

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HIGH FIRS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Swanley, Kent

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118541

Headteacher: Mrs Jenny Scott

Reporting inspector: Paul Evans  
20737

Dates of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2002

Inspection number: 194209

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

|                              |                                   |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Type of school:              | Infant and junior                 |
| School category:             | Community                         |
| Age range of pupils:         | 4 - 11                            |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed                             |
| School address:              | Court Crescent<br>Swanley<br>Kent |
| Postcode:                    | BR8 8NR                           |
| Telephone number:            | (01322) 669721                    |
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| Appropriate authority:       | The Governing Body                |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mr David Greenaway                |
| Date of previous inspection: | May 1997                          |

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members |                      |                      | Subject responsibilities   | Aspect responsibilities   |
|--------------|----------------------|----------------------|--|---|
| 20737        | Paul Evans           | Registered inspector | Special educational needs<br>English as an additional language<br>English<br>Information and communication technology<br>Physical education<br>Religious education | What sort of school is it?<br>How high are standards?<br>How well is the school led and managed?<br>What should the school do to improve further?                 |
| 9420         | David Martin         | Lay inspector        |  | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development<br>How well does the school care for its pupils?<br>How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| 22058        | Christine Richardson | Team inspector       | Foundation Stage curriculum<br>Science<br>Art and design<br>Music  | How well are pupils taught?   |
| 24019        | Ken Parry            | Team inspector       | Equal opportunities<br>Mathematics<br>Design and technology<br>Geography<br>History  | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?  |

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

High Firs Primary School is a small primary school when compared to the national average size. It provides education for 203 pupils, 98 boys and 105 girls, aged from four to eleven. The majority of pupils come from the local estate, which consists mainly of privately owned houses. The percentage of pupils identified as being eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The number of pupils for whom English is an additional language is higher than most schools, however, none are at the early stages of learning English. The number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register is below the national average and the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is below the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is average overall, as shown by county tests and assessments.

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

The overall effectiveness of High Firs Primary School is very good. The very good management promotes very good attitudes and personal development of all pupils, which leads to the very high standards achieved by pupils as they leave the school.

When considering its context, the standards that it achieves, the level of education that it offers to all its pupils and the money that it spends, the school provides very good value for money.

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

- The standards that pupils reach at the end of Year 6 are very good.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are very good.
- The governors' role in shaping the direction of the school is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes to school are very good.
- The school promotes the personal development and relationship of its pupils very well.
- Relationships between pupils and between pupils and their teachers are very good.
- The care that the school offers to all its pupils is very good.

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

- Pupils' levels of achievement in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 and 4 are not as good as they should be in English, mathematics and science.
- The development of pupils' understanding of the multicultural nature of society and their place within it is less than satisfactory.
- The school's procedures for promoting and monitoring good attendance are less than satisfactory.
- The school's accommodation is less than satisfactory in several areas.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

High Firs Primary School was last inspected in May 1997 when weaknesses were identified in the curriculum for children under five and with the need to differentiate the curriculum for older children in mixed-age classes. There was a need to create a whole-school curriculum supported by policies and schemes of work and a comprehensive system of assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress. Staff development needed to be linked with priorities identified within the School Development Plan. All these issues have been dealt with successfully.

Since May 1997 the curriculum for under-fives has been replaced by the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. The school has implemented this curriculum well. All pupils are now taught in single year groups. There are whole-school agreed policies and schemes of work for all subjects. The school now has a very good, comprehensive system of assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress. All staff have undertaken courses specific to their needs and linked to the school's improvement plan. Overall, the school has made good improvement since the last inspection.

## STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | Compared with |      |      |                 |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
|                 | all schools   |      |      | similar schools |
|                 | 1999          | 2000 | 2001 | 2001            |
| English         | E             | A    | A*   | A               |
| Mathematics     | B             | A    | A    | A               |
| Science         | C             | A*   | A*   | A               |

| Key                |    |
|--------------------|----|
| Very high          | A* |
| Well above average | A  |
| Above average      | B  |
| Average            | C  |
| Below average      | D  |
| Well below average | E  |

On entry to the Foundation Stage, children's levels of attainment are average overall. They make good progress during their time in the school's Reception class. By the time they move into Year 1 the majority achieve the targets for children of their age in all six areas of learning, as set out in the national early learning goals for the Foundation Stage.

In the 2001 national tests for seven year olds, the school's results were well above the national average in reading, above average in writing and average in mathematics. Standards in science, according to teacher assessments, were above the national average. In 1999, standards in reading and mathematics were well above average and above average in writing. Although there was a drop in the school's results in all three subjects in 2000, standards rose in 2001 to the 1999 levels in both reading and writing. However, although standards in mathematics improved in 2001, they have not yet reached the high standards achieved in 1999.

The school's results in national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2001 were well above the national average in mathematics and in the top five per cent nationally in English and science. This shows a marked improvement on the school's results from 1999 when standards were above average in mathematics, average in science and well below average in English. Standards rose in 2000 to well above average in English and mathematics and in the top five per cent nationally for science. In 2001, mathematics and science remained at these very high levels while standards in English improved into the top five per cent nationally.

When compared to the results of similar schools, the results for seven year olds were average in reading, below average in writing and well below average in science. When comparing the school's results for eleven year olds with similar schools, they are well above average in all three subjects.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect                                 | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school                | Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic about the work they undertake and are keen to attend school. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Good. The behaviour of all pupils, both in and out of classrooms, is good.                      |
| Personal development and relationships | Very good. The relationships between pupils and pupils and their teachers are very good.        |
| Attendance                             | Good. Attendance is good and above the national average.  |

Relationships between all pupils and staff are very good. Pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are also very good. Procedures for promoting good attendance are less than satisfactory.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Reception | Years 1 – 2 | Years 3 – 6 |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| Quality of teaching    | Good      | Good        | Good        |

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

When considering the inspection evidence provided by pupils past work and the quality of teaching seen in lessons, the quality of teaching is good overall. Forty-five lessons or parts of lessons were observed. In two of these, the quality of teaching was excellent and in another eight it was very good. The quality of teaching in 22 lessons was good; it was satisfactory in 11 lessons and less than satisfactory in only two lessons. The effectiveness of the strategies for teaching English and literacy and for teaching mathematics and numeracy is good.

The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language is good. The quality of learning is good for all pupils. However, the quality of teaching and learning is better in Years 5 and 6 than in the remainder of the school. The high standards that pupils reach by the end of Year 6 are heavily reliant on the accelerated learning programmes in these two years.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect  | Comment   |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum   | Good. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum to all its pupils.  |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs   | Good. Teachers and support assistants provide good support to allow all these pupils to make good progress.                                     |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language                                 | Good. There are a small number of pupils in school for whom English is not the language they speak at home. Provision for these pupils is good. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.          |
| How well the school cares for its pupils  | Good. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are very good. The educational support and guidance of pupils          |



|  |          |
|--|----------|
|  | is good. |
|--|----------|

The partnership between the school and parents is satisfactory.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect   | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Very good. The headteacher provides excellent educational direction and very good leadership for the school. There is an outstanding partnership between the headteacher and the deputy headteacher and very good teamwork within the rest of the teaching staff. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities             | Very good. The governing body makes a very good contribution to shaping the educational direction of the school. They fulfil their statutory duties very well and have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.                   |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                       | Good. The key issues of the last inspection have been effectively addressed.  |
| The strategic use of resources                                   | Good. The school makes good use of strategic funding and ensures this is appropriately spent.   |

The match of teaching and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good. The adequacy of learning resources is good overall. However, the school's accommodation is less than satisfactory. The school has two mobile classrooms, which are damp, one has no toilets and the wooden steps leading to one are beginning to rot. All classrooms are too small and have very limited storage space. The school does have some good spaces outside classrooms, which they use very well. There is a fenced off play area for the use of children in the Foundation Stage. However, this is small and there is insufficient room for large climbing equipment. This area is also used as a main thoroughfare between the main building, the playground and the two mobile classrooms.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have developed an outstanding partnership and there is very good teamwork within the remainder of the teaching staff. The school applies the principles of best value well.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most  | What parents would like to see improved  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The high expectations the school has for their children</li> <li>• They are comfortable approaching the school with any questions or concerns</li> <li>• The behaviour of the children in the school</li> <li>• The fact that their child likes school</li> <li>• The quality of teaching in the school</li> <li>• The way the school helps their children to become mature and responsible</li> <li>• The good progress their child makes at school</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information they receive about their child's progress</li> <li>• The leadership and management of the school</li> <li>• The way the school works with parents</li> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities</li> <li>• The amount of homework their child receives</li> </ul> |

