

INSPECTION REPORT

**PLATT CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOLUNTARY AIDED
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Sevenoaks

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118728

Headteacher: Caroline Cain

Reporting inspector: John Francis
17976

Dates of inspection: 26th – 28th November 2001

Inspection number: 193837

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body, Platt CE Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Mackay
Date of previous inspection:	14/04/1997

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Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17976	J Francis	Registered inspector	Equal Opportunities Special Educational Needs Science Information & Communication Technology Design & Technology	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9569	J Leaning	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values & personal development How well does the school care for pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
10808	A Britton	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Geography History Physical Education	How good are the curricular & other opportunities offered to pupils?
18083	J Howell	Team inspector	English as an Additional Language English Art and Design Music	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This smaller than average sized primary school has 136 pupils on roll, aged between four and 11, in five mixed-age classes. The 14 pupils in the Foundation Stage are in a class with one Year 2 and 14 Year 1 pupils. The number of pupils on roll has risen slightly in recent years, and this is forecast to continue, putting additional pressure on accommodation. The area served by the school is one of mainly privately owned housing, with a greater than average proportion of children from higher social class households. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is below the national average. There are four pupils from minority ethnic groups and two pupils with English as an additional language both of which are below the national average. The level of special educational needs, at around 20 per cent, is broadly average. These are mostly for moderate learning difficulties. Three pupils have statements of special educational need which is above average. Pupils' attainment on entry is above average. The headteacher has been in post for two terms.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. After a period where pupils' attainment fell significantly, standards are now beginning to rise. Although there is still some underachievement by the oldest pupils in school, a combination of some very good teaching, pupils' very good attitudes and effective leadership by the headteacher has arrested this decline. The school offers satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good and pupils are making good progress.
- The headteacher's leadership and management of the school are very good.
- The teaching and organisation in the Foundation Stage are of a high quality.
- Pupils' attitudes to work and behaviour are both very good, and their enthusiasm for school is excellent.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Relationships throughout the school are excellent and there are very good links with parents, who are actively involved in the life of the school.
- The quality and range of music throughout the school are very good.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment and pupils' achievements in English, mathematics and science in Year 6.
- The effectiveness of the governing body in understanding the school's strengths and weaknesses, and its involvement in long-term strategic and financial planning.
- The monitoring role of the co-ordinators in evaluating teaching and learning.
- The quality of teachers' marking to give greater consistency and to set short-term targets for improvement.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since it was last inspected in April 1997, the school has made satisfactory progress overall and good progress in addressing the action points identified at that time, particularly in regard to the curriculum and the provision for pupils' multicultural development. However, the governing body has made more limited progress in monitoring the work of the school. Standards for 11 year olds have fallen significantly and, by comparison, pupils are underachieving in English, mathematics and science. Standards of attainment have not been rising as quickly as they have in other schools nationally.

With recent appointments, and more rigorous monitoring there has been some improvement in the quality of teaching, especially for the oldest pupils. Consequently, standards are beginning to rise again and pupils are making greater progress. The headteacher has, in a short time, responded well to the challenge and is bringing the school up to its previous levels of attainment through detailed analysis of test results, which set clear targets, and through improved planning. The school has a good capacity for further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	A	D	D	E	well above average A above average B
mathematics	B	C	C	E	average C below average D
science	C	E	C	D	well below average E

Test results show that when compared with similar schools, attainment in science is below average, and attainment in English and mathematics is well below average. Too few pupils attained the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics or science. Attainment by boys is particularly low. However, with the small numbers of pupils involved, care needs to be taken when analysing the data as one pupil can have a considerable effect on the overall result. Nevertheless, results over the last two years have not improved at the same rate as schools nationally. This represents unsatisfactory progress for these pupils from their high levels of attainment seen at the end Year 2.

Work seen during the inspection from pupils in Year 6 is much better than the results recorded above. Although there is still an amount of underachievement, standards are rising, and are at least average by the time that pupils reach 11 years of age. This reflects the challenging targets set by the school for this year. For pupils in Year 2, standards remain above average in reading, writing and mathematics, and are well above average in science.

Standards in information and communications technology are broadly in line with those expected nationally for pupils by 11, and better than average for pupils aged seven. Pupils are now making good progress in English, science, information and communication technology, design and technology and physical education, and very good progress in music, where they attain high standards. In all other subjects, pupils are making satisfactory progress. With the exception of Year 6, reading throughout the school is particularly good.

Children in the Reception class make rapid progress. Most are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals and the majority to exceed these goals well before they move into Year 1.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes and values are very good. They enjoy school and are very enthusiastic and keen to work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The standard of behaviour, from the youngest children in Reception to the oldest pupils in Year 6, is very good. They behave well at play and during lunchtimes. They are well mannered, polite to each other and adults and courteous and welcoming to visitors.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of pupils is very good. From starting school, they are given a range of responsibilities, and carry out simple administrative jobs around the school. Older pupils show great care when supporting younger ones at break-times.
Attendance	Attendance is very good and well above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very 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.

The quality of teaching throughout the school is good. Whilst good teaching was seen in every class, the most consistently high quality was seen in the Year 5/6 and Foundation Stage/Year 1 classes. These two classes accounted for more than three quarters of the very good teaching, and all the excellent teaching observed. This was characterised by the good organisational skills, good classroom management and good subject knowledge of the teachers and their high expectations. Excellent English teaching in Year 6 was exemplified by skilful questioning which challenged and involved all pupils, and the expert use of the text to draw out pupils' understanding. All teachers make very effective use of small group work in all subjects. In Year 4/5 and Year 5/6 science lessons, the teachers had timed the investigative activities carefully, allowing just enough time to complete each task. The pupils were aware of the need to concentrate and work quickly and this gave these lessons great pace.

The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is very good. The needs of these children are clearly understood and the activities planned lead effectively towards the Early Learning Goals, and often beyond these into National Curriculum levels of attainment.

All teachers have a secure knowledge of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and now implement them well. This is an improvement on the situation in the recent past, where a lack of clear direction resulted in standards falling significantly. There are now significant strengths, particularly in English teaching.

Teachers are aware of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and teachers' notes make reference to these pupils, including those identified as gifted or talented in particular subjects. Teachers' expectations of pupils' work and attainment continue to rise. However, there are still some inconsistencies in the quality of presentation in pupils' books, and in teachers' marking. Although all work is consistently marked and supportive of pupils' efforts, not all clearly identifies pupils' errors or tells them what they have to do to correct these and improve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. There is a good range of extracurricular activities with a strong emphasis on music.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There are effective procedures, and good support for pupils with significant special educational needs provided directly by staff and by carefully adapted materials and tasks.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils with English as an additional language are fluent, require no additional support, and achieve as well as other pupils in school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is good and continues to be a strong feature in the life of the school. The school makes good provision for the personal support and guidance of its pupils. The provision for pupils' cultural development has been improved, and the overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is now good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school makes good provision for the care of its pupils through clear and positive aims, which promote the social, emotional and personal development of each child. The monitoring and support of pupils' academic performance and personal development are satisfactory.

The school works hard and very successfully to ensure that parents feel welcome in school and are actively involved in their children's learning. The school makes good provision for the care of its pupils. They make good progress in a safe, caring, orderly, happy atmosphere where the clear and positive aims are to promote the social, emotional and personal development of each child. There is a good commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The school is well led. The headteacher provides strong leadership and, together with senior staff, forms a good team, which gives clear direction to the work of the school. They are well supported by the governing body, and have the confidence of the parents.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governing body is very supportive of the school and meets all of its statutory requirements. Many are regularly involved in school. However, there are few formal mechanisms for governors to report back on the work of the school and insufficient involvement in school improvement planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. There are effective systems for monitoring the performance of the school, which have identified strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning and, as a result, action has been taken to address these issues.
The strategic use of resources	Good. After a period of difficulty, the school is now in a more secure financial position. The budget is well managed and the systems now in place are effective. Funds provided through specific grants are used well. Consideration is given to major spending decisions to obtain best value for money. However, governors do not compare the performance of the school with schools in similar circumstances to judge its overall effectiveness.

The headteacher has worked hard and successfully since her appointment to address the causes of underachievement. A good mixture of experienced and more recently qualified teachers, who are well deployed, provides a good balance of curricular strengths. More recent appointments have brought great expertise, for example, to literacy.

The accommodation is unsatisfactory. Most classrooms are small and lack facilities such as water. Only the more recently built 'early years' unit provides suitable accommodation.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of teaching. • The behaviour of pupils. • The approachability of the school. • The expectations of the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work given to pupils to do at home. • The quality of information about children's progress

