reception and Key Stages 1 and 2 it is good. At Key Stages 3 and 4 it is very good and excellent. The attainment levels for some students' is to national standards and some achieve GCSE passes. At Reception and Key Stage 1 pupils manipulate dough, use rolling pins and decorate with tools. At Key Stage 2 they understand the term 'maquette' for models to sculpture. They are able to roll clay to make shapes, use tools to model clay and produce a sculpture of their own. They recognise the work of Henry Moore from photos and can discuss the differences between abstract and realistic models.
114. Attitudes and behaviour in art lessons are very good overall. At Reception and Key Stages 1 and 2 they are good. Pupils sit and listen attentively, stay on task and watch the teacher demonstrate. Relationships are positive and the pupils behave well. At Key Stages 3 and 4 they are very good and excellent. Pupils can understand and effectively use brainstorm techniques. Behaviour in lessons is good and pupils clearly enjoy their work.

115. At Key Stage 3 pupils know the key facts of Van Gogh's life and describe the style of his paintings; using terms such as swirls and texture. They understand the properties of oil paints and how poster paste can emulate these. They produce high quality work that is recognisably in the style of Van Gogh. Pupils discuss each stage of their work and are familiar with and confident in the use of a range of materials, tools and techniques, for example; batik, papier mache, printing, collage, wax resistant paper, inks and clay. An English version of the Mexican Tree of Life provides evidence of how pupils can relate examples of world art to their own experience.
116. In Key Stage 4 lessons pupils use the term architecture appropriately and use distortion to create effects like those in the paintings of Munch. They suggest the use of techniques like oils, pastels, water colour, marbling and straw blowing to achieve different effects. They are confident to experiment with a range of media such as fabric paints, polystyrene blocks and crayons. Pupils are familiar with the work and lives of artists such as Munch, Klimpt, El Greco and Vermeer. They understand the term perspective and some can use it effectively in their work. They are able to explain their choice of buildings for illustrating styles of architecture.
117. The quality of teaching and learning at Reception and Key Stages 1 and 2 is good. At Key Stages 3 and 4 it ranges from very good to excellent. Overall it is very good. Teachers are confident and competent with the subject matter. There is detailed planning and careful preparation of lessons, which have identified learning objectives that are shared with pupils. The content and activities are varied so that the pace of the lessons both inspires and challenges pupils. The tasks set gradually develop throughout lessons and this leads to pupils having good levels of confidence. They are encouraged to experiment and all of their answers, approaches and work are valued. The use of repetition supports the pupils' learning and they are constantly supported and encouraged. The quality of learning would be enhanced by the use of ICT to seek information from the internet on artists and artistic movements. Relationships are most positive and pupils clearly enjoy working in the friendly relaxed atmosphere. Lessons are extremely well organised with materials and tasks flexibly matched to pupil need. All pupils can participate and achieve. Teachers ensure that support staff are deployed effectively to help pupils to achieve. Regular reviews of work throughout the lesson support the informal teacher and pupil joint assessment at the end of each session.
118. Co-ordination of the subject is very good within the key stages. Plans are well advanced to develop the rôle of the co-ordinator and allow time for further monitoring of progression and continuity of learning.
119. Policy and planning documents with detailed schemes of work and assessment procedures are in place. Art lessons cultivate pupils' cultural development by introducing them to a wide range of artists and their work as well as to examples of world art. They make a major contribution to the personal and social development of the pupils.
120. The overall quality of art provision in the school is very good and has maintained and enhanced its role as a curricular strength of the school. Since the last inspection an improved and discrete art room has been provided, the level of resources have increased and pupils have access to GCSE and other accredited courses.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

121. Achievements in design and technology are high at all key stages. It is an outstanding feature of the subject that pupils across the school understand the need for initial design, prototype, evaluation and modification before beginning to make the products.