Inspection evidence supports the positive views of the great majority of parents. The information parents receive, particularly about their child's progress, is satisfactory. The leadership and management of the

school are very good. The way the school works with parents is strong in some areas and is satisfactory overall. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. The use of homework to extend pupils' learning is good. In these areas, while the school could make some further improvements, inspection evidence does not support the views of a minority of parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. At the time of the last inspection in May 1997, standards for pupils of seven years of age in English and mathematics were below the national average and above average in science, according to teacher assessments. For pupils of eleven years of age, standards were in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science. All other subjects across the school had standards in line with national expectations. The only exceptions were design and technology for pupils in Years 3 to 6, which was judged to be barely satisfactory, and information and communication technology, which was below expectations throughout the school. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection.
2. Children's levels of attainment on entry to the school are average overall as shown by county tests and assessments. By the time they enter Year 1, the majority have achieved the targets set for children of their age in the national early learning goals in all six areas of learning.
3. In the 1999 national tests for seven year olds, the standards reached by the school were well above average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. In 2000, standards in all three subjects fell to average in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 and above, the expected level for seven year olds, in the 2001 national tests was well above average in reading, above average in writing and average in mathematics. This shows an improvement in reading and writing back to the standards achieved in 1999. However, although standards in mathematics have risen considerably from the 2000 results, they have not, as yet, achieved the high levels of 1999.
4. Standards reached by pupils of eleven years of age in the 2001 national tests were in the top five per cent nationally in English and science and were well above average in mathematics.
5. When compared to the results of similar schools, High Firs Primary School's results in the end of Year 2 national tests in 2001 were average in reading and below average in writing. In mathematics, the results of the school were well below average. The end of Year 6 test results in 2001 were in the top five per cent nationally in English and science and were well above average in mathematics when compared to the results achieved in similar schools. Once again, this is a very good improvement since the last inspection when standards in all three subjects were judged to be in line with national expectations at the end of Year 6.
6. Teacher assessments of the number of pupils who would reach average and above-average levels at the end of Year 6, in 2001 tests, were accurate in English, mathematics and science. The school sets challenging, but realistic, targets and has developed very good strategies for attaining those targets. The school is in line to meet its targets for 2002.
7. Inspection evidence confirms the results of national tests in English, mathematics and science. Standards in religious education, art and design, design and technology, history, geography, music and physical education are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The school has developed a good information and communication technology suite and now has the equipment to teach all areas of the subject, including modelling and control technology. The school is part way through its planning cycle for information and communication technology, and the information and communication technology suite has been opened ahead of time. While there is some evidence of information and communication technology being used in other subjects, this use is underdeveloped and is the next focus of the school's planning. The area of

modelling and control technology is also underdeveloped but again is included in the school's planning as an area for development. Standards in information and communication technology are broadly in line with expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

8. Teachers have good knowledge of their pupils and carefully identify those who need additional support and those who are capable of attaining higher levels. In Years 5 and 6 there are particularly good examples of all groups of pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils, being provided with challenging work to ensure that they achieve their full potential. In other classes, and especially in Years 1 and 2, this is not always the case and therefore too few pupils attain higher levels in the national tests and assessments at the end of Year 2. This also means that while good progress is being made between the end of the Foundation Stage and the end of Year 2, and also in Years 3 and 4, this is not as good as that made in Years 5 and 6. The school carefully monitors attainment and progress and tracks individual pupils and classes as they move through the school in order to ensure fairness of treatment. This has shown that there are significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics and, although the school is attempting to deal with it, there is as yet no clear explanation.

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

9. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and their learning. They show enthusiasm for, and interest in, the work they do and willingly participate in the other activities provided by the school. Pupils are courteous in their dealings with each other and with adults and, for instance during joint activities on computers and at lunchtime play, form constructive relationships and show respect for the feelings and beliefs of others. A particular feature of the school is the caring attitude shown between pupils from different age groups.
10. Numerous opportunities are provided for pupils to show initiative and to assume responsibilities and these are enthusiastically and conscientiously carried through. For instance, pupils are briefed by their fellows and then participate in meetings of the School Council, and others help in assemblies or carry out various tasks as monitors or first aid and clerical assistants.
11. Pupils are capable of working independently, for instance, on ICT projects, and respond well to initiatives such as the optional Challenge tasks and the Year 6 Task Board.
12. The behaviour of pupils is good throughout the school, with very little evidence of any need to implement sanctions. Pupils are aware that oppressive behaviour, such as bullying, will not be tolerated and therefore there are almost no such incidents. Parents endorse the view that behaviour is good and pupils have good attitudes and respond well to the school rules.
13. Attendance is good. The latest published figures show an overall attendance rate which is above the national average and unauthorised absences which are below national averages. The punctuality of pupils arriving for the morning session is also good.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

14. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school, and includes many good features. The consistently high quality teaching in Years 5 and 6 builds very effectively on the common approaches used across the school which are a major reason why pupils enjoy school so much and why standards have been maintained and continue to be high. Forty-five lessons were observed across the school during the inspection. The quality of teaching in ten was very good or excellent, while in another 22 lessons it was good. Eleven lessons were satisfactory and only two were less than satisfactory. Teachers throughout the school have implemented the national strategies for literacy and numeracy effectively. They are competent in teaching basic skills in English and mathematics.
15. Teaching in literacy is good overall, with very good teaching in Years 5 and 6. In mathematics, teaching in Year 1 and 2 is sound. In Years 3 and 4, pupils consolidate their learning and

because tasks are matched very well to individual abilities in Years 5 and 6, this accelerates the learning for older pupils.

16. Teaching in the reception class is good. Staff have created a warm, supportive atmosphere for learning where children feel secure and, therefore, able to work enthusiastically and enjoy their learning. There is an emphasis here on children's personal and social development that has a positive benefit for children's learning. Thorough assessment is undertaken in language and literacy work and this is used to plan activities and reinforce specific skills needed for reading and writing. The teachers plan carefully and use a range of resources to interest children. The teaching assistant works very effectively alongside the teachers in supporting children's learning.
17. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding is good overall. In all classes, there is a good knowledge of how to teach phonics and reading, which helps pupils to make good progress in basic literacy skills. These skills are built on well in Years 5 and 6 where there is additional challenge in the work and pupils have the opportunity to extend their skills in a variety of ways. In other subjects, the individual strengths of teachers are used effectively.
18. Teachers' planning is good. Where planning is inappropriate or does not meet the objectives of the lesson, this leads to less than satisfactory lessons. In most lessons, teachers specify clear objectives, structure the use of time well and provide for the different levels of ability in their classes. Teachers share their teaching plans with support staff and brief them in good time for what support is needed. There are occasions when it is planned to include information and communication technology in lessons on other subjects. For example, in a Year 5 science lesson, the teacher directed pupils to the computer to find more information about their topic. The work they undertook was an extension of the current lesson in preparation for their homework task. This was good use of information and communication technology and contributed well to pupils' learning. However, the school recognises the need to plan for more use of information and communication technology in other subjects.
19. The quality of marking is satisfactory overall. Teachers regularly mark pupils' work and often add written comments which aid pupils' understanding of how they can improve further. The use of targets in English and mathematics is improving, although targets are not used as widely, or effectively, in classes other than Years 5 and 6. Where targets are used effectively, they contribute to pupils' good understanding of their own learning and to the inclusion of all pupils in all lessons. Where teachers identify the next steps in learning, pupils respond enthusiastically.
20. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are good overall, particularly in English and music. For example, there were very high expectations of the quality of pupils' listening in a Year 3 music lesson on the identification of rhythm patterns. Pupils knew what was expected of them and listened very carefully. They identified the rhythm, recorded the notation of the pattern and then completed the same task with another musical extract. The pupils were pleased that they had completed such a challenging task so well.
21. The presentation of work in English and related subjects, such as history and science, is good and evidence from pupils' past work shows that teachers are consistent in their expectations of good handwriting and standards of presentation. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 take great pride in the presentation of their projects and fact files in science. However, presentation in mathematics is not of such a high standard as work in English.
22. During lessons teachers carefully repeat key vocabulary in different sentences and questions so that pupils, including those with special educational needs, soon learn and understand it. This results in pupils being motivated to learn and use the vocabulary in their own work. Teachers use a good variety of grouping strategies. These include the pairing of pupils to share in discussion tasks to ensure that pupils help each other to learn and have opportunities to exchange and talk through ideas. Teachers use the end-of-lesson review sessions well to sum up what they have achieved and to recognise good work. For example, at the end of the English lesson in Year 1, a lower-attaining pupil is very proud to read out his work and others in the class are suitably impressed by his success. This time also allows teachers to point out how pupils can improve and what pupils will be doing next. This is a particularly successful feature of science lessons in

Years 5 and 6. Teaching assistants work very effectively in all lessons to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.