The findings of the inspection agree with the positive comments of the parents. The quality and range of homework are considered appropriate, and the opportunities provided for parents to find out about their child's progress are good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The latest results from national tests at the end of Year 6 show standards in mathematics and science to be broadly similar to those found nationally, whilst standards in English are below average. However, when compared with similar schools, attainment in science is below average, and attainment in English and mathematics is well below average. Attainment by boys is particularly low. Girls, in contrast, achieved much higher than average standards. Through analysing test results, the school is aware of these differences and is taking appropriate steps to address this. Nevertheless, results over the last two years have not improved in line with the national trend. Only in science is there any significant improvement. Pupils' achievement in all three of these core subjects is unsatisfactory. Too few pupils attained the higher level 5 in English, mathematics or science, which has the effect of pulling the average down. This also represents unsatisfactory progress for these pupils from their high levels of attainment seen at the end Year 2, particularly in English and mathematics, and a significant drop overall on the standards reported at the time of the previous inspection. However, there are a number of factors that account for this more recent decline. Over the last two years, there have been more pupils with special educational needs, and a lack of clear direction in English and mathematics, reduced the effectiveness of the literacy and numeracy strategies. Additionally, with the small numbers of pupils involved, care needs to be taken when analysing the data as one pupil can have a considerable effect on the overall result.
2. These results are in direct contrast to those seen for pupils at the end of Year 2. Here, attainment is well above average in writing, and attainment in reading and mathematics is in the top five per cent of schools nationally. These results show an improvement from the previous year, and are even an improvement on the high standards achieved over the previous four years.
3. Work seen during the inspection from pupils in Year 6 is better than the results recorded above. Although there is still an amount of underachievement, standards are rising, and even at this stage of the school year, are at least the average expected for pupils at the end of Year 6. Although failing to meet its targets for last year, currently the school is on course to meet the challenging targets set for this year. These improvements are due to better teaching and better curricular planning, especially for English and mathematics, and clear direction from the headteacher and other senior staff.
4. Standards in information and communication technology are broadly average for pupils by 11, and better than average for seven-year-olds, where the pupils benefit from the expertise of the co-ordinator as their class teacher. Pupils generally know about word processing and how databases are used. Younger pupils use creative software to make pictures using various techniques such as spraying colour onto the screen or using different shapes to add interest. All aspects of information and communication technology are taught. These standards are beginning to reflect the improvements made to the information and communication technology curriculum and planning across the school. Standards in most other subjects are as expected for pupils of this age, although good standards are seen in physical education, and with good subject leadership and some specialist teaching, very good standards in music by Year 6. There has been some drop in standards since the previous inspection in history, where the subject has not had as high a priority, and design and technology, where there was previously specialist teaching.
5. Throughout the school, pupils are making good progress in English, science, information and communication technology, design and technology and physical education, and very good progress in music. In all other subjects, pupils are making satisfactory progress. Through

careful identification and detailed provision, good planning and additional support, pupils with special educational needs are making good progress. Those pupils with English as an additional language are fluent, require no additional support, and achieve as well as other pupils in school. In an effort to address underachievement of higher attaining pupils, the school is now identifying pupils who are gifted or talented in specific areas of learning, for example, science, music or sport, and teachers' planning makes specific reference to their needs. This is leading to improved progress for these pupils in many subjects.

6. By the time they are seven and 11, most pupils can express themselves well and keep a discussion going. They listen well to each other, and their responses show thoughtful consideration of others' comments. Reading is particularly good in Year 2. From an early age, pupils have an interest in books and authors and develop the skills necessary to allow them to read for both pleasure and information. They read with expression, understand what they are reading and can support comments and views by reference to the text. For pupils in Year 2, written work is good. Independent writing shows they can structure their stories well, spell correctly and punctuate their work appropriately. Written work for pupils in Year 6 is broadly average, but there are examples of good quality writing from higher attaining pupils using adventurous vocabulary.
7. In mathematics, pupils in Year 2 are making good progress and achieve well. Much of their work, for example, telling the time or adding and subtracting two-digit numbers is at a higher level than usually found for pupils of this age. For pupils of 11 years of age, whilst they are attaining average standards, there is still some underachievement. Where they are achieving more in line with their capabilities is, for example, in their work with fractions. There are still relative weaknesses in their ability to explain the strategies they use to work out answers. However, this is being addressed through improved teaching and better application of the National Numeracy Strategy. Standards in science are very good in Year 2 and average in Year 6. A revised scheme of work to support planning for mixed age groups, and the purchase of additional commercial material are having a significant impact on teaching and learning, particularly for the younger pupils in school.
8. For children in the Foundation Stage – the Reception class – progress is rapid. Most are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals¹ and the majority to exceed these goals by the time they start Year 1. They enter school with good levels of language and mathematical skills and the high quality teaching builds on these well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' attitudes and values are very good; they enjoy school and behave very well. These qualities have been maintained since the previous inspection and are recognised as strengths by the parents. Pupils are friendly and polite to visitors, teachers and each other. In conversation, they are confident, lively and articulate. Their enthusiasm for school, interest in their work and relationships with others are excellent. They work hard and sustain concentration, are confident in class discussion, work well together and react positively to adults. Adults provide very good role models and the strong Christian ethos in the school means that all work hard to raise expectations and to develop pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence. The school's aims: 'to nurture spiritual growth in a Christian environment, encouraging mutual respect within a friendly, caring and supportive community', are clear and positive. Pupils are encouraged to be thoughtful and care for others, and they respond well to this encouragement.
10. The standard of behaviour, from the youngest children in Reception to the oldest pupils in Year 6, is very good. It is recognised as an important factor in achieving successful learning. There

¹ These are in the areas of learning that include personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development and physical development that children should obtain by the end of Reception year.

are many rewards and few sanctions and there have been no exclusions. Achievement of any kind is celebrated in the 'Golden Book' assemblies, and parents are notified when their children are 'going for gold'. They are also involved at an early stage if behaviour is unacceptable. At lunch and playtime, in spite of the cramped conditions, pupils play together very happily. There is high quality supervision, a sociable atmosphere, lots to do and no evidence of any unnecessary rules. Pupils explain that 'rules keep you safe, so you can do your work and help each other' and without rules it would not be a 'nice place'.

11. The personal development of pupils is very good. In the Foundation Stage, pupils make very good progress, forming trusting relationships with adults and other children. They are given responsibilities, are able to work with others and to share and act sensibly when moving around school. Older pupils are given opportunities as playground monitors, helping in assembly and in the library, and carry out simple administrative jobs around school. The recently formed School Council is full of ideas such as raising a petition to secure a bypass for the school, which is on a busy main road. Each class has a representative on the council. They have instigated a 'worry box' for pupils to register any concerns, but so far this seems to get very little use.
12. Pupils with special educational needs are given every opportunity to take part in all activities. The school's provision for those with significant special educational needs is very effective and is based on clear identification of their needs, with learning appropriate to their age and maturity. There are good relationships with other pupils and adults, which support them effectively and help build their self-esteem.
13. Pupils are encouraged to be mature and responsible. Funds are raised for local, national and international charities and pupils understand that they should help others who are less fortunate. After the Harvest Service, they take gifts to the elderly.
14. The rate of attendance is very good and well above the national average, with unauthorised absence well below the national average. Regular attendance has a very good effect on standards. Pupils arrive punctually.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching throughout the school remains good, although the proportion of very good or better teaching has improved since the previous inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed, and in eight out of ten lessons, teaching was good or very good and, occasionally, excellent.² Although good teaching was seen in every class, the most consistently high quality was seen in the Year 5/6 and Foundation Stage/Year 1 classes. These two classes accounted for around three quarters of the very good teaching, and all the excellent teaching observed. Throughout the school, English, science and music are taught particularly well, good teaching is also seen in information and communication technology and physical education, and in mathematics in Year 1 and 2. This is the result of teachers' good subject knowledge and understanding, which gives them confidence when teaching the subject, and of the clear guidance provided by the subject co-ordinators.
16. The best quality teaching comes from a combination of factors. The good organisational skills, classroom management and subject knowledge of the teachers and their high expectations. This was clearly demonstrated in two singing lessons observed, one involving pupils from Reception to Year 2, the other, pupils from Year 3 to Year 6. The lessons were lively and pupils were engrossed in the activities. When singing three part rounds, the older pupils

² Inspectors make judgement about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor and very poor. Satisfactory means that strengths outweigh any weaknesses.

showed good technical control and diction. Excellent teaching seen in an English lesson in Year 6 was exemplified by skilful questioning which challenged and involved all pupils, the expert use of the text to draw out pupils' understanding and the very brisk pace seen in all sections of the lesson.

17. Teachers make very effective use of small group work in all subjects. In the carousel of science activities seen in Year 4/5 and Year 5/6 lessons, the teachers had timed each investigation carefully allowing just enough time for pupils to complete the task. The pupils were aware of the need to concentrate and work quickly and this gave these lessons great pace. They applied themselves well and derived great enjoyment and success from the work. The good relationships between teachers and pupils contribute well to pupils' learning. Building on this, teachers use co-operative working as a feature of many lessons and often provide opportunities for pupils to discuss and clarify their ideas with a partner before answering. This was very effective in a Year 2 English lesson where pupils discussed their understanding of the poem being studied before offering their ideas to the whole class. This chance to rehearse their views with others helps to build both their confidence and their language skills.
18. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is very good. The needs of these children are clearly understood and the activities planned lead effectively towards the Early Learning Goals, and often beyond these into National Curriculum levels of attainment. The excellent range of free-choice activities for children to select from covers all aspects of early years development. From the carefully planned role-play on an imaginary building site that engages children's interest and encourages good speaking and listening skills, to the range of outdoor activities which improve their physical skills, children are presented with interesting and exciting opportunities for learning. Even where such a wide range of activities is offered, the teacher uses these expertly at the end of the session for children to report back to the rest of the class, providing further opportunities for them to develop their language skills.
19. Teachers' planning is good at all levels. Planning for English and mathematics follows the national literacy and numeracy strategies. All teachers have a secure knowledge of these and now implement them well. This is an improvement on the situation in the recent past, where a lack of direction resulted in standards falling significantly. There are now important strengths, particularly in English teaching. These are the result of better planning and a clearer focus on teaching and learning brought about by the recent appointment of a new co-ordinator. The medium-term and daily planning used by the teachers for all subjects is of a high quality, with work planned to meet the needs of pupils at different levels. Clear learning intentions, revisited in the plenary session at the end of each lesson, allow teachers to check on the gains made in pupils' knowledge and understanding. This form of assessment is used effectively to help teachers plan the next steps in learning.
20. Teachers' expectations of pupils' work and attainment are now much higher than they have been, particularly for pupils in Year 3 to 6, and are continuing to rise. However, there are still some inconsistencies throughout the school, for example, in the quality of presentation in pupils' books, and in teachers' marking. The marking of pupils' work is an aspect currently being developed by the school. Whilst all work is consistently marked and supportive of pupils' efforts, not all clearly identifies their errors or tells them what they have to do to improve. There are few examples where pupils are set short-term targets for tackling areas of weakness.
21. Teachers are aware of the requirements of pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans match the work effectively to the pupils' attainment and teachers' notes make reference to these pupils, including those identified as gifted or talented in particular subjects. Learning support assistants work well with teachers to provide additional guidance for these pupils, or more general support during other lessons.