122. At Key Stage 1 children are able to select suitable materials to make models and understand the differences in materials. They understand and can describe materials in term of both shape and colour and use appropriate language such as thread, sparkle, and pattern to describe the qualities of material they use.
123. At Key Stage 2 pupils can recognise the differing attributes of materials and plan and make artefacts, for example, wall hangings in appliqué. They discuss their reasons for selecting various materials and can modify their designs to take into account available materials. Their attainment at this level is in line with national expectations and they take great pride in their work. They can manufacture prototypes and adjust their models in the light of experience, for example, altering the angle of the strut in making a picture frame and selecting a suitable sequence of manufacture to ensure the best fit of the picture in the frame. They understand the use of templates and can make these from their own plans.
124. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils have been exposed and are able to work with a variety of materials such as wood and plastic as well as paper, card and fabric. They understand many of the basic processes in food technology (cookery) and produce work of a high standard. Pupils understand the design process and can marry differing construction methods together such as soldering in the construction of simple circuits to wooden buggies. They are able to test their designs and in the light of this evaluation modify or add to their designs.
125. At Key Stage 4 students are able to work in a large variety of materials and use tools, including large fixed apparatus such as pillar drills, powered saws and thermoplastic heaters well and safely. They fully understand the design process and that part of this process is concerned with construction technique.
126. In all key stages the teaching is at least sound, more frequently good and the pupils attitudes are equally good as a result. They enjoy their work and work co-operatively together taking pride in their work and celebrating the work and the success of others. Overall pupils have high regard for safety and well understand the need for craft rules and procedures.
127. The technology curriculum is well planned and managed and meets with the requirements of the National Curriculum. It provides for a wide range of activities for pupils and enables them to make good progress. The lack of provision for ICT within design and technology has a detrimental effect on the amount of progress made in all key stages.
128. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator but there remains a need to evaluate and monitor teaching and learning at Key Stages 1 and 2. Good progress has been made since the last inspection, especially in the enlargement of the design and technology room and in greater provision in food technology. The quality of teaching has improved at all key stages and as a result pupils' progress is better. There remain some restrictions, however, for example lack of storage space prevents large stocks of consumable materials being kept and so they have to be bought in when they are required.

GEOGRAPHY

129. Improvement in the subject since the last inspection has been very good. Pupils achievement and progress are now satisfactory overall across all key stages and very good at Key Stage 4. The very good progress made by pupils at Key Stage 4, is supported by specialist teaching. However, teaching of geography at Key Stages 1-3 is carried out by class teachers with support from the co-ordinator which is limited to

ensuring continuity and progression in the Programmes of Study and in the provision of a range of appropriate resources. There is no support as yet in relation to improving the range of teaching strategies and the sound use of resources to extend pupils' cultural awareness, especially at Key Stages 1 and 2. However, resources are now adequate for the wide range of abilities found in classrooms and teachers were noted to make creative use of available resources to extend the learning opportunities available to pupils. The lack of the use of a mini-bus however, has limited fieldwork opportunities to extend pupils' observational skills and their knowledge and understanding of the local environment. Teaching is satisfactory overall and good or better at Key Stages 3 and 4 where geography is taught as a discrete subject. Assessment is now linked to the scheme of work and is used for thorough day-to-day planning which now takes account of pupils' needs. However, this remains an area for development for the subject, particularly in relation to more able pupils who are sometimes presented with tasks which are not challenging enough.

130. No observations could be made of lessons at Key Stages 1 and 2 during the inspection week due to time-tabling arrangements, therefore judgements are based on the scrutiny of pupils' work provided and displayed in classrooms. Pupils make satisfactory progress across the key stages and by the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils recognise and make observations about physical and human features of a range of places. For example, they use geographical language to correctly label features of water landscapes. In cross-curricular work on India and Greece, teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to recognise features that give places their character and extend their knowledge and understanding. Pupils illustrate their work and some are able to describe key features in writing. Teachers' constructive comments, especially at Key Stage 2, help pupils to focus on areas for improvement, for example, their writing skills. More able pupils are stretched through differentiated materials which offer appropriate challenge resulting in good progress.
131. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have made satisfactory progress in relation to their learning difficulties. Teacher assessments of pupils' SATs show that the majority of pupils are working at Levels 1 and 2 with 16 per cent achieving Level 3. Although this is well below national averages, the majority of pupils have extended their geographical knowledge and skills to include, for example, work on energy sources, during which teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to offer explanations for the location of power stations using a range of strategies, for example brainstorms, to involve pupils who have limited writing skills. In some lessons, for example, in a Year 9 lesson, where pupils have a very wide range of abilities and learning difficulties, more able pupils are not sufficiently stretched when only whole-class teaching strategies are used. However, pupils' progress in learning is enhanced by good lesson planning which includes sound consolidation of prior learning.
132. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils respond with enthusiasm and interest in the lessons observed. Lessons observed were very good or excellent with pupils making very good progress in learning geographical knowledge, skills and understanding. The specialist teacher's planning is very good and clearly based on regular individual and whole group assessment. The teacher makes constructive and focused comments in written work which helps pupils to understand what they need to do in order to improve. The scheme of work is appropriate for the range of pupils and is linked clearly to National Curriculum Programmes of Study. The strong leadership of the co-ordinator has a clear impact on planning and delivery of the subject, especially at Key Stages 3 and 4. However, good practice embedded at the later key stages are not clearly evident at Key Stages 1 and 2. Curriculum planning is a strength of the subject with good links being made in planning to enhance pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and to raise their social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness. However, reflective activities which would help pupils to integrate their prior knowledge and understanding with new subject knowledge are not