23. The management of pupils is usually good. Teachers have established their expectations in the classes and approach the encouragement of good behaviour and positive attitudes in a consistent manner. In the best lessons, expectations are very clear and rules are strictly followed. These are promoted positively through praising pupils who are sitting ready to learn, who help others and who remember to raise their hands when asking or answering questions. Where engrossed in lessons, as in Year 6 in English and Year 5 in science, pupils produce high quality work and their attitudes to learning are very good. Occasionally, the approach is not so consistent and a few pupils do not respond as well. Sometimes, in well-planned lessons with good use of resources and interesting tasks, the restless behaviour of a minority of younger pupils does not allow others to get on with tasks. At times, noisy excitement takes over and insistence on quiet endeavour is needed to ensure that all pupils are able to carry on with their tasks. In these lessons, the quality of teaching and learning suffers from the lack of attention of a few pupils.
24. Teachers in Years 5 and 6 make good use of homework through a series of challenges and research projects. In most classes, pupils have mathematics and literacy homework, including reading, although this is not on a regular and consistent basis. Reading diaries are provided for parents to write comments on how their child is progressing and these are used to communicate between home and school.
25. Teachers have good knowledge of all their pupils, gained on a day-to-day basis and through the school's very thorough procedures for assessment. Teaching strategies motivate all groups equally, enabling them to participate fully and to make progress in their learning. Teachers give equal regard to pupils of differing attainment and the demands placed upon boys and girls are similar.
26. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language is good. Learning support assistants provide very good support and pupils with English as an additional language are given specialist support for a half a day each week. All these pupils are fully included in all school activities and all make good progress.

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

27. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection when the curriculum was judged to have significant weaknesses. The school now provides a broad and interesting range of curricular opportunities that is relevant to the needs of its pupils. It is well balanced between the subjects, with literacy and numeracy quite correctly being given the largest proportions of time. It successfully promotes pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development and prepares them thoroughly for their secondary schools. The appropriate statutory curriculum, including religious education, is firmly in place and statutory requirements for special educational needs are well met. The school's inclusive approach ensures equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. Satisfactory use is made of the local community and other additional activities to support and enrich pupils' learning.
28. Since the last inspection the headteacher and staff have worked hard to deal with the weaknesses identified at that time. They have created a whole-school curriculum that is firmly supported by a comprehensive range of agreed policies. Policies are well written in clear and specific terms to guide teachers' planning. In English and mathematics, this is based securely on the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, which also determine the level of work to be expected from each year group. This is making a significant contribution to the better systems for monitoring and assessing pupils' progress seen now in these subjects. In addition, national and local guidelines for other subjects have been adopted. They are used well to support the school's long-term plan that allocates topics and themes for study to each class. The plan is well thought out to provide the effective links that are evident between history and literacy, for example, which make pupils' learning more meaningful. In order to improve further, the school acknowledges the necessity to

continue to refine its arrangements for ensuring that teachers' planning fully meets the needs of all pupils. In particular, teachers need to set more challenging, yet realistic, objectives for higher-attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2.

29. The school is firmly committed to the inclusive principles expressed clearly in the comprehensive policy for equal opportunities. Teachers work hard to ensure that all pupils enjoy equal access to the full range of opportunities provided. All of them are equally and fully included in the curriculum and, indeed, in all aspects of school life.
30. The provision for personal, social and health education is good. An annual cycle of topics for study by each age group is mapped out and the programme is being implemented consistently to promote the responsible attitudes and very positive relationships seen throughout the school. It includes teaching on health, sex and drug awareness, much of which is covered appropriately through the science programmes of study.
31. The school provides a well-run breakfast club run by paid assistants. The headteacher and all teachers are involved in running a good range of after-school clubs that considerably enhances the basic curriculum. They include the football, recorders, chess, computers and pottery clubs that took place during the inspection and others of a seasonal nature such as cricket and gardening. Pupils take full advantage of these activities to develop their intellectual, creative and sporting interests. They make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and to their personal development as they learn new skills and meet people other than their classmates in a relaxed and informal atmosphere. A recent but valuable initiative is the homework club that began this term, adding another dimension to the school's good use of homework to support pupils' classroom work. Pupils also have the chance to take part in an annual performance that includes music, dance and drama. Use of the Internet to extend pupils' learning, for example by undertaking independent research in geography and history, is being developed very successfully. Other opportunities to enhance the curriculum are more limited. For example, with the exception of the valuable and worthwhile residential experience provided for pupils in Years 5 and 6, very few educational visits are organised to support pupils' studies. The school makes some use of resources in the community to extend the basic curriculum. A good example is the school's success in the Swanley in Bloom project, in which the headteacher, parents, pupils and friends of the school co-operated to design and create their award-winning garden. Another example is the link with the local vicar who takes termly assemblies. There remains considerable scope to develop a broader range of visits and visitors to stimulate pupils and to enhance their learning.
32. Links with other educational establishments in the area are satisfactory overall. The school's good relationships with local playgroups and other pre-school providers ensure the smooth transition into the reception class. Links with secondary schools are more restricted. This is partly because of the large number of different schools to which the pupils of High Firs transfer at the end of Year 6 although efficient arrangements minimise the disruption to their continuing education. Good use has been made of a neighbouring "Beacon" primary school, with teachers sharing and exchanging ideas as part of the school's drive to continue to raise standards.
33. Overall, the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although there are considerable variations between these four elements. This is similar to the judgement made at the time of the last inspection.
34. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Assemblies and acts of collective worship take place daily and comply fully with statutory requirements. Along with religious education lessons, they provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own and others' experiences, feelings and emotions and make an important contribution to the promotion of their spiritual awareness. For example, assemblies seen during the inspection provided some good opportunities for reflection and the celebration of pupils' achievements and special events. In one of these, the headteacher's closing remarks and thoughtful prayer clearly demonstrated the value that teachers attach to the work of their pupils. It rounded off an enjoyable and special experience that had been shared by the whole school. However, teachers do not plan systematically to develop spiritual awareness and reflection in the classroom in subjects such as science, art and music, and good opportunities are therefore missed. Few visitors come to the school to share

their ideas and to raise pupils' awareness of the importance of a spiritual dimension in many people's lives.

35. The arrangements for pupils' moral development are very good. A strong moral code is evident in all aspects of school life and forms the basis of the very good behaviour seen during the inspection. Teachers work hard to promote and reward good behaviour and to raise pupils' self-esteem. Personal, social and health education lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to deal with morality, discuss issues and establish codes of behaviour. Each class has discussed and restated the school's behaviour expectations and these are clearly displayed in classrooms. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and to respect the feelings and beliefs of others. They develop a clear understanding of what is acceptable and unacceptable and they are consistently expected to consider the impact of their behaviour on others. The positive outcome of these approaches is to be seen in the orderly school community in which effective teaching and learning take place.
36. The school's procedures for promoting pupils' social development are very good. Teachers expect pupils to be positive and supportive members of the school community and from the start they are encouraged to share ideas and learning resources. The range of groupings employed by teachers in the classroom is used well to promote these social and co-operative skills. It is clear that all adults value pupils' contributions to the life of the school and in lessons and assemblies they celebrate their successes in work and helpfulness. This helps to raise their self-esteem and encourages them to take pride in their achievements. A wide range of opportunities is provided for pupils to take responsibility, such as helping in assembly, in classrooms or assisting with tasks in the office to help the smooth running of the school. The school makes use of its links with the wider community to promote a sense of responsibility, and through their regular support of local and worldwide charities pupils develop positive attitudes towards those who are less fortunate than themselves. The good variety of after-school clubs provides many opportunities to take part in team sport and other group and individual activities that broaden pupils' social experience and skills. The school council is a very good initiative that gives pupils opportunities for independence and co-operation through real responsibility that empowers them democratically to influence school development. Pupils are elected by classes and consider, and act, on issues of importance such as the school garden, playground games and the storage of shoes in the classroom.
37. There is satisfactory provision for pupils to appreciate their own cultural heritage and as they move through the school they are introduced to the traditions and beliefs of other cultures. The school does not do enough, however, to prepare them for the rich ethnic and cultural diversity represented in contemporary Britain. In geography, pupils' learn about life in the immediate locality and in contrasting locations, for example, a village in India. In history, they learn about some of the important cultures and events in the past, such as the Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Tudors and Victorians. In religious education they learn about other faiths, as in Year 5 where they explore the ways that Muslims express their beliefs through their practices. An attractive and stimulating display arising out of work by pupils in Year 6 on the Chinese New Year includes a variety of interesting artefacts, pictures and examples of research carried out on the Internet. However, many opportunities are missed to provide valuable first-hand experience through visits to museums and galleries, places of worship and other interesting places.

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

38. The school's policy for child protection is good, and the way in which it is implemented is satisfactory, except for the need to ensure that support staff are fully aware of the information and guidance available. Practices and procedures for ensuring the health and safety of pupils, and other aspects of their welfare such as their medical needs, are satisfactory. Regular risk assessment, checks of structures and testing of equipment and systems, including fire drills, are organised. The school is aware of the need for them to further develop their monitoring of the provision of statutory safety equipment and its regular testing.

39. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour. The school has a wide range of effective rewards, including the award of house points and stickers at special celebration assemblies, which are well supported by pupils and staff. There is also a wide range of sanctions available, although it is rarely that these are called upon.
40. The school carries out monitoring and subsequent action in order to maintain good attendance and punctuality. However, because registers are not always filled in correctly or completely, this monitoring cannot be regarded as satisfactory and the situation may also pose a danger in the event of an enforced evacuation of the school.
41. The procedures and practices for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development, which are implemented by caring staff who know the pupils well, are both varied and good. Provision is made both within the classroom, including a sex education programme and the promotion of healthy eating, and through strategies such as the establishment of the School Council and breakfast and homework clubs.
42. The care that the school offers to all its pupils is good. The statutory requirements are met concerning the reporting of results of national assessments to parents at the end of each key stage. Parents receive Annual Reports that meet this need. There are very good systems in place for assessing pupils' attainments for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Their use in the planning of future work is good. Day-to-day assessment in the Reception class is systematic. It includes base-line assessment and analysis soon after pupils' entry to school and the results are used on an individual basis. Staff keep careful records of attainment for each child. New skills are noted as they are acquired and records dated and expanded. Activities in the Reception class are generally planned to match pupils' attainment.
43. Throughout the school, teachers effectively use assessment data, drawn on weekly planning sheets, in core subjects to plan work to meet pupils' needs. This is good practice and supports learning and progress. The school carefully assesses the needs of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Teachers share their learning objectives with pupils and mark their work accordingly. However, the school's marking policy is inconsistently applied. At one extreme, it does little to encourage pupils to improve their work, commenting only when work is less than satisfactory while at the other it is supportive and developmental. The use of day-to-day assessment information varies throughout the school. In Years 1 and 2, and in Years 3 and 4, this information is not sufficiently well used to consistently challenge more able pupils. This is a significant factor in the overall rates of progress being made in these classes when compared to the high levels of achievement in Years 5 and 6. Individual target setting in the core subjects is effective in supporting learning and progress. The targets can be tracked and fresh ones set as necessary. Assessments feed planning and critical information is passed from class to class, giving guidance on the level of pupils' attainment and their targets. There is a close match, for example, between teachers' assessments and the results of national tests at ages seven and eleven. Assessment in non-core subjects is developed satisfactorily, with each subject co-ordinator developing manageable systems with the rest of the staff.
44. Assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are very good across the school in English, mathematics and science. Procedures are well supported by appropriate help from outside agencies, such as speech and language specialists, the medical services, educational psychologists and behaviour support services, whenever this is necessary. Provision for pupils with statements and arrangements for annual reviews are good. Although the main focus of special needs support is for literacy and learning difficulties, there is also good support for pupils who have behavioural difficulties.
45. Baseline assessment takes place for Foundation Stage pupils and results are used well to identify those pupils with learning difficulties. Regular assessments in English and mathematics are undertaken for all pupils and the information is carefully analysed and used to identify pupils with learning difficulties, provide suitable support and monitor progress. The school makes effective use of the learning support service to undertake formal assessment procedures when necessary.



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

46. Parents, in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and at the parents' meeting, mostly expressed positive views of the school and what it achieves. However, a significant minority had some concerns regarding the amount of homework, the information, apart from annual reports, which they receive about the progress of their children, and the co-operation between parents and the school.
47. The school has established satisfactory and effective links with parents. Information is provided through a diverse range of publications and events such as newsletters, Action Days, governors' surgeries and reading diaries. Annual open evenings are held, when pupils' share their work with their parents. Meetings for parents are held on topics such as the National Numeracy Strategy, National Literacy Strategy and information and communication technology, but there are no regular communications, for example in newsletters or on readily accessible notice boards to keep parents informed of items such as termly work topics or governors' meetings.
48. The school has good links with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Parents are fully involved in the school's procedures for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress.
49. Pupils' annual reports clearly set out what they have achieved and give advice as to areas for improvement or where parents may assist in their child's development. Parents have the opportunity to discuss the reports and other aspects of their child's education at regular parent evenings. Other statutory information for parents is satisfactory, except for some minor omissions from the content of the governors' annual report.
50. Pupils, parents and the school sign home-school agreements and parents are asked to monitor homework and home reading. Parents regularly come into the school to help in activities such as assisted reading and to attend class assemblies. This, together with the good use of homework, means that parents make a very good contribution to pupils' learning at school and at home.

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

51. The headteacher and senior staff form a very good team that provides very good leadership and management of the school. The excellent leadership of the headteacher is fully complemented by the very high level of teamwork between her and the deputy headteacher. Both are highly respected by staff, pupils, parents and governors. As a team, they provide an excellent level of educational direction for the work of the school. The further raising of standards at the end of Year 2 and further general school improvement are priorities not only of the school's management, but also of all staff and governors. This commitment to raising standards further is shared by the whole staff and the teamwork between teaching and non-teaching staff are a major strength of the school. The inspiration and motivation of staff is an essential priority for the leadership of the school and the headteacher and senior staff set very good examples. The management team shared an extremely keen commitment to school improvement and the further raising of pupils' standards. All staff have very high expectations of what the school can achieve. The management team is aware of the school's priorities for further development. The headteacher's delegation of management responsibilities to staff is very effective and all staff have fully accepted their delegated roles.
52. The governing body is very good at supporting and monitoring the work of the school and ensuring that their statutory duties are fulfilled. Governors are very proud of the achievements of the school, while realising that more can still be done. There is a very positive relationship between the headteacher and the governors. The governing body clearly understand the strengths, weaknesses and priorities of the school. They fully support and share the commitment of the school team to improvement and the further raising of pupils' standards at the end of Year 2.

53. The school makes good strategic use of its financial resources, grants and other funding. The school secretary provides very good financial support to the management team and to the governing body. The audit trail is highly secure and the financial information available to the senior management team and the governing body is very good. Updated financial information is regularly provided and this supports the school's financial planning well.
54. Specific grants are used effectively for their designated purposes to improve the quality of learning. The school monitors the effectiveness of its spending well. The development of the school's new information and communication technology suite is a good example of this. Computers were made available through an ex-pupil now working in industrial management. The school has very successfully monitored the planning of the development of the suite, it opened ahead of time and is now fully operational.
55. The principles of best value are a high consideration in school spending. The school compares its costs and effectiveness with other schools well. Subject co-ordinators are required to monitor resources for their subjects, justify their spending and review the impact that it has on the quality of learning. Spending on staffing is well monitored. For example, when a full-time Foundation Stage teacher could not be appointed, it was decided to employ two very experienced teachers to work as a team to teach the Foundation Stage children. The school attracted support from the local education authority and from local schools in the area in support of these two teachers, who had limited experience of teaching such young children. This has proved a very successful strategy and during the inspection the quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage was judged to be good.
56. The special needs co-ordinator provides good leadership and manages special needs provision well. Governors soundly discharge their responsibilities for special needs through the headteacher. The current special educational needs governor is very involved and works closely with the special educational needs co-ordinator. He also takes a great interest in the progress of more able pupils and involves pupils in Years 5 and 6 in "challenges" which involve them using e-mail and the Internet in the course of their investigations. This is one example of the governors' close involvement with the management of the school having a beneficial effect on pupils' learning. There are sufficient teaching and learning support assistants to cater for the number of pupils on the special needs register. There is effective use made of external support, such as the educational psychologist, medical services and behaviour support services, whenever this is necessary.
57. Overall, staffing levels and qualifications are good. They are well matched to the number of pupils and the requirements of the National Curriculum. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. The school involves learning assistants in planning for these pupils, so that they are included in all aspects of the curriculum. The provision for the teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good. Although there are no pupils who are presently at the early stages of learning English, there is specialist provision for their support on one half day each week. There is a very clear management structure and all teaching and non-teaching staff have job descriptions. Where co-ordinators do not have any special qualifications from their initial training, they attend in-service training courses. The school's procedures for performance management are good. They are closely linked to the professional development of individual staff and to the school improvement plan.
58. The accommodation of the school is unsatisfactory. There are some, well-used spaces outside classrooms. All classrooms are small for the teaching of 30 pupils. There is limited storage throughout the school. The new information and communication technology suite, while very well equipped, needs great teacher skills in pupil management because of its small size. All offices are small, and there is damp in the ceiling of the staff room and in one of the staff toilets. There are two mobile classrooms, neither of which is satisfactory. The platform at the top of the steps giving access to one classroom is rotting and potentially unsafe. The outer skin is breached on both buildings and the lining is exposed. One classroom has its own toilets, but they are damp and there is damp on the inside of the classroom walls. The other building has no toilets and neither building has a covered walkway to the main school. The library is of a reasonable size, is

satisfactorily stocked and is regularly used for independent research. Special educational needs pupils normally receive support within the classroom, although some are withdrawn for additional literacy language support. Disabled pupils and adults have reasonable access and there are suitable toilet facilities. Outside, there are satisfactory areas for developing physical skills. The school is appropriately considering developing the wild life area to extend pupils' learning in science. The cleaner in charge maintains the buildings well, so that pupils work and play in a clean and hygienic environment.