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

22. The curriculum is broad and balanced and fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The curricular provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and is well focused on the needs of young children. A daily act of collective worship is carried out in the form of a class, whole school or key stage³ assembly. The curricular provision also indicates a good commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils. The school is successful in offering a wide range of appropriate opportunities for pupils of all ages. The issues from the previous inspection regarding, 'the development of schemes of work in all subjects to ensure progress through the National Curriculum' and the need, 'to strengthen the provision for multicultural education', have both been fully addressed. There are comprehensive schemes of work for all subjects and the provision for multicultural education is now good.
23. The school makes sound provision for the personal support and guidance of its pupils. There is a sex education policy and a video to support this, which is shared with parents. The school nurse also talks to pupils in Years 5 and 6. Drug abuse and other health education issues are covered through 'circle time', in assemblies and in other subjects of the curriculum. There is no formal policy for personal and social health education. Personal and social education is delivered through assemblies, in 'circle time' and through other lessons. In lessons, pupils work hard in small groups or independently, for example, a Year 5 science lesson with very good practical group work and discussion when planning an investigation. Each pupil has a personal profile with a section for general observations about social and behaviour patterns. Since September, individual and class targets have been set.
24. The school has successfully implemented the national literacy and numeracy strategies in all classes and although the rise in standards has yet to be seen fully at Key Stage 2, there is now evidence of rising standards in English and mathematics in all year groups in the school. This has not yet had the effect of fully raising standards in mental mathematics and numeracy. The effectiveness of the school's approach to the literacy strategy has been carefully analysed and, as a result changes have been made, particularly for Years 3 to 6 in an effort to raise standards. In-service training has been provided by the new co-ordinator to improve the guided reading and writing sessions. These are now well established and are proving to be effective. The application of literacy skills across the curriculum is satisfactory and there are many good links made with other subjects, in the development of pupils' speaking skills.
25. The provision of extra-curricular activities is good. Pupils are offered soccer, netball, tennis, and cricket clubs linked to their physical education activities. Other pursuits are linked to music, for example, recorder and other instrumental groups, choir and orchestra. To broaden pupils' opportunities, chess, creative writing, science and homework study groups have also been organised. Visitors to the school and educational visits, especially in music, history, geography, and science and provide a rich variety of experiences for all pupils. Pupils from Years 5 and 6 participate in a residential trip to Sayers Croft during the autumn term.
26. The school has a good, practical commitment to inclusion and equality of opportunity in the curriculum and there is a comprehensive policy for this aspect of its work. All curricular activities are open to boys and girls of all age groups and abilities including those with significant special educational needs. Many extra-curricular activities are aimed at pupils in Years 3 to 6, but all music tuition and clubs are open to other pupils also. The results of national and internal tests are scrutinised and assessed for gender or racial differences. The

³ Key stages relate to the age groups of pupils. The Foundation Stage includes pupils in the Reception class; Key Stage 1 includes Years 1 and 2 and Key Stage 2, Years 3 to 6.

school has recognised that girls perform better than boys in English and mathematics in both key stages and is taking steps to raise boys' attainment.

27. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There are effective procedures for the identification and assessment on these pupils. Good support for pupils with significant special educational needs is provided both directly by staff and by carefully adapted materials and tasks. Pupils have equal access to the curriculum through good quality individual education plans, with clear and specific targets. The school is currently modifying its procedures in line with the new Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs to be introduced in January 2002.
28. Pupils' behaviour and their very positive attitudes towards their work are based on the school's good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. The school's ethos and aims reflect a caring school with strong links to the school's Christian foundation.
29. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The daily collective act of worship forms an integral part of pupils' spiritual development and follows religious themes, which are also closely related to moral and social development. Music is an important part of all assemblies and this with a lighted candle and wooden cross gave a good spiritual atmosphere. Statutory requirements for a daily collective act of Christian worship are fully met. In a whole school assembly on Advent, the headteacher explained the reason for the four red candles and one large white one at the beginning of Advent. A torch reflected from a mirror on to the ceiling to illustrate 'The Light of the World' brought a gasp of wonder from the younger pupils. An older pupil from Year 5 played a flute for the younger pupils, who all listened intently. Pupils then reflected and thought about the things they did last Christmas and the best time they remembered. Displays in classrooms and the large part that music plays in the everyday life of the school helps to provide a spiritual dimension to the curriculum for all pupils. There are opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to develop a sense of awe and wonder especially in curriculum subjects such as art, music, science and literature.
30. The school also makes good provision for pupils' moral development. There are clear expectations of high standards of behaviour displayed in the school rules and in the notices about behaviour displayed around the school. Pupils' understanding of right and wrong is developed through school assemblies, 'circle times' and the quiet but firm way that all staff deal with any misdemeanours. The school uses a number of reward systems. Achievement by individual pupils for both academic and helpful behaviour is included in a 'Golden Book'. The headteacher reads out pupils' names at the end of whole school assemblies and pupils are invited to come to the front of the hall to have their contribution recognised. All staff act as very good role models for pupils and the consistent way in which issues are dealt with, promotes pupils' appreciation of fair play.
31. There is good provision for pupils' social development and most parents agree that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. The school has a welcoming ethos and relationships are good. All pupils are integrated well into all aspects of school life including extra curricular activities. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions. Many lessons provide opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively, for example, in mathematics lessons when teachers invite pupils to discuss an aspect between themselves before coming to a whole class conclusion. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and participate in independent learning are well promoted in lessons and other aspects of the school day. The very active school council plays a part in the organisation and running of the school and they are eager to explain their role. The provision of an autumn term residential visit by pupils from Years 5 and 6 gives an opportunity to develop an understanding of looking after themselves and living in a community. The many functions arranged by the school and its pupils to promote the social development of its pupils include participation with staff in 'Red

Nose Day', 'A Strip for Shelter' and a collection for Children in Need. Older pupils in Year 6 raised money to finance a trip to Europa, a French village in Essex.

32. Cultural provision for pupils is good which is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection where there was an insufficient emphasis upon cultures beyond Western Europe. British and western culture is promoted well through subjects such as literacy, history, art and music. Pupils are made aware of the contributions of ancient civilisations such as Greece and Egypt, and the impact of events such as the Second World War on people's lives. Tudor history is studied to give pupils an understanding of the way people lived in the past in British society. Pupils are introduced to the works of several composers in their music lessons and daily assemblies. The many visits enhance pupils' cultural development and knowledge. Visitors to the school include various music instrumentalists and a specialist in Tudor musical instruments. In their artwork, older pupils have constructed African masks in clay, pupils in Years 4 and 5 have participated in a topic based on Indian music and textiles, assisted by Asian parents, and a wide range of musical instruments has been used for African and calypso music.
33. The local community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning, and can be seen in several areas of the curriculum including history, science, music and physical education. The school has very close connections with the local church and the Vicar leads a whole school assembly every three weeks. A local garden centre has donated plants and shrubs to the school for the Reception children's adventure playground, which itself was donated and constructed by a local building firm with the help of parents. Local businesses make donations to the annual May Fair to raise money for the school and the Parent Association has supplied physical education equipment. The Kent Environmental Consultancy has helped the school to develop a pond for use by all age groups of pupils and children.
34. There are sound, constructive relationships with partner institutions. Pupils from the school go on to more than six secondary schools and liaison between them and the school is satisfactory. Secondary school teachers make visits before Year 6 pupils leave and pupils visit their respective schools at the end of the summer term. Teaching students from several training establishments are welcomed to the school and work well assisting teachers in classrooms.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school continues to make good provision for the care of its pupils. They make good progress in a safe, caring, orderly, happy atmosphere where the clear and positive aims are to promote the social, emotional and personal development of each child. Teachers know the children and their families well. There is good rapport and an open door policy, which give parents confidence to approach staff with any problems. At playtimes and lunchtimes, pupils are supervised well.
36. The procedures for promoting behaviour and discipline are very good. The behaviour policy clearly outlines the school's high expectations, which are shared with parents in the school prospectus and through the home school agreement. The pupils participate in drawing up the playground code. Although there are very few bullying incidents, any that occur are dealt with immediately. No inappropriate behaviour was seen during the inspection.
37. The policy for child protection contains good information and follows local authority guidelines. The headteacher has responsibility for child protection and has received appropriate training. Staff are aware of the procedures and the need for vigilance.
38. The procedures for encouraging regular attendance and punctuality are good and work well and registers are completed according to statutory requirements. Parents are aware of the need to inform the school of absences and the school telephones to check on absentees if no message has been received. Parents understand the school's expectations and respond appropriately.