always built into lesson plans. There are good plans for developing assessment and promoting the use of ICT to enhance pupils' learning.

HISTORY

133. In Key Stages 1 and 2 only one lesson was observed during the inspection. Evidence was gained from a scrutiny of pupils' work, displays around school, looking at teachers plans and discussions with teachers and pupils. The standard of work in both these key stages is judged to be satisfactory in relation to pupils' prior attainment. In Key Stage 1 pupils have looked at old and new toys and have an appreciation of how toys now are different from those in the past. Pupils have some sense of chronology and use terms such as 'then' and 'now' appropriately. They compare some aspects of everyday life in the past with their own lives.
134. In Key Stage 2 pupils have studied the Victorians and have satisfactory knowledge of Victorian childhood. One pupil could tell how children in Victorian times had to work as chimney sweeps and another could describe clothes of the Victorian period. They were very keen to tell how teachers were very 'bossy and strict' at that time and that the cane was punishment for bad behaviour.
135. In Key Stage 3 pupils learn well. They know about the Roman Empire, the Middle Ages and important events of the twentieth century. Pupils can discuss life in the Middle Ages and compare town and village life and have some knowledge of the feudal system as a method of control.
136. They also have a satisfactory understanding of the conflicts of religion at that time and the reasons for 'The Gunpowder Plot'. Older pupils can talk knowledgeably about the First World War and life in the trenches. They have an understanding of the terrible conditions and how information was censored. They know that new weapons were developed during the First World War and can tell you that big guns, machine guns and gas meant that more people died in that war than in any previous war.
137. Pupils in Key Stage 4 make good progress. They study life in Germany previous to the Second World War, including The Rise of the Fuhrer, the Youth Movement and how Hitler and the Nazi Party aimed to control every part of people's lives.
138. On the basis of all the evidence available the standards of work in history at Key Stages 3 and 4 is judged to be satisfactory.
139. Teaching and learning across all key stages is satisfactory. Pupils have good attitudes to learning, are keen and interested in their work, most stay on task and all enjoy explaining verbally their historical knowledge. Teachers have good subject knowledge and know the pupils and their needs very well. They plan effectively and manage pupils well. There is a good pace to lessons. However, in Key Stages 3 and 4 the good content of lessons needs to be presented in a variety of ways to maintain the interest and concentration of pupils.
140. The co-ordinator has produced a policy and satisfactory schemes of work which guide the teaching and learning satisfactorily. There are procedures for assessment and recording and this is used to inform planning. However the co-ordinator's role is not fully developed in that she does not plan lessons or monitor teaching across the whole school. Resources are generally adequate, but there is a need for more artefacts and colourful text books.
141. There is no real change in standards of teaching or learning in history since the last inspection. Standards have been maintained.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