59. The quality and quantity of resources are good overall and continue to improve. For information and communication technology, English, mathematics and science, they are good. The range of texts and school owned artefacts for religious education is good. For many subjects, the co-ordinators have organised resources so that they are easily accessible to teachers and pupils. There is scope for further development of resources so that they are relevant to the multicultural nature of modern society. Resources for music, history and geography are satisfactory for delivery of the school's schemes of work. However, there are some areas of need in both history and geography. Resources for the teaching and learning of design and technology are in need of development. There are sufficient resources to support pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

In order to raise standards even further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) raise the levels of achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 and 4 in English mathematics and science by :
  - i. extending the length and use of writing in various styles and in other subjects;
  - ii. using assessment information more effectively to fully and consistently challenge more able pupils.

*(paragraphs 8, 28, 43, 74, 75, 79, 83, 90, 100, 114)*
- (2) develop and implement strategies to ensure that all pupils learn about the multi-cultural nature of our society and their place within it;

*(paragraph 37)*
- (3) raise the levels of monitoring of full attendance by :
  - i. ensuring the accurate completion of all attendance registers;
  - ii. using the emerging statistics to monitor attendance patterns rigorously;

*(paragraph 40)*
- (4) Enter into discussion with the authority responsible for the school's buildings to:
  - i. correct the various deficiencies in the mobile classrooms;
  - ii. seek remedies to the school's lack of space;
  - iii. repair the various areas where damp is entering the main buildings.

*(paragraph 58)*

The governors may also wish to include the following minor issues in their action plan:

- complete the school's planning for information and communication technology to ensure that computers are regularly used in all other subjects and that all pupils have regular experiences in modelling and control technology (paragraph 7, 18, 79, 95, 103, 132).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed   | 45 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 26 |

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

|            | Excellent | Very Good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number     | 2         | 8         | 22   | 11           | 2              | 0    | 0         |
| Percentage | 4.5       | 18        | 49   | 24           | 4.5            | 0    | 0         |

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

### 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)      | 203     |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 12      |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs   | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs       | 1       |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 30      |

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

| Pupil mobility in the last school year                                       | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 3            |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 5            |

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

|             | %   |
|-------------|-----|
| School data | 5.0 |

#### Unauthorised absence

|             | %   |
|-------------|-----|
| School data | 0.0 |

|                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
| National comparative data | 5.6 |
|---------------------------|-----|

|                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
| National comparative data | 0.5 |
|---------------------------|-----|

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

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

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
|  | 2001 | 17   | 13    | 30    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 17      | 17      | 17          |
|   | Girls    | 12      | 12      | 12          |
|   | Total    | 29      | 29      | 29          |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 97 (90) | 97 (94) | 97 (90)     |
|   | National | 84 (83) | 86 (84) | 91 (90)     |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 17      | 17          | 17      |
|   | Girls    | 12      | 9           | 12      |
|   | Total    | 29      | 26          | 29      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 97 (84) | 87 (94)     | 97 (77) |
|   | 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 | 12   | 17    | 29    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | English | Mathematics | Science  |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above   | Boys     | 12      | 12          | 12       |
|   | Girls    | 16      | 15          | 17       |
|   | Total    | 28      | 27          | 29       |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School   | 97 (89) | 93 (93)     | 100 (93) |
|   | National | 75 (75) | 71 (72)     | 87 (85)  |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above   | Boys     | 8       | 12          | 11      |
|   | Girls    | 15      | 14          | 15      |
|   | Total    | 23      | 26          | 26      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School   | 79 (82) | 90 (82)     | 90 (86) |
|   | National | 72 (70) | 74 (72)     | 82 (79) |

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

|                                 | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage      | 0            |
| Black – African heritage        | 0            |
| Black – other                   | 0            |
| Indian                          | 0            |
| Pakistani                       | 0            |
| Bangladeshi                     | 3            |
| Chinese                         | 4            |
| White                           | 165          |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 0            |

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 7    |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 27.4 |
| Average class size                       | 27.4 |

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 5   |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 105 |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

|                |           |
|----------------|-----------|
| Financial year | 2000-2001 |
|----------------|-----------|

|  | £      |
|--|--------|
| Total income                               | 399878 |
| Total expenditure                          | 393881 |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 1960   |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 26235  |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 32232  |

### **Recruitment of teachers**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years     | 3 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 2 |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)  | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)                           | 1 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*



## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 192 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 51  |

### Percentage of responses in each category

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 47             | 47            | 6                | 0                 | 0          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 41             | 51            | 6                | 2                 | 0          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 39             | 59            | 2                | 0                 | 0          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 33             | 51            | 10               | 4                 | 2          |
| The teaching is good.  | 39             | 55            | 4                | 0                 | 2          |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 18             | 61            | 20               | 2                 | 0          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 51             | 39            | 10               | 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.   | 25             | 55            | 12               | 8                 | 0          |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 36             | 48            | 16               | 0                 | 0          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 43             | 47            | 4                | 2                 | 4          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 22             | 57            | 14               | 0                 | 8          |

Please note that not all columns total 100 due to rounding and the fact that not all parents respond to every question.

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

60. There were 30 children in the reception class at the time of the inspection. Children are admitted in September and January, initially on a part-time basis, although the majority of children very quickly become full-time members of the class. Most pupils attend local playgroups or nurseries before coming to school. The school has effective links with most of the providers and children have some time in the school in the term before admission. Attainment of the majority of children on entry to the reception class is typical of that of children of this age in Kent, as shown by county tests and assessments. Children make good progress across the areas of learning recommended for young children. By the time they are five, the majority have achieved the expected levels in all areas and are above the expected levels in language and communication and knowledge and understanding of the world.
61. Teaching and learning for children under five are good in all the areas of learning. The school has effectively implemented the national guidance for the curriculum in the Foundation Stage. Adults make good use of praise and encouragement to make clear the reasons why a child has gained success. Day-to-day assessment, especially in literacy where teaching is consistently good, effectively ensures that activities are carefully targeted to match children's abilities.

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

62. Children make good progress and show that they enjoy coming to school. Routines within the class are reinforced well and children become used to sitting at the table to complete early-morning activities as soon as they arrive in school. Teaching of personal development is good and most children are growing in confidence, developing a sense of self-worth and achievement. Children are interested in their work and the teachers encourage them to make choices of activities during the day, so that not all activities are directed. Children learn the importance of sharing equipment and co-operation, the social rules of taking turns and listening to others, because adults consistently reinforce these. They become independent in remembering routines such as taking the register to the office and changing for physical education lessons. They demonstrate suitable levels of initiative and responsibility in their use of equipment and materials. Children's concentration improves and they are able to sit and participate in literary and numeracy time, the majority of children paying good attention throughout because of the teacher's skilful presentation of the material. Almost all pupils reach the standards expected for their age, by the time that they enter Year 1.

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

63. Children make good progress in speaking and listening, reading and writing during the time they spend in reception. The majority of children exceed the expectations for their age by the time that they enter Year 1. Discussions in lessons show that children have good speaking and listening skills. For example, children respond well to questions about toys they think are suitable for a baby. They talk about what attracts a baby, what is pleasant to touch and why some toys are not suitable for babies. Children quickly learn to write their name on their work and practice forming letters correctly in short handwriting lessons. Children develop an interest in words and reading. They enjoy early letter recognition activities, especially when the teacher has a puppet to help them focus on particular words and letters. Staff build on children's confidence in these activities and they use good questioning skills to increase children's knowledge and vocabulary. They use imaginative strategies, which offer challenge, to stimulate and interest the children. Children enjoy books and the majority are reading simple books. They select books from the displays and discuss these with friends. Children take home reading books and reading diaries, which contain

very useful dialogue between parents and teachers. These show how well parents support their child's reading progress.

### **Mathematical development**

64. Children make good progress in the development of numeracy skills because of the regular opportunities provided to consolidate their learning of one to ten, and understand the need to find "more than" and "less than." Almost all children reach the standards expected for their age by the time that they enter Year 1. In addition to counting numbers aloud, children recognise numbers up to five confidently and draw circles around five shapes on a page, carefully omitting the circle where there are four or six shapes. Children are developing a good understanding of spheres, cubes, cylinders and rectangles. They know that spheres and cones are not good shapes for building towers and bridges. Children identify many of the numbers on a 100 square that have a five in them because the teacher introduces this in an imaginative and stimulating manner. In other activities there is good reinforcement of important mathematical vocabulary. For example, when building with shapes, children discuss that one brick is too big, another too small and that since one is bigger than another one, it will not make a suitable bridge. Good extension of mathematical ideas and language is provided when children sort items, print patterns with shapes, play together in the sand tray and count how many people may go to each activity. "If you come here we will have one more than five," says a girl when a boy asks to join the drawing group. He goes quietly to check the numbers at another group.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

65. Children make very good progress in the development of their knowledge and understanding of the world. The majority of children exceed the standards expected for their age by the time that they enter Year 1. They know how to use the mouse on the computer, click on correct icons to enable them to draw a variety of shapes and colour them with paint or brush lines. All complete a basic picture of their own design in the Techno lab and are very pleased when they see the printed piece at the end of the lesson. When building imaginatively with construction materials, careful questioning helps children think about what they are doing. There are regular opportunities for structured play and exploration and children enjoy these. The idea of time is developed well through the routines of the day and week, children looking carefully at the attractive timetable on the board to check what comes next. They have a good idea of the relationship between 'old' and 'in the past' from their discussion about the toys they liked when they were babies.