39. The procedures for promoting the health, safety and well being of the pupils are good. The health and safety policy is clearly laid out, and procedures are in place for recording and reporting accidents. Staff are trained in the provision of first aid. However, there is no medical room or quiet area, and pupils have to be cared for in the school office. The governors carry out rigorous and regular risk assessments, and there are regular safety checks on equipment, such as fire extinguishers and electrical appliances, with fire drills at least once each term.
40. Procedures for introducing children to the Reception class are good. Most children come from the private nursery on-site and are very familiar with the school. There are meetings and visits and each parent is given a folder with useful information. Children settle in very quickly and are happy. There are good links to secondary schools, including meetings, visits and the passing on of curricular and other information.
41. The monitoring and support of pupils' academic performance and personal development are satisfactory. The school's assessment and record keeping policy gives a clear breakdown of the assessments used and a timetable for these throughout the year. Very soon after children enter the school at the Foundation Stage, they are assessed using the Local Education Authority's procedures designed for this age range of children. The information from this is used to predict the expected level pupils are likely to achieve by the end of Year 2. In the intervening period between the national tests in Year 2 and Year 6, the school uses optional tests for Years 3, 4 and 5, similar to the national tests at the end of Year 6. These tests however, were only introduced last year and the school is at an early stage of analysing the pupils' performance against available national data. Other standardised tests in English and mathematics are used to track pupils' progress. The results of all these tests are now being used to set group and individual targets for future learning and to forecast the level pupils are expected to achieve the following year. The school is beginning to look carefully at all this information and use it to identify weak areas in pupils' learning. This is aimed at tackling the underachievement of pupils in English and mathematics. Teachers review samples of pupils' work in English to reach common agreement on the levels achieved. However, there is no collection of work to provide an evidence base for teachers to refer to. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work at the end of lessons by teachers asking them to consider whether they have achieved the lesson's learning intention.
42. The school has recently adopted national guidelines for most subjects of the National Curriculum and is beginning to use the examples provided to assess the attainment of different groups of pupils. However, these procedures are new to the school and have been monitored for success. To assist staff in tracking each individual pupil's progress, all relevant information, such as test scores over time, any significant observations made under subject headings and notes on personal development are kept and passed on from teacher to teacher. A good initiative is the involvement of parents in agreeing specific targets, which their child should work towards. For pupils with special educational needs, there are clear and consistent procedures for identifying their needs and recording their progress and appropriate targets in their individual educational plans. The school is now modifying its procedures to meet the requirements of the revised Code of Practice for special educational needs. Although there are now many good structures in place, these are not firmly embedded in practice to provide the school with a cohesive approach to assessment.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. At the previous inspection, links and partnership with parents were good; they are now very good. The school works hard and very successfully to ensure that parents feel welcome in school and are actively involved in their children's learning. Many parents are regular helpers in school and many more give very good support to the Parent Teacher Association's events. Parents appreciate the dedication and commitment of the staff and praise the very good

relationships within the school. They say that they are made welcome, that the headteacher and staff are very approachable, and that their contributions are valued.

44. There is good information in the school prospectus, and a home school agreement encourages parents to support their children and emphasises the partnership between children, parents and the school. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are appropriately involved in target setting and reviewing their children's progress. Parents are actively and successfully involved in their children's learning at home. In the questionnaire returns, around 20 per cent of parents expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of homework. Some felt that there was too little and others that it was not consistent, but the inspection team considers that homework is appropriate, and supports pupils' learning.
45. Discussions with parents, parents' questionnaires and the letters received by the team were all positive and appreciative of the work that the school does. While a few parents felt that there was less information than formerly, the inspection team considers that the range and quality of information provided for parents is good. There is a weekly newsletter. There are two parents' evenings a year, and information on topics and other curriculum areas is sent out. Annual reports meet statutory requirements and there is provision for parents to comment. Around 15 per cent of parents responding to the questionnaire would like more information on the progress their children are making. However, inspectors consider reports to be of good quality and suitably detailed.
46. The school prospectus and the governors' Annual Report to parents contain good information. They are clear and informative and meet statutory requirements. There is an excellent range of after school activities and parents are happy with these. Parents who are governors are well informed and understand their role. They support the work of the school well. The Parent Teacher Association is very well supported. It is very successful and raises large sums of money, which are used very well to supplement the school's resources.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The school is very well led. The headteacher provides strong leadership and has worked hard and successfully since her appointment to address the causes of underachievement. The headteacher and senior staff form a good team and provide clear direction to the work of the school. They are well supported by the governing body, and have the confidence of the parents.
48. There are effective systems for monitoring the performance of the school through analysing test results and acting on the information that these provide to improve the curriculum. The careful analysis of results has identified strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, for example, the underachievement of boys, and action has been taken to remedy them. The monitoring of teaching, and the better match between teachers' strengths and particular year groups have brought about significant improvements. These are now beginning to have an impact on raising standards.
49. Development planning, mostly done by the headteacher, with support from senior staff and co-ordinators, is good, is closely linked to the budget and addresses the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. Subject co-ordinators are approaching their role much more actively and systematically, and have produced good curricular plans containing details of what is to be taught at each age, making sure that the needs of pupils in mixed age classes are met. The role of co-ordinators in monitoring the progress of their subject is still being developed and for many, there has not been sufficient monitoring of standards or of quality of teaching and learning. This is one of the reasons for the weaknesses in the development of literacy and numeracy in particular, and the low standards in English and mathematics over the past two

years. However, for some subjects, this now forms part of the school's improvement plan for the coming year.

50. The governing body has an appropriate committee structure and meets all of the statutory requirements placed upon it, for example, the curriculum, acts of worship and for pupils with special educational needs. Governors are better informed, are now asking pertinent questions about the work of the school and are developing an understanding of the standards achieved. Governors are regular visitors to school, and many help in classrooms. Whilst this provides a good level of involvement, some of the contacts are too informal, and there is no clear or systematic way of recording the outcomes of their visits or reporting back on the information gained. This does not give the governing body all the information they need to have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, for example, pupils' progress. Some of the roles delegated to individual governors do potentially cause some conflicts of interest. However, governors are now much more active in debating issues around school development, although still rely heavily on the work of the headteacher to provide the direction for the school improvement plan.
51. There have been financial difficulties over the last two years, which were only identified by the current headteacher following her appointment. The governing body did not have any effective systems in place at the time that would enable them to recognise the possible outcomes of the decisions made. With her involvement, these are now being addressed, and whilst the budget remains tight, prudent management has put the school on a much more secure financial footing. The budget is well managed and the governing body now has good quality information on which to base its decisions. The best value is sought where possible when major spending decisions are made. However, governors do not compare the performance of the school against schools in similar circumstances to judge its overall effectiveness. Grants for specific purposes such as special educational needs are used appropriately.
52. There is an appropriate mixture of experienced and more recently qualified teachers who are well deployed and provide a good balance of curricular strengths. More recent appointments have brought great expertise, for example, to literacy. Teachers newly appointed to the school are well supported, and there is a suitable performance management policy to appraise the work of all teachers. The management and administration of special educational needs are done well. The work of classroom support staff is effective and is carefully targeted.
53. The accommodation is unsatisfactory for teaching all National Curriculum subjects. Most classrooms are small and lack facilities such as water. This makes effective teaching of subjects such as art and design and technology much more difficult. Only the Year 2 classroom and the more recently built 'early years' unit, with its good outdoor area, provide suitable accommodation. The current library is small and provides only limited opportunity for personal research by pupils. Plans are in hand to improve this and the provision for teaching information and communication technology. However, teachers display pupils' work to full advantage, brightening up otherwise dull areas. Questions and explanatory statements enhance the best displays. Resources for most subjects are satisfactory, and for English, music and physical education, they are good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. In order to improve the school further, and raise standards to a higher level, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) **improve standards of attainment and pupils' achievements in English, mathematics and science, particularly for pupils in Year 6;***
(Paragraphs 1, 3, 65, 77, 84)
- (2) **increase the effectiveness of the governing body by:**
 - improving its understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses;
 - having a more effective system for governors to report back on their work in school; and
 - improving its strategic involvement in long-term development and financial planning;(paragraph 50, 51)
- (3) **strengthen the monitoring role of the co-ordinators in evaluating teaching and learning;***
(paragraph 49, 82, 97, 102, 107, 123)
- (4) **improve the quality of teachers' marking to give greater consistency throughout the school by:***
 - clearly identifying what pupils need to do to improve their work; and
 - set short-term targets for improvement.(paragraph 20, 74)

* The school has already identified these issues in its improvement plan and has put measures in place aimed at addressing these weaknesses.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	31
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	15	9	5	0	0	0
Percentage	6.5	48.4	29	16.1	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	136
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	26

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.9
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	9	9

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (76)	100 (82)	100 (94)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (76)	100 (94)	100 (91)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	13	6

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (79)	68 (86)	89 (86)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (79)	94 (86)	100 (86)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Because of the small group size, only the overall percentage of boys and girls attaining at each level is shown.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	0
White	120
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.48
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.2
Average class size	27.2

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	123

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	305,221
Total expenditure	295,282
Expenditure per pupil	2,065
Balance brought forward from previous year	1,439
Balance carried forward to next year	11,378

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	136
Number of questionnaires returned	70

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	22	7	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	40	3	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	34	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	43	19	0	5
The teaching is good.	55	41	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	48	10	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	24	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	43	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	43	52	3	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	36	45	4	7	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	36	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	53	33	7	2	5

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

55. At the time of the inspection, the 14 children in the Reception class, all of whom are full time, are taught for part of the day with pupils from Year 1 and Year 2. This will change in January when the next intake of 12 children will be admitted into the Reception class and Year 1 will then form a separate class. Most children attend the adjoining nursery school before starting in the Reception class. Most children enter the school with above average levels of attainment. Little judgement was made on provision for the children under five in the previous inspection in 1997, but by the time they were five years old, attainment was judged to be satisfactory. The judgement of this inspection is that nearly all children are on course to achieve expected standards in all six areas of learning before they leave the Foundation Stage. This finding represents an improvement on the last inspection even though children enter school with above average attainment. This section of the report relates to children in the Reception class who are in their final Foundation Stage year.
56. The class teacher and part time learning support assistant are very experienced and well qualified. Both have a very good knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children. The local education authority has designated the school as an example of good practice for Early Years education. In conjunction with the senior management team, staff have worked hard to produce long, medium and short term curricular plans that are in line with the new national recommendations for the very youngest children: the Early Learning Goals. The children have a very safe and secure environment both indoors and outdoors including a large classroom and a large, enclosed paved area with direct access to their classroom. This includes an adventure play area that is used well for outdoor activities, for example, large wheeled toys such as tricycles and scooters and for other activities throughout the year. The school hall is also used for their physical development lessons.
57. Learning resources are generally good and are well used by children and staff. The teacher and support assistant work well together, planning, assessing and recording and ensuring that all children receive a well planned, safe, happy and appropriate start to their school life. Teaching is judged to be very good, overall, with one example of excellent teaching. Day-to-day liaison with parents is very good and a weekly newsletter keeps parents informed of their child's progress. There are good induction procedures before children attend school. Liaison is good between the private nursery on the school site and the school. Some children from the nursery unit come into the school to use the outdoor play activities provided for Reception children.