142. In information technology as a discrete subject the pupils' achievement in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. Several of the youngest pupils can use a computer program to assemble pictures and match pictures to text, and they become familiar with other technological equipment and a range of early learning software. They use the mouse to click and drag shapes to produce pictures and patterns and write their names using drawing and word processing programs. The range of work is limited but teachers provide interesting and useful activities so that overall, pupils make sound progress.
143. Achievement in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. By the end of the primary phase the highest attaining pupils are confident computer users. They know where the appropriate letters are on the keyboard and use the space, capitals and delete correctly when writing a news item. Most pupils develop sound mouse skills and are able to log on and load programs using icons or program menus. They have less opportunity to experience computer modelling or use programmable equipment, however the well documented Programmes of Study help teachers to plan for these activities. Access to computers in classrooms is supplemented by lessons in the computer room.
144. Achievement in many aspects of information technology is sound and sometimes good in Key Stages 3 and 4. Key Stage 3 pupils achieve well in keyboard skills, data entry and producing images. They also develop an awareness of the advantages and disadvantages of using new technology. The well planned programme of work taught by a teacher skilled in the subject, enables them to make good progress. Year 8 have used a digital camera and an animation package to produce their own animated story.
145. Year 11 pupils are working towards a new externally accredited Certificate of Achievement in information technology and most pupils are enthusiastic, confident and competent computer users of regular office software by the time they leave school. The highest attaining pupils are beginning to use spreadsheets and follow the teachers' directions in entering formulae and producing tables. Their enjoyment is reflected in the pleasure they have in using the internet to find and print out information linked to their chosen topic. Most pupils are highly motivated by the projects they undertake; they respond well to the work set and make good progress.
146. Since the last inspection teaching equipment and the computer operating skills of pupils have kept pace with new advances in technology. The school has driven ahead in the development of information technology resources and now has multi internet access ahead of its projected National Grid for Learning target. The computer suite has been redeveloped and houses sufficient computers for all pupils to have their own when within the room. The teacher's computer is now linked to a projector and screen to assist teaching. The school is yet to develop the use of ICT across the whole curriculum, and the present absence of computers in other subject specialist rooms significantly detracts from the quality of learning in those other subjects.
147. Teaching of information technology is satisfactory overall with some good teaching. The best teaching is based on good subject knowledge linked to the needs of the pupils, combined with enthusiasm and a clarity of purpose. This enthusiasm communicates to the pupils who are clear in what is expected, enjoy what they do, work hard and make good progress. Behaviour management is generally good with potentially difficult situations diffused by refocusing pupils on interesting tasks. Lessons start with a well paced introductory question and answer sessions, clear targets and expectations shared with the class. Work is well matched to individual needs and based on ongoing assessment. Where teaching is less satisfactory, targets and expectations are unclear and work is not sufficiently matched to the needs of individual pupils – for instance a

Year 11 pupil putting information into a database was 'very bored' and unable to explain why she was doing this work. Assessment of pupils' achievements is satisfactory and is linked to lesson objectives. At the end of Key Stage 4 pupils are assessed at the end of each unit of work, which, when all units are completed comprises a Certificate of Achievement in Information Technology .

148. Subject leadership is good in relation to the information technology curriculum and the management of the existing network of computers. There is still a need to consider how information technology will be integrated across the curriculum throughout the school, how it will be used systematically to promote literacy and numeracy and how to develop the resources further to provide pupils with specific solutions to meet their individual special needs. The development plan for the subject has rightly identified the need to increase the number of computers in the classrooms, improve teachers' own skills and provide technical support to ensure that all pupils receive their entitlement to a full programme of work in this core subject.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

149. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in French lessons. They make satisfactory progress in both key stages. Their speaking and listening skills greatly surpass those of reading and writing in the language.
150. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils greet each other confidently, and respond using the French language. They know their numbers in French. They know the days of the week and the months of the year and ask each other the date of their birthdays. Pupils give directions in French to turn left or right or go straight on. They often, with help, read and write the correct vocabulary to support this exercise. By the end of Key Stage 4, students know and can use the basic vocabulary to allow them to buy clothes of the right size in a French shop. Pupils have some knowledge of the parts of the body in French and have some idea of how to describe an illness.
151. Pupils make satisfactory progress because the teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are stimulating, practical and relevant. Although the teacher does not use French throughout the lessons, there is an appropriate amount to maximise pupils' learning. The recording and assessment procedures are not yet sharp enough to improve standards further. Tasks are not always in line with pupils' abilities, and progress is unsatisfactory. The rigour of the National Curriculum is not always present in the schemes of work to fully support simple reading and writing.
152. In Year 8, all pupils visit France for a day, and this makes them want to learn. All lessons are carefully planned, with clear objectives. Pupils are interested in the lessons and concentrate well on their learning, particularly in Key Stage 4 because there is good emphasis on teaching French culture. Pupils are introduced to French food, and they see authentic French texts. Not enough use is made of the recordings of authentic spoken French, however, for pupils to begin to achieve a good and readily understandable accent. The teacher's relationship with the students is very good in Key Stage 4, and this motivates them to behave well, and helps them to learn. Pupils put a great deal of effort into acquiring new vocabulary and delight in trying it out on others.
153. The curriculum is good and relevant in its emphasis on everyday French and socially oriented spoken language. The subject has been well and effectively introduced into the curriculum. Linking with a French school is now planned. Co-ordination is satisfactory.