### **Creative development**

66. Children make good progress and almost all reach the standards expected for their age by the time that they enter Year 1. They achieve well because staff plan interesting opportunities thoroughly. Children enjoy painting and concentrate well when painting their pictures. They use brushes carefully and with some deliberation. Skilful questioning by adults makes them think about their task and improve their skills and concentration. Children make interesting models and collage with a wide variety of textures and shapes, using glue and tape purposefully and efficiently. Children enjoy singing and making music. They have a good knowledge of the names of a range of instruments and select instruments appropriately to make long, sustained or short sounds. Children know how to play loud and soft sounds on request and a group plays a marching rhythm accurately so that the other children march around the hall to their rhythm. In dance, they are encouraged to imagine that they are trees and creatures and most children enter the spirit of the picnic story well, moving quietly or quickly as the teacher tells the story of the picnic very effectively. The great majority of children achieve standards which are in line with those expected for their age, by the time that they enter Year 1.

### **Physical development**

67. Children make good progress in physical development, learning new skills in lessons and developing awareness of others when they move around the hall. Children are enthusiastic and very interested in the effects of exercise on their bodies. After the first burst of running in the hall,

one boy announces to the teacher, "My heart's beating faster now," and later a girl explains that, after all that exercise, "My heart is running fast." Teachers sensibly ensure that children have regular changes of position and time to stretch and curl, travelling around the hall with pulling and pushing movements. This helps children to sustain their concentration more easily. Children have access to the small outside area and manoeuvre the toys around the area well. A large new train has been installed and this will give additional opportunities for developing imaginative and social play, as well as physical development. Children learn to use tools, materials and equipment with increasing dexterity and demonstrate a good level of coordination when emptying and filling containers. Children use a variety of construction materials to build and make objects, which develops their manipulative skills.

68. The provision for children under five is now satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection because the teachers have made a good start to planning across the six areas of learning. They have appreciated and benefited from the support and expertise of the staff of a local Beacon school. This has helped staff to organise the rooms in such a way that there are increased opportunities for children to learn independently and to develop their own skills in planning. The good teaching in these lessons enables children to make good gains in learning because the planning is thorough and takes good account of the children's needs, as well as identifying links with the National Curriculum. The two teachers and the teaching assistant work well together and have all benefited from additional training to improve their planning over the six areas. There are suitable procedures for assessing children's attainment on entry into the reception class and before they move into Year 1. The outside play area is barely adequate for the range of activities which teachers plan, but they use the area well and have added to the facilities this week.

## ENGLISH

69. The standards achieved by pupils in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 in 2001 were well above average in reading and above average in writing when compared to all schools nationally. When compared to the results of similar schools, these results were average in reading and below average in writing. During the period 1997 to 2001, the school's results at the end of Year 2 have improved steadily and have exceeded the national trend of improvement.
70. The standards achieved by pupils in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2001 were in the top five per cent nationally when compared to similar schools. During the period 1997 to 2001, the school's results at the end of Year 6 have improved at a rate which is better than the national average. Inspection findings show that standards in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 and 4 are good in speaking and listening and in reading, and satisfactory in writing. In Years 5 and 6, standards in speaking and listening and in reading are very good, and they are good in writing. Handwriting is well developed throughout the school. At the end of Year 2, the school's results show that boys achieve significantly higher scores than girls in both reading and writing. This is a reversal of the national trend. At the end of Year 6, boys in the school score lower than girls and are further behind than the national trend.
71. This represents good improvement since the last inspection in May 1997. In that report, standards in all areas of English were judged to be average throughout the school.
72. These improved standards are due to the good quality of teaching, the improvement brought about through the good implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and the pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes. Inspection evidence shows that the attitudes of pupils to their work and their behaviour in lessons are always good or very good. This is having a significant effect on pupils' learning in English and literacy, throughout the school. Inspection evidence indicates that the school will meet its targets for Year 6 in 2002.
73. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils in both key stages to develop their speaking and listening skills. They set up the introductory part of lessons so that pupils have time to share what they know and have learnt and they acquire and use the language associated with a topic. An example of this was in a good science lesson in Year 1 when the teacher enabled all pupils to learn and understand the vocabulary related to mass. Pupils quickly learned to use qualitative

adjectives such as “shiny, rough, and prickly” to describe a range of materials, which they were to study. Teachers place an appropriate emphasis on teaching correct terminology. In a very good religious education lesson in Year 6, the teacher expected pupils to use specific vocabulary when explaining their work. When they used other words, such as “hat”, he reinforced pupils’ learning by insisting on the word “Kippah”. Throughout the school, teachers encourage pupils when working in pairs or small groups to discuss their work with each other. During these discussions, pupils consider each other’s views carefully. Thus, pupils expand the vocabulary associated with the different topics and subjects across the curriculum. Throughout the school, whole-class sessions in personal and social education provide very good opportunities for pupils to share their feelings confidently.

74. Standards of attainment throughout the school vary. In the Foundation Stage children make good progress in their communication, language and literacy. Pupils’ reading skills on entry to the school are broadly average, as shown in county tests and assessments, and they make good progress to attain above-average standards by the end of Year 2. They build steadily upon their knowledge of letter sounds learnt in Years 1 and 2. Pupils enjoy their reading. Average and below-average pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, quickly develop their knowledge and understanding of letter sounds, as a result of the good quality of the structured teaching that they experience. This helps them to tackle new and unfamiliar words. Above-average pupils demonstrate enjoyment and interest in reading when in Year 2 they predict future happenings in their favourite stories. In Years 3 and 4, the good progress is maintained. Standards at the end of Year 2 are average in reading when compared to similar schools and below average in writing. This is because the good assessment information gathered is not consistently used to fully challenge more able pupils in Years 1 and 2 or in Years 3 and 4. However, in Years 5 and 6, progress is accelerated and standards are well above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils read with improving fluency and accuracy and 11 year olds can speak with first hand knowledge of a range of different authors, including Dick King-Smith, Roald Dahl, Enid Blyton and JK Rowling. School reading record books are used well throughout the school. They are used effectively, showing good progress and regular monitoring by class teachers. These are also a good form of communication with parents. Pupils throughout the school know how the library is arranged, and know what indices and contents are and how to use them. However, when given the opportunity to retrieve books from the school’s library, most could not put this knowledge into practice. All enjoy reading and writing fiction, factual reports and poetry. However, pupils in Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4 are not sufficiently encouraged to write longer pieces of work either in literacy or in other subjects. Pupils said that they use the school library and the town library regularly. The reading skills of the majority of Year 6 pupils are sufficiently well developed to enable them to cope with most texts.
75. The standards of writing seen during the inspection, throughout the school, are in line with expectations in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 and 4, except for more able pupils who are not consistently challenged to write longer pieces in a variety of styles or in other subjects. The very good assessment and tracking of pupils’ progress means that most pupils are fully included in the English and literacy programmes provided by the school. Each pupil makes satisfactory progress according to his or her level of ability. The exception to this is more able pupils in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 and 4.
76. Throughout the school, pupils have good presentation skills. Handwriting is taught regularly and frequently enough to develop a good joined style as early as possible. Teachers have high expectations for the presentation of pupils’ work and insist on this when marking finished work. Standards of spelling and grammar, including punctuation, are satisfactory. Pupils know how to sustain stories with satisfactory attention to characterisation and plot. Some use different forms of writing appropriately, for instance, when writing a letter of complaint about “the Mad Hatter’s Tea Party” or when reporting factually about a “Swimming Competition”. For pupils in Years 3 to 6, there are regular opportunities to write for a variety of reasons in all subjects. This has a positive effect on the standards of writing achieved. In the writing of pupils of all abilities, there are many examples of the imaginative aspect of language, but less of the argumentative aspect. Writing standards, overall, throughout Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 and 4, are average, but clearly improving

in Years 5 and 6 due to very good teaching. It is presently a whole-school focus and pupils are making good progress.