Personal and social development

58. Teaching, overall, in this area of learning is excellent. The national guidelines for the teaching of the very youngest children have been introduced very well both in planning and in everyday classroom practice. All staff act as very good role models and expect high standards of behaviour and this results in a very, quiet working atmosphere in all activity areas. The effect of this can be seen in children's very good behaviour. All available space both in and out of the classrooms is used to organise a broad and stimulating range of activities that develop very good progress in children's personal and social development. All children make very good progress in this area of development and are on course to exceed the expected standards by the end of the Reception year. The children show a developing confidence in choosing and trying new activities and very good ability to initiate simple ideas, especially in their role-play in the shop or building site activity areas. All children concentrate on their lessons and activities extremely well and sit quietly and listen to their teacher when required. This is especially noticeable when they are listening to a story or singing and chanting rhymes. They are also well prepared to take their turn before talking or answering a question and most listen very

attentively to their classmates without interruption. All children, including those with special educational needs, are beginning to form very good, trusting relationships with adults and their peers. They are already able to work as part of a group or a whole class, sharing fairly and they understand the need for a code of good behaviour to enable them to work harmoniously. They understand the classroom rules and behave accordingly. When required to leave the classrooms and move around the school, they act sensibly and quietly, showing good awareness of pupils working in other classrooms. Nearly all children are prepared to speak out confidently in large or small discussion groups especially in the literacy and numeracy sessions with their Year 1 classmates.

Language and literacy

59. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and children are constantly encouraged by the questions asked, and the positive responses they receive. Children talk about their experiences and express their thoughts very well to convey meaning. This is particularly noticeable when the staff take part in activities that children have initiated. Literacy work is appropriately structured with a shortened form of the literacy hour being used. The introductory session is organised so that both Reception and Year 1 classes participate. This system has the effect of raising standards for the Reception children and increasing their awareness of literacy skills. The teacher captured children's interest at the beginning of a lesson by showing them a new 'big book' about snails still contained in its clear plastic wrapper and saying, *'We can only look at the front and back of the book at the moment because I've been told not to take it out of its wrapper until tomorrow'*. The title and author of the book were discussed and the class were left eagerly waiting for the next day for the contents of the book to be revealed.
60. There is a wide range of activities to develop phonic awareness including writing skills and imaginative role-play in the shop and building site areas. Writing skills are introduced and encouraged by children writing lists for shopping or building materials. One child's list for the building site contained an order for wood, nails and milk for their tea! Children concentrate very well when listening to stories or rhymes, or to the teacher's instructions at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. Stories are used appropriately during the literacy time and at the end of the morning and afternoon sessions to develop the children's awareness of, and interest in, print. Staff share books with individuals or small groups to encourage children to enjoy books and handle them carefully. Most children can read and a few can read independently. They can all recognise their names, for example, when they identify their name pegs to pin on their chosen activities and most are able to write their names. Children make good progress in this area of learning and the present standards attained indicate that the vast majority of children are on course to exceed the standards, in all aspects of language and literacy, before they leave the Reception class.

Mathematical Development

61. The quality of teaching and learning is also very good in this area of learning and children make good progress due to the organisation and management of mathematical sessions. All children have the opportunity to practise 'hands on' what they have learnt in whole class or group lessons. Learning resources are organised well to give all children the opportunity to participate in the various planned activities relating to mathematics, including sand and water. All Reception children are involved in the mental work in the first part of numeracy sessions along with the Year 1 pupils. This encourages the development of their early mental abilities. Children are encouraged to talk about and explain their work, for example, in their work on sequencing. This lesson was planned very well with children singing well-known nursery rhymes like 'Humpty Dumpty', and 'The Grand Old Duke of York'. The teacher then asked questions to introduce the concept of ordering and sequencing, *'What happened to Humpty Dumpty before he fell off the wall and after he fell off the wall?'* Resources were also used very well during the main lesson activity by using a clothesline and pegs for children to peg up

story cards showing the sequence of events. The teacher took the opportunity during this activity to introduce the terms, 'before' and 'after' thus developing the children's mathematical vocabulary. Children are able to sequence and count using everyday objects like cards and pictures. They know the days of the week and the seasons of the year, and can use their knowledge and understanding of sequencing to place them in the correct order. All can recognise and use numbers to ten, and most can count to 20, and use this knowledge well during activities in their role-play areas. Nearly all children are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals in mathematical development by the end of the Reception year.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

62. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Nearly all children have a good knowledge and understanding of many aspects of this area of learning from their home environment, and staff use this to further children's progress and achievement during the Reception year. Children are provided with a range of opportunities to explore their school and local environment. The pond adjoining the outside play area gives children a good opportunity to observe changes in their environment during the different seasons of the year. Planned walks have also been arranged for children to observe changes specifically in the autumn. They have visited the seaside at Bexhill and are beginning to appreciate and describe localities that are different from their own. A wide selection of objects, materials and equipment were provided for children to use and handle in their everyday activities, including computers. In their work on computers, most children are able to switch on the computer, use the 'mouse' for the activity, print the finished work and close down independently. The recent development of the adventure play area outside the Reception classroom gave children the opportunity to observe a building project and to talk about it. In their role play sessions in the classroom 'building site', they use the building techniques observed in their play, wearing hard hats and using large wooden building blocks, toy drills and sanders. Present standards indicate that nearly all children are on course to exceed the recommended targets in this area of learning before they leave the Reception class.

Physical development

63. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and appropriate use is made of the available resources, equipment and materials. Children are managed very well when using tools and equipment and staff show a good awareness of health and safety factors when the class is performing any physical activity. During a physical development lesson in the hall, nearly all children changed quietly and quickly and showed very good consideration for other classes working. The teacher used physical education equipment to perform a lively 'warm up', where children had to convert the coloured cones to hats or cups. In the main activity, children practised their running, hopping and jumping skills. The control and co-ordination of the Reception children compared very favourably with their Year 1 classmates. Children were given the opportunity to watch others and comment on their performance, for example, when the teacher asked questions such as; *'What was the difference between the two jumps, which one did you like better and why?'* The 'cool down' session was used very well to develop children's control by the class lying on their backs. They then had to *'draw a picture on the ceiling with one extended leg'*, then *'write their name on the ceiling with one arm'*. All staff teach, support and work with children to help them gain confidence in using the space and equipment imaginatively and safely. Children of all abilities develop their physical skills very well through using the outside activity area. They ride tricycles and other large wheeled toys, steering them confidently around markers and obstacles. Children's skill in using pencils, crayons, paintbrushes and simple tools like scissors is developing well. All children are able to find and put on their coats for playtime and going home, most change quickly and sensibly when changing for physical development lessons with the minimum of help. They can also manage their own personal hygiene like, washing their hands after visiting the toilet, without being reminded. Very good teaching and the appropriate use of the many resources both in and

outdoors are on course to enable all children to exceed the national standard before they enter Year 1.

Creative development

64. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and the many activities for this area of learning are well resourced and organised to ensure that children of all abilities have the opportunity to take part in creative work. Staff give good demonstrations of the required activities before the children commence their tasks, without being too prescriptive. All children make good progress in developing their creative skills and most are on course to exceed the recommended level before the end of the Reception year. This is due to good use of plentiful resources and opportunities for independent work, for example, in their use of dough to make snails, and the plentiful supply of large and small construction kits. Children all enjoy learning and singing new songs and take part in the role-play associated with building and shopping. Nearly all show the ability to initiate and use role-play to stimulate their imaginations both in their classroom and in the outside activity area. There are good examples of the children using paintings to express their own ideas in the colourful displays of work in the classroom. They have also explored texture, shape and form in using different materials and paints in their artwork connected to their lessons about autumn and snails. The teacher's very calm, quiet manner produces a good atmosphere for learning and developing all children's creative development.

ENGLISH

65. Standards are average in Year 6, which represents a decline since the last inspection. However, the findings of this inspection differ considerably from the results of the 2001 national tests where standards were well below the national average and very low when compared to similar schools. Past results also show that boys do less well than girls, although this difference was not apparent during the inspection. The trend over the last five years has been erratic but, over the last two years, standards have fallen significantly. However, the number of pupils taking the tests is small and this itself can lead to considerable variation from year to year. From their high levels at the end of Year 2, pupils have made unsatisfactory progress and are underachieving. However, the recently appointed English co-ordinator has introduced effective measures aimed at improving standards and providing a clearer focus for teaching the National Literacy Strategy. These are based on an audit of literacy needs and are aimed at addressing underachievement, particularly in writing for pupils in Years 3 to 6. An improved approach to guided reading and the introduction of group targets for pupils have been well received by staff. All of these have resulted in better teaching, more effective use of assessment information and improved progress. On the basis of this, the school has set more challenging targets for 84 per cent of the current group of pupils in Year 6 to reach average standards.
66. Pupils in Year 2 achieve well and attain above average standards in all areas of English. Pupils with special educational needs achieve good standards compared with their previous attainment as the result of their progress being regularly reviewed and well planned and effective support in class. The higher attaining pupils benefit from the teacher's high expectations of them, which results in them reaching higher standards than those reflected in the 2001 national tests.
67. Standards in speaking and listening throughout the school are above average. Pupils enter the school with good levels of spoken language and enjoy listening to, and talking about, stories, rhymes and poems. This was evident when Year 2 pupils put forward ideas for their poems with a great sense of pleasure and humour. All pupils listened very attentively to the teacher and to each other's contributions. As they progress through the school, pupils continue to listen attentively, respond thoughtfully and show respect for the opinions of others. Many of the pupils are able to express their ideas and opinions confidently and fluently, often developing depth and detail in their answers. Pupils in the Year 5/6 class contributed very well to a debate

on whether enough had been done to restrict the speed of traffic outside the school. All pupils listened well to the views put forward, and many were able to express their own views thoughtfully using the formal vocabulary required in a debate.