154. The subject did not form part of the curriculum at the last inspection. Since then, it has been introduced at Key Stages 3 and 4 as required by the National Curriculum.

MUSIC

155. The Music provision across the school is good. Following the previous inspection a discrete specialist room has been established and a wide range of musical instruments provided. Music lessons are taught at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. Musical productions and events, as well as specialist visits and visitors, offer musical experiences for pupils across the school.

156. Achievements in music in all key stages are good. At Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 the quality of pupils' learning is good. At Key Stages 1 and 2 they can match instruments to named flash-cards. They can identify instruments such as bongos, maracas, metal shakers and cabasa. Pupils understand the difference between verse and chorus. They can all sing along with the chorus and play a variety of simple instruments. Most can clap in time to taped music. At Key Stage 3 they can identify high and low notes and play a simple tune. Some can recognise the time and beat. They are able, some with support, to recognise notes and play chime bars and keyboards. Many pupils can use technical language like melody, accompaniment, chord, pulse and ostinato. They can play, with support, C and G chords alternately. There is evidence of simple composition activities in pupils' workbooks. In general pupils enjoy Music lessons and behaviour is good. When they are distracted or difficult the teacher applies the school's agreed procedures.

157. The quality of teaching at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 is good. The co-ordinator is a specialist who delivers the subject matter with confidence and enthusiasm. At Key Stages 1 and 2 activities are well planned. Each builds on the next to challenge pupils to develop their playing and singing skills. They enjoy the range of lively activities. Expectations of behaviour and achievement are high and relationships are good. Support staff are deployed well to support pupils appropriately. Pupils are confident to negotiate the assessment of their learning at the end of each lesson, as they are familiar with the criteria applied. At Key Stage 3 tasks are also clearly planned and challenging. The activities are developed to culminate in a whole class performance. Pupils are praised and encouraged. Worksheets and displays reinforce the learning. Pupils enjoy their work and are confident with the colour notation system. When support staff are not clear about what is expected there is a negative effect on pupils' behaviour. When they fully understand the tasks and how best to support individual pupils, behaviour is good.

158. Displays, pupils' workbooks, the co-ordinator's records and photographs give clear evidence of the wide range of additional music provision which contribute to pupils' cultural, spiritual and social development. These include a 'Celebration of Music' with two other special schools, events to mark Christian festivals with the local church and African workshops. Pupils have seen performances of Australian music, folk groups, Barber Shop and the Deal Military Band. Musical events are also used to enrich work in other areas of the curriculum like the Victorian Christmas, Tudor music and 'Joseph and His Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat'. There are opportunities for pupils to play a wide range of musical instruments and to perform in class and at events. All classes in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 are taught by a specialist music teacher. There is a system of 3 star music awards for each six-week cycle of music modules. Crib-sheets support the pupils to judge their success in meeting the criteria for these awards and they are confident in negotiating their grades with the teacher.

159. The school provides a discrete music room with a wide range of instruments; many of which have been funded by the Parent, Teacher and Friends' Association. The co-

ordinator has developed numerous resources like flash-cards, worksheets and display to support learning. She is a music specialist and is very confident with the subject matter. She has developed detailed policy and planning documents. The co-ordinator has not yet developed a monitoring role, nor does she provide specialist briefings for support and other staff.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