77. The quality of teaching in literacy is good overall. It is good in the Foundation Stage, in Years 1 and 2, and in Years 3 and 4. In Years 5 and 6, the quality of teaching is very good or excellent. Seven lessons were seen during the inspection. In two of those lessons, the quality of teaching was very good or excellent, in four lessons it was good and in the final lesson it was satisfactory. In a very good lesson in Year 5, the teacher, by the use of good open and closed questioning, encouraged pupils to investigate the effects of placing vowels before certain letter strings such as "ight". Pupils correctly identify that a vowel placed before this string changes the sound as in "eight", while another notices that "height" is an exception to the rule.
78. The quality of marking is good, overall. All teachers mark pupils' work regularly and many frequently write comments which help pupils to improve their work. However, this is at its most effective in Years 3 to 6 when comments are regularly written which praise pupils' work and give clear guidance on how they could improve further. Learning assistants give pupils opportunities to succeed, for example, when helping two pupils of lower ability to form complex sentences by identifying the main clause and helping them gain a greater understanding of sentence structure and punctuation.
79. The co-ordination of English and literacy is good. As with all subjects, there is a nominated teacher responsible for the development of the subject. However, a great strength of the school is that all teachers work very well as a team in all areas. Areas for development are identified (at present, writing) and all contribute to a consensus view of the best way forward. This approach to the development of literacy is a major contributory factor in the good improvement since the last inspection. The assessment of pupils' progress, the use of that assessment information to track pupils progress throughout the school and the setting of individual and whole school targets also contribute strongly to the progress that pupils make. Further improvements could be made in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 and 4 by using the marking and assessment policies to guide pupils' further improvement and by fully challenging more able pupils. There are examples of information and communication technology being used in literacy lessons, and word processing of pupils' finished work is a regular practice. However, although it is included in the school's planning for information and communication technology, the use of computers in the teaching of literacy is not yet fully developed.

## **MATHEMATICS**

80. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds, standards were in line with the national average. They were well below the average for similar schools. Whilst the percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 was just above the national average, too few pupils attained the higher Level 3 and this had the effect of depressing the school's overall standard. The school recognises that boys did significantly better than girls and is attempting to deal with the issue, although it has no explanation as yet. Results have fluctuated considerably in recent years because of the impact that the performance of one or two pupils can have on statistical information in schools of this size.
81. In the 2001 tests for eleven-year-olds, standards were well above the national average and well above those in similar schools. There was no difference in the standards attained by boys and girls. Since 1998, when there was a dip in performance from the previous year, standards have risen year on year at a faster rate than nationally.
82. In Year 2, the work pupils were doing during the inspection shows that standards are similar to the national average. There is no significant difference in the standards attained by boys and girls. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment. Teachers in the infants build securely on the sound base provided in the Foundation Stage. Progress is mostly good in the juniors and pupils attain standards that are above average by the age of eleven. This is largely as a result of the high expectations and carefully targeted teaching seen in Years 5 and 6.

83. Continued improvements to the curriculum, focused monitoring of teaching and learning, and the careful tracking of pupils' progress have also contributed to the improvements in standards by the age of eleven. In order to improve the achievement of pupils by the age of seven, teachers should make more effective use of assessment information to plan work that fully challenges higher-attaining pupils. In addition, it should be used to identify pupils who are not achieving their true potential, whatever their prior attainment, and to provide them with focused teaching and additional support where appropriate. The co-ordinator has also identified the need to raise both teachers' and pupils' awareness of the next steps in learning in order to move from one level to the next.
84. Teachers ensure that mathematics lessons are fully inclusive and that all pupils are wholly involved in all mathematical activities. This enables all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, to achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Almost all make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of mathematics. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is well organised and learning support assistants are well briefed to develop their confidence and understanding. They provide strong support for both teachers and pupils. In all lessons seen, this ensured that pupils sustained their concentration well when engaged in small group tasks and during whole-class sessions. At the same time, the sensitive nature of the support encourages pupils to develop their capacity as independent learners. This support is particularly significant in Year 6 where almost half of the class is on the register of special educational needs. The school does very well to ensure that standards overall in this age group are above average. Taking this into account, pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment to reach their present standards.
85. Most pupils start school with skills in mathematics that are just below average, as shown by county tests and assessments. Although the rate of learning is not consistent, they make good gains overall in their knowledge and understanding of number and in the other aspects of mathematics, including shape, measuring and handling data, as they move through the school. In particular, as a result of the emphasis teachers place upon the basic skills, they make good progress in acquiring strategies to deal confidently with number problems.
86. By the age of seven, most pupils develop a secure knowledge of the place value of each digit in numbers to 99, confidently adding and subtracting numbers to 20 and beyond. They estimate and measure length and tell the time to the half-hour. They identify the particular features of common two- and three-dimensional shapes, and handle data confidently when carrying out a survey about school uniform.
87. By the age of eleven, most pupils have developed good skills in mental mathematics and the majority work confidently and accurately with large numbers. Most pupils have a secure grasp of place value and of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Above-average pupils successfully complete written calculations involving multiplication and division of three and four digit numbers. Most pupils understand the link between equivalent fractions, percentages and decimals and use this understanding to solve challenging everyday problems. Most pupils understand how to calculate perimeter and area. They understand the meaning of mode and median and learn to draw and interpret line, pie and block graphs. About half of the pupils with special educational needs work at a lower level but as a result of sensitive support they demonstrate good attitudes to their work and apply their skills well.
88. Pupils use their mathematics skills well to support their learning in other subjects. For example, they are involved in drawing graphs and taking accurate measurements in science, handling data in information and communication technology, using timelines in history and map work in geography. Their ability to use the classroom-based computers to aid and extend their learning is being developed well.
89. Teachers have been well trained and supported in their adoption and implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. They use it consistently to guide their planning and in this way ensure that pupils' learning builds progressively as they move through the school. This has been a major factor in the improvement to the quality of teachers' planning since the last inspection.

90. The three-part lesson structure is firmly established. Most, but not all, lessons begin with a brisk mental mathematics session that captures pupils' interest and develops and extends their calculation skills. In Year 2, for example, as a result of the teacher's quick-fire questioning pupils were keen to respond and as a result learned quickly. In other lessons, this session is occasionally too short and does not present a suitable challenge to some groups within the class. Teachers often miss opportunities to build constructively on pupils' errors in order to extend their understanding. A good feature of most lessons is the clear sharing of the purpose of lessons with pupils. This raises awareness of what they are expected to learn and helps to focus their attention. Most teachers use the plenary or final part of the lesson effectively to reinforce learning. In Year 5 it was used very successfully not only to involve pupils in assessing the gains they had made in their understanding of angles but also to discuss the next steps in their learning.
91. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, although some good teaching was seen. In Years 3 to 6, it is inconsistent but good overall. Some examples of very good teaching were seen in Years 5 and 6. Teachers throughout the school have good knowledge of the subject. They use it well to encourage pupils to discuss the good strategies they acquire for dealing with mental calculations. The very good relationships established within the classroom are the key to the most successful teaching at High Firs and are at the heart of teachers' skilful management of behaviour. Their encouraging manner ensures that both they and their pupils enjoy their lessons and the subject. Pupils see that their contributions are valued and join in discussions confidently. In Year 6, this resulted in excellent attitudes and behaviour. Arrangements for homework are good and support pupils' class work well.
92. The co-ordinator provides strong leadership and support to colleagues and manages mathematics very effectively. Through her monitoring of teaching and learning she has a very clear view of standards across the school and thorough knowledge of what is working well and what is not. Careful analysis of test results is used well to identify any areas of weakness in pupils' learning. Tracking of pupils' progress is good and individual and group targets have been successfully introduced. This is proving to be influential in raising standards at the end of Year 6.

## SCIENCE

93. The provision for learning in science is good and pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in science. The majority of pupils enter Year 1 with a knowledge and understanding of the world that is above the standard expected for their age. By the time they are seven, pupils achieve standards that are above the levels expected nationally in most areas of the subject. In the teacher assessments for pupils aged seven in 2001, pupils' performance was in line with the national average but few pupils attained at a higher level. At the age of 11, standards in National Curriculum tests were well above the national average in 2001. All pupils achieved the expected standard, but more than half the pupils attained at a higher level. The overall upward trend in results over the last few years continued and standards have risen since the last inspection, especially for pupils aged 11. Standards are well above those in similar schools at eleven. Inspection findings are that current pupils achieve standards that are above the national average, although there is a high number of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6. Both boys and girls achieve well in science.
94. There are particular strengths in the teaching and learning of science, including a programme of work that places a strong emphasis on practical scientific enquiry and experimentation. Topics are systematically re-visited at a higher level as pupils move through the school. The use of assessment and tests to identify areas of weakness in pupils' learning and comprehensive assessment of pupils' progress at the end of each unit of work are good. Consistently good teaching in science, with very good and excellent teaching in Years 5 and 6, enables pupils to achieve high standards at the end of Year 6. Careful attention to the use of specific scientific vocabulary is steadily developed throughout the school. Pupils' enthusiasm for the subject and their enjoyment of the activities are very good.
95. An area for further development is more use of information and communication technology in science.