68. In Year 2, standards in reading are above average. Pupils have an obvious enjoyment of books, handle them confidently and take them home regularly to practise their skills. More able pupils read fluently and are able to talk about the books they read with a good understanding of the content. Average and lower attaining pupils read accurately at their level and employ a number of strategies to tackle unfamiliar words. All pupils know which books they like to read and some name their favourite authors. Pupils' interest in books develops well. In Year 6, standards overall in reading are average. Pupils read suitable books for their age and maturity with a good understanding, are familiar with the work of authors, such as J.K. Rowling, Lewis Carroll and Roald Dahl, and are able to comment on features of their style. Higher attaining pupils read a wide selection of challenging texts and are becoming increasingly confident at selecting essential points and using them to gain information for their writing. Research and reference skills are appropriately developed and most pupils are familiar with the Dewey system of book classification. However, there are still a high percentage of pupils in Year 6 who read accurately but need the extra support provided to help them reach the higher levels in reading.
69. Standards in writing are above average in Year 2. Most pupils write in a variety of forms and for an appropriate range of purposes through simple stories, personal experiences, instructions and poems. They write independently, order their ideas and show an understanding of sentence structure. Higher attaining pupils use a wide vocabulary and make good use of language to link different parts of text, such as 'before that' and 'meanwhile'. Common words are usually spelt correctly and many pupils use punctuation accurately. In the best work, pupils show an understanding of the use of question marks and exclamation marks in their writing. Pupils are developing an appropriate joined style of handwriting.
70. In Year 6, standards in writing are average. However, there is evidence of good quality writing from some higher attaining pupils who show a growing confidence in using an increasingly adventurous choice of words. For example, when writing about the character of Alice after reading the story 'Alice in Wonderland', a pupil wrote, '*Alice is inquisitive...although wise and sensible she is inspired by what she reads*'. The basic grammatical structure of sentences is usually correct but very few are using paragraphs appropriately and consistently in their writing. Lower attaining pupils use mainly familiar vocabulary, write simple sentences and find it difficult to develop their ideas in sufficient depth and detail. Writing journals have been introduced recently to enable pupils to develop their ideas freely and draft, edit and refine their written work before presenting a final copy. Standards of presentation are beginning to improve for these older pupils with the introduction of the new handwriting scheme, thus addressing one of the areas for development from the previous inspection.
71. Throughout the school, standards in literacy across the curriculum are satisfactory and reflect those found in English. There are many productive links with other subjects. For example, history and science provide opportunities for pupils to extend their range of writing. There was little evidence that pupils use information and communication technology to write at length through drafting and editing their work.
72. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good with examples of very good and excellent teaching in Year 2 and Year 6. The very good relationships between pupils and adults in the classroom create a positive atmosphere for learning and give pupils the confidence to develop their skills and understanding. Teachers' good subject knowledge is evident in their clear presentations. Pupils are given a clear understanding of what they are expected to learn and most lessons have a brisk, purposeful pace. Teachers use a range of strategies to reinforce learning, for example, giving pupils the opportunity to exchange ideas with a friend before

voicing their thoughts to the class thereby enabling all pupils to participate in class discussions with confidence. This was used effectively in a Year 2 lesson, in which the teacher skilfully used the structure of the poem 'Morning' by Grace Nichols as the stimulus for pupils to write their own poems. After sharing their ideas with a partner and the class, all pupils confidently used a similar structure when writing their own poems. Using humour to write lines such as, '*Morning comes with breakfast crackling*' and '*Morning comes with my mum yawning*'.

73. Strengths of the teaching and its impact on learning were well illustrated in an excellent literacy lesson in Year 5/6, in which the teacher used an extract from the life of Roald Dahl to develop the pupils' understanding of biographical and autobiographical writing. The teacher's enthusiasm for the subject motivated the pupils to learn. Through perceptive questioning, the teacher enabled them all to explore the text and extract the information in preparation for writing Roald Dahl's obituary. The brisk pace and the teacher's high expectations ensured that pupils' made extremely good gains in their understanding of autobiographical and biographical writing.
74. Where there are weaknesses, these are because learning objectives and assessment criteria are not clear and the tasks provided for group activities are limited. For example, pupils have similar worksheets with the expectation that the more able pupils will produce more work than others do. This is insufficiently challenging. The quality of marking is also variable and although pupils are given good recognition for their achievements, too little indicates to them how they can improve their work.
75. Homework is used appropriately to support reading and spelling across both key stages and, at times is used to reinforce the work covered in class.
76. Although resources are generally good and most classes have an appropriate range of fiction books, the selection of non-fiction books is limited. The library area is small and open to the main corridor and is not conducive for pupils to browse quietly or to use it for personal research. English makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development through the opportunity to work together and through reading a range of traditional tales, poems and stories from other cultures. This is enhanced by events such as visits by storytellers, drama groups and a poetry week that ended in pupils giving a performance of their own poems to parents.

MATHEMATICS

77. Current standards in Year 6 are average. This is below the standards found in the previous inspection. There has been a steady downward trend in standards over the last four years. During this period also, girls have consistently outperformed boys and this difference in gender performance has been recognised by the school. Progress and achievement for pupils in Year 6 are still unsatisfactory, as the teacher works to address gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, pupils with special educational needs are making good progress with the support they receive. Furthermore, there are definite signs of improving standards, due to very good teaching in the Year 5/6 class, which motivates pupils, and more effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy in all Year 3 to 6 classes. Challenging performance targets have been set to raise the standards of mathematics in Year 6, and with the very good teaching seen, the use of booster classes and the introduction of a mathematics group for higher ability pupils, these are on course to be achieved.
78. There are strengths in pupils' achievement in Year 6. For example, they are beginning to develop a sound ability to use inverse operations to check the reasonableness of their answers. Pupils are also able to reduce fractions to their lowest term and can convert improper fractions

to mixed fractions. This is at a higher level than expected for pupils of this age. Some pupils are weaker when it comes to explaining the different mental strategies they use.

79. Pupils in Year 2 attain above average standards in all areas of mathematics, although this is below the standards shown in the latest national tests, where pupils' attainment was very high. However, it is early in the academic year and pupils are making good progress. Results over the last four years indicate an upward trend with girls attaining at a higher level than boys. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well. Pupils know about and understand time and are able to read analogue and digital clocks accurately. Most pupils can also count on or back in tens starting from a two-digit number and can count to a 100. They use their knowledge and understanding of the place value of tens and units to add and subtract two-digit numbers. All of this is at a higher level than is usually found for pupils of this age. A comparative weakness is their development of using and discussing their methods of quick working in their mental work.
80. At Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching and learning is, overall, good. A very good lesson in Year 1 on sequencing was related effectively to a literacy lesson by the teacher reading a book concerning the food eaten on certain days. The teacher used the opportunity to introduce the terms, 'before' and 'after' by asking, for example, "*What day comes before Friday?*" and "*What day is after Monday?*" The pace and challenge of the lesson ensured very good understanding of the sequencing of numbers, days of the week and seasons. Resources were used very well to interest and motivate the pupils by carrying out sequencing exercises at the front of the class. Classroom support is also used well to help a group of pupils with special educational needs. In Year 2, planning is of a very high quality, and contains clear lesson objectives. In a lesson on telling the time, the teacher checked pupils' understanding well by asking specific questions about time like, "*How else can we say 11:30?*" Good use was made of analogue and digital clocks and an imitation post box to illustrate times. This linked well to pupils' everyday life by using post box collection times and 'letters' with times written on them. A scrutiny of past work indicates some over-use of worksheets to the detriment of pupils' own presentational skills. However, all the relevant aspects are covered and appropriately differentiated work is evident.
81. The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall with an example of very good teaching in the Year 5/6 class. Pupils are grouped by attainment, and in the top set of Year 5/6 the initial mental session had very good pace and challenge. The teacher asked quick-fire questions on rounding numbers up and down, and pupils held up white boards to show their answers. The teacher shared the lesson objectives for the main activity with the class and ascertained pupils' previous knowledge by asking, "*What methods could we use to solve this problem?*" However, the opportunity to include a range of mental strategies into the question was missed. A regular feature of the good teaching is the way pupils are given short periods to discuss questions with a partner before returning to a whole class session thus encouraging co-operation as well as independent learning. The main strength in teaching is the way teachers use the format of the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers' planning is good and contains differentiated tasks in line with most pupils' abilities, and assessment opportunities. Pupils are organised and managed well during the lessons to ensure good concentration and satisfactory progress. Weaknesses from both an analysis of previous work and lesson observations include a lack of pace and challenge in some lessons. Pupils' work is sometimes not completed and presentation of work in pupils' books is untidy especially the younger pupils in Year 3/4.
82. The subject is managed satisfactorily but as a part-time teacher, the co-ordinator has insufficient time to monitor the development of the subject effectively, especially the quality of teaching. Not enough improvement has been made since the previous inspection, particularly for pupils in Years 3 to 6. A comprehensive scheme of work is in place for both key stages and the subject policy has recently been updated. Tracking documents have been developed to

chart pupils' progress in mathematics through the school. An action plan has been produced aimed at raising standards. The school has identified the difference in performance between girls and boys and is taking steps to remedy this situation. Learning resources are satisfactory, are well used and are appropriately situated in classrooms to raise standards in the subject.

83. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has had the effect of giving teachers more confidence. However, whilst there is now greater emphasis on investigative mathematics, not enough use is made of a range of mental strategies to improve pupils' skills. Numeracy is used soundly across other areas of the curriculum including geography, science, and information and communication technology in all classes and includes charts, graphs and other data collection work. Pupils of all age groups are developing good computer skills to compile and illustrate this data.