160. The achievements of pupils at all key stages of the National Curriculum are high and progress is good or very good. At Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils undertake all Programmes of Study. At Key Stage 3 all areas of the Programmes of Study are visited and at Key Stage 4 there continues to be a wide range of activity offered to students. In the Junior School (Key Stages 1 and 2) pupils understand the concepts behind the subject, for example the need to 'warm up' before a lesson and at the end of Key Stage 1 they are inventive in their gymnastic work and can recall sequences of actions or exercises.
161. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils understand safety rules and can express themselves through movement and can both control and predict their actions on the apparatus, for example 'if you twist in the air which way will you face?' They can help with the setting up of equipment and work co-operatively. At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils put up the required apparatus and play and work co-operatively. They understand the rule of games, for example rugby, football or table tennis, and enjoy playing together. Pupils with additional handicaps sometimes find a lack of motor control, especially fine control, makes the tasks more difficult but they nevertheless enjoy the work and participate with enthusiasm.
162. There is a wide range of activities on offer to students at Key Stage 4 and achievements are high. Students display refined ball skills such as accurate passing and safe and controlled tackling at rugby, for example, and are able to put the skills learnt in lessons into practice in actual games. They play co-operatively, and competitively and can understand and explain game tactics and strategies.
163. Overall the quality of teaching is good or very good. Lessons are well planned and the teacher displays not only very good subject knowledge but a clear insight into the needs of individual children and this results in high and positive achievements for all pupils. Attainments in some areas are on a level to be expected by all children in the age range especially in table tennis and swimming. The high level of teaching results in generally good or very good progress by pupils.
164. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator who has provided a well constructed policy and scheme of work that are both broad and balanced. The curriculum leader is both knowledgeable in the subject and in the understanding and meeting of individual pupils' needs, but some fine differentiation to meet individual needs is not always recorded or apparent within individual lesson plans.
165. There has been good progress in the subject since the last inspection where a wide variety of activity still remains and now includes, riding, archery, outdoor pursuits, swimming, gymnastics, games and dance, sailing and canoeing. Resources have improved and are now beyond a basic level. Steps have been taken to prevent pupils disturbing lessons in the hall although changing facilities remain inadequate.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

166. Progress and levels of achievement are at least satisfactory in all key stages. During the period of the inspection only a limited number of lessons could be observed. It is therefore not possible to make judgements about teaching in Key Stage 1. However

discussions with pupils and teachers and scrutiny of teachers' plans and pupils' work in books and displays enable judgements about progress and pupils' attitudes to be made.

167. In Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils make satisfactory progress through their topic work. Themes appropriate to the topic are linked to the Kent Agreed Syllabus. Pupils develop their knowledge of stories and festivals from different religions, learning about Jesus, Divali and Ramadan. As they move through the key stages they develop an understanding of famous and special people such as Martin Luther King, discussing feelings and the importance of relationships. Their work is reinforced in assemblies which are planned to cover the calendar of Christian festivals and major events from other religions, for example the Hindu festival of Spring.
168. Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 make satisfactory progress in the modules of work they follow. Themes appropriate to the model from the agreed syllabus allow pupils to improve their knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, teachings and lifestyles and encourages them to ask and respond to questions about purpose, values and commitments. Pupils consolidate and develop their knowledge of different religions learning about different ways of worship and celebrations within those religions. They develop their understanding of beliefs and relationships and discuss the hardships and suffering of people in different parts of the world. For example, pupils in Year 9 look at the distribution of wealth in the world and compare their lives to those of young people living in the third world. The school has links with families in Kenya which are supported by gifts from the pupils. Key Stage 4 pupils discuss the different attitudes people around the world have to the care of old people and the Hindu system of arranged marriages, giving their own views.
169. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and the present co-ordinator for religious education has worked hard to develop a good curriculum. The use of the Kent Agreed Syllabus for religious education is now more firmly established and standards across the school have improved. The school has developed a good range of resources and artefacts to support the school's scheme of work.
170. Teaching of religious education previously judged to be unsatisfactory is now never less than satisfactory and often good or very good. In the best lessons seen learning was very good, pupils were interested, and fully involved. Their attitude to religious education was very positive due to the well planned work organised to meet their needs, capturing their interest through the use of very good resources. Artefacts, and information from the internet – for example, Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech – were used to add interest and boost pupils' learning. Older pupils are encouraged to share their own experiences and opinions when they discuss topics in the module 'The value of human life'. They compare aspects of their own experiences and ideas when answering questions which are difficult to answer with those of others, and identify what influences their lives. Year 11 pupils discuss abortion suggesting reasons why and alternative outcomes. Carefully organised plenary sessions enable key learning points to be revisited and consolidated. Pupils response to religious education is always satisfactory and often good. Most pupils are interested and motivated, however a small minority of pupils sometimes need additional support to maintain their interest. Most pupils are polite, confident and keen to contribute to class discussions of major religious or moral issues.
171. The curriculum is well planned through modules of work linked to the Agreed Syllabus to enable all pupils to make progress in their knowledge and understanding of a range of themes. Co-ordination of the subject is effective, however opportunities for the curriculum co-ordinator to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in lessons have yet to be organised.

172. The subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral and cultural development of pupils. Themes cover the importance of relationships, facing up to life, prejudice, discrimination and deprivation. World religions and festivals are covered, while stories from the Bible are an important feature. Links with the local church include use of the church for special services and the vicar's contribution to collective worship.