SCIENCE

84. Although there is still some underachievement, pupils' attainment in Year 6 is average, but below the standards reported in the previous inspection. Improvements throughout the school to planning and the clear focus on teaching investigative science as well as subject knowledge have resulted in all pupils making good progress. The attainment of pupils in Year 2 is well above average in both their subject knowledge and in their understanding of experimental science, and has improved since the previous inspection.
85. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Learning objectives for each lesson are well thought out and provide a suitable basis for assessment. Teachers have good subject knowledge, use technical vocabulary well, and ask probing questions that require pupils to think hard about what they are seeing. In a practical investigation into the structure of paper, pupils in the Year 3/4 class offered a good range of possible approaches and two pupils particularly gifted in science made very good suggestions for a number of approaches to ensure that tests were fair. The regular use of investigative work provides many opportunities for pupils to plan and record in a variety of ways, whilst appropriate support is given to lower attaining pupils through the use of prompt sheets. However, not all recording is of a high enough standard, and for some pupils, including higher attainers, the layout of diagrams and tables, in particular, is not good enough, for example, the recording of food chains.
86. Lessons have a brisk pace, such as in Year 4/5, where pupils investigated the evaporation of liquids into gases. A demonstration using pupils to play the part of molecules in solids, liquids and gases and showing how they link together, made the point very well and aided pupils' understanding. In the carousel of group activities following this, each investigation was carefully managed, ensuring just enough time for pupils to complete the tasks. Similar strategies were used in the Year 5/6 lesson. In both these classes, and in other lessons, teachers used paired discussions between pupils during the introduction very effectively, allowing them time to compare ideas and come up with suggestions or comments. This encourages good co-operation between pupils, allows the sharing of ideas and uses pupils' high level of speaking and listening skills to good effect. Pupils' good social skills are used well during group work and teachers make effective use of learning support assistants and volunteers at these times. Pupils attained good standards both in their subject knowledge and their understanding of scientific investigation.
87. For pupils in Year 2, an investigation into colour, using a simple form of 'chromatography' (a technique to separate mixed colours into their component parts), was done well. The discussion between pupils about the experiment was of a high standard. They shared materials well and recorded the outcomes carefully. The quality of their predications reflected their experience in scientific investigations and their level of knowledge and understanding was above that expected for pupils of this age.

88. The co-ordinator has not been in post for long, but has already made significant improvements to the way the subject is managed. The recently purchased commercial scheme and the revised scheme of work following national guidelines, gives clear guidance for teachers in mixed age classes and provides good coverage of all attainment targets over time. Not enough use is currently made of information and communication technology to support the teaching and recording of the pupils' scientific work. The evaluation of previous test papers has identified areas for development, including raising the attainment of girls, and has provided the focus for future development. Considering the limitations of the classrooms for practical activities, teachers do well to provide such a range.

ART AND DESIGN

89. As it was only possible to observe one lesson in art and design, judgements are based on an analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning throughout the school. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress, and standards are average by the age of seven and 11. The work on display and examples of previously completed work show the broad range of experiences planned for pupils.
90. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is satisfactory. Pupils get off to a good start in Year 1, where there are well-planned opportunities for them to draw, paint, print, make collages and work with a variety of different materials. A good example of this is seen in a very realistic looking three-dimensional 'fossil' wall picture using play dough, tissue paper, glue, sand and paint. Basic skills, such as drawing techniques and colour mixing are taught well. In Year 2, effective links are made with other subjects, for example, history, where pupils used a variety of media, such as straws, wallpaper and paint to produce a picture of the 'Great Fire of London'. Pupils' skills in drawing, painting and collage are satisfactory but show little individual flair.
91. Across Years 3 to 6, pupils experience a range of skills and have, for example, produced pastel pictures of flowers, using smudging and shading techniques successfully to achieve good results. In the Year 3/4 class, where pupils have studied the work of Monet, their work in pastels and paint demonstrate a suitable understanding of how the artist used colour to show the effect of light and dark. Pupils in the Year 4/5 class using pencils, pastels and paint skilfully matched half of a photograph to produce good 'symmetry' pictures of animals. In the lesson observed on self-portraits, clear explanations by the teacher, meant that pupils knew exactly what was expected of them, and the teacher's demonstration of drawing techniques helped pupils to develop their skills. The lesson was well prepared, the teacher having previously taken individual photographs of the pupils to provide them with a starting point to develop their ideas. They used pastels well to smudge and blend colours to create different tones of skin and hair. However, the range of sketching pencils available did not allow pupils to fully develop their drawing skills. All pupils were engrossed in the activity and the teacher used their work productively to compare the methods and approaches they had used. As a result, pupils tried hard, developed their skills and produced self-portraits with greater attention to detail.
92. Sketchbooks are used appropriately to allow pupils to explore the use of colours and develop their ideas. However, few pupils showed fine detail in their observational work. The range of work in three dimensions is appropriately developed. Photographs show pupils have made ceramic African masks, and pupils in Year 5/6 used the pure clay they dug out of the ground when on a residential trip, to make models of animals they saw in the woodland. Work relating to fabric was less evident but it is planned for and closely relates to work in design and technology.
93. The co-ordinator provides good leadership in the subject, producing a helpful policy and scheme for each class that provides a good structure to the progressive development of pupils' skills. This is currently being reviewed to incorporate national guidelines. This is an

improvement since the previous inspection. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and although teachers keep photographs and samples of pupils' artwork, there is no whole school portfolio to show the full range of work covered. Teachers make use of information and communication technology programs for drawing, and the school has an art gallery page on its web site. Pupils' learning is also enhanced by visits to places such as the National Gallery. The good displays around the school reflect the value placed on pupils' artwork. Resources are generally adequate but classrooms for the pupils in Years 3 to 6 are cramped and do not have a water supply. Teachers have to plan carefully to overcome these limitations.

DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY

94. It was not possible to observe design and technology being taught because of timetable arrangements. However, there is evidence from work undertaken before the inspection, and some photographic records. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 indicated that they have sound knowledge of design and technology and are making satisfactory progress, including those with special educational needs. This is not quite as good as the judgement of the previous inspection. However, at that time, there was specialist teaching for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Currently, pupils are good at designing their models and in writing evaluations of them when finished. The main area of weakness is in the limited range of experiences available to them. For example, although they work well in card and paper, they have little experience of working in more resistant materials such as wood or plastic. Consequently, their knowledge of cutting and joining in various ways to suit the material is limited.
95. Pupils are enthusiastic, and take great pride in showing and explaining their latest work: picture frame constructions. This was the theme for all pupils from Year 3 to Year 6. In all classes these were planned well, carefully constructed with a range of finishes, and suitably evaluated. Pupils were also complimentary about the work of others and could recognise where classmates had worked hard to produce a good finished product.
96. Although no teaching was seen, it is clear from the finished work and teachers' planning, that teaching is satisfactory and that the subject is given full consideration throughout the school. Teachers give appropriate weight to all of the aspects of design and technology, and are keen to see pupils discuss and evaluate their work. Classrooms and corridors have well labelled displays of pupils' work showing the various stages from design to evaluation. Teachers do make suitable links between design and technology and other subjects. For example, work in food technology is linked well to other work in science on topics such as healthy eating, and the carefully constructed clay models on display are made from clay dug out by pupils during a visit to an outdoor study centre. Information and communication technology is used in a design package to produce a new classroom layout.
97. The co-ordinator manages the subject appropriately, although there is little opportunity for detailed evaluation of teaching and learning. The photographic record is useful, but lacks the organisation to show development as pupils move through the school. The scheme of work, based on national guidelines, provides appropriate coverage of topics, but the range of approaches used is limited. Resources, while satisfactory, do not provide pupils with enough equipment to experience a wide enough range of cutting, drilling or joining techniques. The accommodation is also a limiting factor with little space in classrooms to work, store part-finished models or display finished work to best effect.

GEOGRAPHY

98. Standards in Year 6 continue to be average for pupils at the ages of seven and 11. Pupils of all abilities, including special educational needs, make satisfactory progress and their achievement is sound. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls. Because of

the timetable, little teaching was observed and the judgement is formed by an observation of a geography lesson in Years 5/6 and a thorough scrutiny and analysis of pupils' workbooks, classroom displays and subject portfolios.

99. The strengths of pupils' achievement include their ability to respond well to a range of questions about their local environment, for example, the traffic problems connected with having a main road running alongside the school. In their work on weather, they indicate a sound understanding of the methods used by meteorologists to predict weather and can discuss how weather patterns can affect their own area. During their residential visit to Sayers Croft Environmental Centre, they studied two different habitats, and can compare and describe the difference between a wooded and a hill environment. Year 6 pupils use suitable geographic vocabulary in their work and they use their writing skills well to record their findings both in the classroom and on field trips.
100. Pupils in Year 2 are able to identify features in their local area like the various signs of autumn seen during their visit and walk through a nearby wood. They show a good ability to present information about places and use this information to ask and answer questions about these places. Using a link with history, they have explained and discussed where they live and are able to express views on environmental features of their own locality. Pupils indicate a sound awareness of localities beyond their own in their projects on countries of the world including Australia and America and use the Internet effectively to research these topics.
101. On the evidence of pupils' previous work, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the very good Year 5/6 lesson, the teacher organised and managed the lesson as a debate in order to discuss the premise: "*Has enough been done to restrict the speed of traffic outside the school?*" This followed a recent traffic survey carried out by pupils to record the number and speed of vehicles passing the school. During the debate pupils were encouraged to put forward their views and opinions on recent changes in speed limits. The teacher organised the class into three factions, 'The Council Party', 'The Opposition Party' and 'The Quirky Party' with pupil spokespersons from each party. Adults were distributed among the 'parties' to provide support, but did not over-direct the proceedings. Although the chairperson and party spokesmen were all girls, the boys in the class participated well in the debate with all pupils putting forward sensible and rational arguments to support various views. Teachers' planning in both key stages is good and effective in order to achieve satisfactory standards for all age groups. General presentation of pupils' work is satisfactory and pupils use their literacy skills in writing well. Pupils are managed and organised well, especially in Key Stage 2 classes.
102. Leadership and management are sound. The headteacher is the acting co-ordinator due to the departure of a member of staff. The subject is monitored and evaluated by scrutinising teachers' planning and pupils' workbooks, but there has been no opportunity to monitor and evaluate class teaching of the subject. A subject policy is in place but has not been reviewed and revised in the light of recent changes. The scheme of work is based on national recommendations. A subject portfolio has been introduced for moderating and levelling standards and also to give further evidence of pupils' work. Procedures are in place for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, but the use of this assessment information to guide curricular planning is at an early stage. Resources are satisfactory and the subject is enhanced by field trips and visits to places of geographic interest including a residential trip for the older pupils in the autumn term.

HISTORY

103. Standards at seven and 11 are average, but this represents a drop in attainment for pupils in Year 6 since the previous inspection. This is mainly due to a greater concentration on improving attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science over the last two terms. As no lessons were observed during the inspection due to the subject alternating with

geography, this judgement comes from discussions with teachers and a scrutiny of their planning, and an analysis of pupils' work, classroom displays and photographs. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress and achieve soundly.

104. Pupils are able to place events in chronological order, for example, in Year 2 with events in the Great Fire of London. They indicate a developing knowledge and understanding of the events and people of this period. They are able to compare aspects of past lives and their own by comparing where they live to where they were born. Year 6 pupils indicate a sound factual knowledge and understanding of exploration in Tudor times. They are able to answer questions about the period like; "*Why did people have to explore the world at that time and what methods did they use to explore?*" In this context, they know why Sir Francis Drake had to circumnavigate the World and his reasons for doing so.
105. Most pupils are able to use secondary information sources, like books, pictures and the Internet, to answer questions about the past. They are starting to select and link information from secondary and primary sources such as books, pictures and artefacts from the time. Pupils' recording is developing well. Written work and diagram are well organised and clearly presented.
106. No classroom teaching was observed during this inspection due to the school's timetabling of the subject. However, from the scrutiny of pupils' past work, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Planning is effective as part of the whole school scheme of work and provides differentiated work to enable pupils of all abilities to progress satisfactorily. An appropriate range of resources is provided by teachers including books, pictures and artefacts for pupils to use in their research in order to encourage independent learning.
107. The subject is soundly co-ordinated. An appropriate scheme of work using national guidelines, meets the needs of pupils in the mixed age classes. A subject policy is in place but has not been revised in light of the re-introduction of the full National Curriculum requirements. There has been no monitoring of the teaching, although some monitoring has been carried out by observing classroom displays, pupils' work and teachers' planning. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment is satisfactory but the use of assessment information to plan the pupils' future work is relatively under-developed. Resources are supplemented by the use of loan services, visitors to the school and visits to places of historical interest.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

108. Information and communication technology is an improving aspect of the school's work. Standards for pupils in Year 2 have improved since the previous inspection and are now good and pupils are achieving well. Much of this is due to the quality of teaching for the younger pupils and the very detailed planning now in place throughout the whole school. Standards by Year 6, while remaining broadly average for pupils of this age and similar to the judgement at the time of the previous inspection, are showing signs of improvement but are not reflecting the full benefit of the new scheme of work.
109. Although the limited number of computers does not allow for more than a small number of pupils in a class to work at any time, pupils have regular access to computers, which are often used to good effect during other lessons. The direct teaching of skills is generally good and pupils use these effectively. Teachers make appropriate links with other subjects such as science and mathematics through the use of tables and spreadsheets, or through using CD-ROM or the Internet to search for information in subjects such as history and geography. Regular use is made of information and communication technology to support pupils' work in English, writing and editing work on screen, and younger pupils use a program that allows them to select the words they need from a menu to create their sentences. Pupils enjoy using the computers and work well together, taking turns and helping each other where necessary. There

are fewer examples of pupils being used to teach each other new skills, for example, older pupils with younger pupils, or higher attainers working with less knowledgeable pupils.

110. Pupils in Year 1 and 2, use drawing software skilfully to produce a range of pictures, for example, fireworks and bonfire night and choose the background colour for maximum effect. They show good skill in selecting an appropriate finish, for example, using a spray effect to represent fireworks, and selecting from a menu of shapes to add finishing touches such as stars.
111. Older pupils in Year 6 are keen and have a suitable level of understanding, but for many, their main experience and background come from home. More recently, these pupils have been using a design package to plan ideas for the redevelopment of their classroom and have been introduced to the Internet and the use of e-mail as a way of communicating with others. The school does have its own web site, with information and displays such as their school art gallery.
112. The co-ordinator has a good level of expertise in the subject and provides a good model for other teachers, although there is little opportunity to demonstrate this knowledge through classroom monitoring or support. The scheme of work, using national guidance, is of exceptionally high quality and is carefully adapted to meet the needs of pupils in the mixed age classes throughout the school. Each teacher has detailed lesson notes showing how information and communication technology can be used to support other work and the direct teaching of skills. However, there is no method of recording pupils' progress in these skills as they move through the school.

MUSIC

113. Pupils throughout the school enjoy music and make good progress so that, in Year 6, many are attaining well above average standards. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, much of which is due to the additional support from the co-ordinator and the higher profile given to music throughout the school. Pupils have the opportunity to join the choir and the orchestra to take part in recorder groups and to receive musical tuition from visiting specialist teachers. Many pupils take part in these activities and as a result, the singing in assemblies and, the music played by many of the pupils to accompany this is of a very high standard.
114. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 sing with enthusiasm and skill, matching the dynamics of their voices to different songs. For example, they change from singing lively action songs to very reflective hymns, performing both with complete conviction and equal enjoyment. They also hold their own line well when singing rounds or in harmony and produce a very good overall sound. Their composing skills are equally well developed. All pupils have equal access to the wide range of musical opportunities the school provides. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because much of the work is carried out in groups and pupils support each other very well. The school caters well for pupils who have a particular talent in music and enables them to achieve at a high level.
115. It was not possible to observe any class music lessons in Years 1 or 2. However, during their singing practice and assemblies, pupils responded with enthusiasm and sang a variety of challenging songs from memory. Their singing shows good control of pitch, dynamics and rhythm. A video recording of pupils performing in a previous Christmas production, 'It's A Baby', show them singing tunefully and with expression. They combine the elements of tempo, timbre and rhythm well in their singing and when using musical instruments.
116. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is very good and helps all pupils to sustain concentration and to make good progress. All teachers take their own class for music, although it was only possible to observe one lesson in the Year 4/5 class during the inspection. In this very effective lesson, the class teacher worked in partnership with the music co-ordinator to the

clear benefit of the pupils. Pupils sang and composed, improvising and combining their musical ideas to compose an ostinato. Both teachers used their musical ability to challenge the pupils and develop their understanding of how sounds can be organised in different ways to make a musical structure. The very good relationships enabled all pupils to participate at their own level and achieve success. By the end of the lesson, pupils were maintaining their own rhythmic phrases as part of a group when performing with instruments and had created their own compositions using musical notation. Many pupils in this age group have a good understanding of the structure of music and are confident in reading musical notation.

117. The music co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and uses this well to support staff and challenge and extend pupils' musical experiences. Pupils learn new songs well and show that they can sing expressively with good attention to breathing, diction, phrasing and pitch. Across the school, pupils are given opportunities to record their work in lessons and to listen to and evaluate what they have done.
118. The updated policy and scheme of work address all the National Curriculum elements. The subject is well resourced with a good supply of percussion and tuned instruments and music to listen to. Music makes a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. For example, through visiting specialists, opportunities to entertain others in school productions and performing for the elderly in a local nursing home. Pupils also listen to and sing reflective pieces of music from a range of cultures, which enhances their knowledge of many different styles of music, and they have many opportunities to collaborate in performing.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

119. Standards in physical education are above average by seven and 11, similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection. Although no Year 6 lessons were observed during the inspection, observation of Year 4 and 5 pupils indicates that standards here are also above average. Progress and achievement, including that by pupils with special educational needs, are good, and there are no differences in attainment between boys and girls.
120. Most pupils in Year 2 are able to perform simple rolling, jumping and landing skills using their previous knowledge of body positions and are developing a good ability to link these actions. Nearly all have a good awareness of safety in their lessons, especially when setting out and returning larger apparatus. They show a good understanding of the effect of exercise on their body by checking on their heartbeat at the beginning of the lesson and they understand the necessity for 'warm up' and 'cool down' sessions at the beginning and end of lessons.
121. Years 4 and 5 pupils show a good ability to practise and improve their performance. In dance, they devise imaginative solutions to the challenge of formulating their own routines. All show a sound awareness of safety aspects and they are very aware of the limitations of space when moving around the hall and are able to perform safely while working in small or larger groups. Pupils are all able to evaluate their own and others' actions in order to improve their own performance. They understand the effect of exercise on their bodies and can link this knowledge and understanding to their scientific work. Most Year 6 pupils are able to swim for 25 metres by the time they leave the school.
122. The quality of teaching and learning is good in both key stages. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the main aspects of the subject are good and lessons are planned well to ensure continuity between age groups in mixed age classes. In the Year 2 lesson observed the teacher demonstrated a good awareness of health and safety factors by asking, "*Why do we have to warm up before a gymnastics lesson?*" After the warm up, she encouraged pupils to put their hands on their hearts to find out whether the heartbeat was faster or slower. As an introduction to the main activity, she asked pupils to name the various rolls that they knew, but missed the opportunity to develop this by asking pupils to demonstrate. The lesson was

planned very well improve pupils' gymnastic skills. In Years 4 and 5, the teacher used various musical instruments to stimulate the pupils' imaginations in their dance routine linked to their geographic work on weather. Good work was seen where pupils performed a 'weather mirror image' while working with a partner.

123. The subject is well managed by keen and enthusiastic co-ordinator. An excellent scheme of work covers the areas of games, dance and gymnastics, using several commercial schemes and national guidance. This ensures good progression of skills across the age groups especially in classes having two age groups. The revision of the policy is a priority for the co-ordinator. There are sound procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress but the use of this assessment information to guide curricular planning is still relatively under developed. There has been no monitoring of class teaching, although teachers' planning is regularly monitored and guidance is given to other members of staff. The subject is well resourced, partly by donations from the school Parents' Association. The physical education curriculum is enhanced by extra-curricular activities including, clubs for soccer and net-ball. 'Kwik cricket' and 'short tennis' coaches have worked with pupils.