96. Pupils in Year 1 think hard as they try to find words to describe an array of materials on their table. If they cannot think of one, they invent words, which adds more fun to the activity. With very focused support from a teaching assistant, lower-attaining pupils sort materials into two categories, hard and soft, with understanding, whilst higher-attaining pupils decide how they wish to present their work, in table or sentence form. They do this very confidently and discuss their decisions about the objects with their partners. As part of their work on electricity, pupils in Year 2 make decisions about which household items heat, light up, make sounds or move because of the use of electricity. They discuss with their partner the fact that a drill makes a noise when used, but it also moves, so how can they decide? This brings them on to a discussion of the primary purpose of each piece of equipment. At the end of their practical work of categorising the pictures of these items, pupils admit that the trickiest item was the iron. "We thought it was move because it moves when we push it." Teachers use these lessons as an opportunity to develop initiative and skills of working in small groups. Discussion with the pupils shows that they have a good understanding of their tasks and the majority apply themselves very well.
97. In Year 3 pupils extend their investigation into different types of materials and plants. They improve their skills in arranging labels around drawing of plants, the body and rocks. Pupils in Year 4 revise previous work on forces and extend their learning about magnets further when they carry out an investigation to see whether all magnets are equally strong. "I can control the movement of this spring with my magnet," proudly claims one boy and a girl, equally confidently, demonstrates how she has discovered how to move her spring by remote control from the magnet. They identify items that 'repel' and 'attract' and higher-attaining pupils describe the reasons for this very accurately.
98. Pupils in Year 5 work in companionable quiet as they compile information about the earth, sun and moon in fact files, or design posters which give important information about the orbit of the earth around the sun. They use notes made when watching a video earlier in the lesson and information they find in books and on the Internet to ensure that information is correct and relevant. The teaching of good note-taking skills in literacy is reinforced well in this lesson and there was good use of information and communication technology as a useful source of facts and figures. Through very skilled questioning the teacher ensures that pupils are able to link what they find in one book with information found elsewhere. In presentations at the end of lessons, pupils speak with clarity and enthusiasm about their work in the lesson. Pupils who design posters also check the accuracy of their information and present their work with very effective and subtle use of pastels. When the high quality work of one pupil is praised, another pupil says spontaneously and appreciatively, "She's an artist, that's why!"
99. As they create their food chains, pupils in Year 6 demonstrate good use of technical vocabulary and basic understanding of the need for all food chains to start with a producer. Pupils think logically about how humans affect the food chain and show good awareness of the problems caused by hunting and the destruction of the rain forest. The teacher and teaching assistants expand pupils' thinking and responses very effectively through use of probing and thoughtful questions. There is a working 'buzz' in the classroom but it is never noisy because pupils are involved in their tasks and discuss their work quietly and sensibly with each other.
100. Learning throughout the school is good and pupils make good progress, both in individual lessons and in the longer term. The pupils build on what they have learned before, recalling terms and equipment used in previous years well. Good support is given to pupils with special educational needs and teachers simplify and adapt written tasks accordingly. For example, in some lessons the teacher or teaching assistant writes down ideas for a group of pupils, asking open-ended questions to help pupils to extend their answers and thinking. Higher-attaining pupils are usually given suitable opportunities to work at a different level and are particularly helped when they have separate tasks to complete, rather than being asked to do more work on the same task.
101. The quality of teaching is good and in Years 5 and 6 it is very good and excellent. Some very good features of teaching are evident in lessons. Teachers use a wide range of interesting resources to ensure that pupils are purposefully involved in a range of practical activities. They

take care to ensure that clear explanations are given to pupils so that they can have success with practical tasks and learn from each other. Scientific terms are introduced and used effectively. The practical work develops pupils' social skills and understanding of taking turns very effectively. This was seen in Year 6 when pupils played a game to demonstrate likely food chains and when pupils in Year 5 shared books and notes. In the best lessons, pupils are fully engrossed in their task and noise levels are minimal. Good behaviour and learning are the result when pupils find the subject interesting and exciting. Pupils in Year 5 remind the teacher that they have to return from their travels into space at the end of the lesson and listen reflectively to the music from the Planet Suite before they return to earth. When pupils come into the classroom and see items set out, they look forward to the lesson. As Year 1 pupils said on entry to their lesson, "Look. We've got things to do!" Pupils want to learn more, concentrate for extended periods on practical activities and usually try hard with the written elements.

102. Teachers' planning is good and they use a wide variety of methods to maintain pupils' enthusiasm for the subject and to develop understanding of the scientific language used. Lessons are interesting and teachers strike a fine balance between leading pupils to expected conclusions and allowing them to find out for themselves. Questions are carefully phrased and rephrased to enable pupils to answer the questions. For example, in Year 6, pupils are asked, "Are there more daisies in the world than sparrow hawks?" The teacher urges pupils to think logically and this leads to several connected questions and extended discussion. There is some helpful marking of pupils' work where pupils are reminded about the presentation or completion of their work and given an indication of how they can improve the content or organisation of their writing next time. Teachers and support staff work well together to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are able to participate fully in the lessons. Higher-attaining pupils are given additional challenges in their work, particularly in Years 5 and 6, so that they have opportunities to continue their research and investigations at a higher level.
103. The management of the subject is very good and effective use is made of test results. The co-ordinator leads the subject very well and regularly monitors teachers' planning and pupils' work. There are some good examples of observational drawing skills but more use could be made of information and communication technology across the school, especially with work involving comparisons of information when presented in different types of graphs. There are good resources for the range of topics currently being studied.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

104. By the time they are seven and 11 years old, pupils produce work that is in line with national expectations. Pupils use a wide range of media and techniques and develop their skills systematically as they move through the school. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve at least satisfactorily because the activities are planned thoughtfully and pupils are encouraged to develop their own ideas.
105. By the time they are seven, pupils use paint, collage, pens and pencils to create an interesting and imaginative range of illustrative work, some of high quality. For example, pupils in Year 2 produce busy, lively pictures of dangerous places and objects in their personal, social and health education lesson. This links well with their work on electricity in science. They draw and colour maps of islands very neatly and appropriately to show where the treasure is hidden. In their work on natural objects, pupils collect twigs, branches and pebbles in the school grounds and make particularly good drawings of the twigs, which are full of movement and interesting shapes. Using these as a stimulus, pupils create attractive patterns with the outline shapes of the objects they found.
106. Seven to eleven year olds are taught skills effectively and make careful use of their sketchbooks. These contain interesting planning ideas and preparation for using certain techniques. Pupils in Year 3 practise making marks with charcoal and pastel. Some pupils produce very intricate designs and interesting shape patterns, including some work on the computer. They produce emotive writing on a series of pictures of Jesus. They are asked, "What does the artist think

Jesus looks like?" and pupils write clearly about the wide range of portrayals by a variety of artists. This is a very good link with religious education and this is also reflected in the postcards they have written and drawn about a meeting with Jesus.

107. Pupils in Year 4 design an interesting or unusual seat for a specific purpose and write down their ideas for building up a sequence in stories and patterns. They link religious education well with their artwork when they draw realistic scenes from the life of Moses. Pupils' observational drawing work shows an increasing understanding of ways in which to give added form and depth to their line drawings. This is shown very effectively in Year 5 when pupils draw still life pictures of bottles, musical instruments and shells. They try out their ideas in their sketchbooks before composing a picture in the style of Cézanne. As a result, they produce good groupings of the items they select and the finished pastels and paintings have vitality and vibrant colourings. Pastel work in Year 5 is of a high quality because the skills are taught well and pupils make good use of colour, blending pastels very subtly and effectively to add interest and life to their work. Year 6 pupils produce an amusing range of headwear for characters at the Mad Hatter's Tea Party because they think hard about the characters in the story. Pupils create a wide range of individual designs because they think about the details in the story and use several different techniques to make their hats amusing and attractive.
108. Pupils look forward to their art and design lessons. As they move through the school, they develop a good perception of how artists use colour and shape effectively and this gives them confidence to attempt their own designs in a similar manner.
109. Based on discussions with pupils and teachers, looking at pupils' work and teachers' planning, it can be said that teaching and learning in art and design are at least satisfactory and pupils say that they enjoy their lessons. Teachers promote the use of sketchbooks well and this helps pupils to rehearse their ideas and skills. Art is used extensively in subjects such as religious education, history and science, through observational drawings. For example, pupils in Year 5 produce an interesting display of parchments with information about the Five Pillars of Wisdom and what the special words mean to the Islamic people. Year 6 have produced colourful dragon masks, to celebrate Chinese New Year, which add effectively to the religious education displays in the hall. There is planned use of a range of programs in information and communication technology. This is used well for pupils throughout the school to prepare different designs and link with work done on the digital camera or for display.
110. There is currently no co-ordinator for the subject but there are clear guidelines for staff to use and ensure that pupils improve and extend their skills and understanding as they move through the school. Pottery Club makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning because skills such as making coil pots are taught directly and pupils have opportunities to design and experiment in a warm, relaxing atmosphere. There are limited opportunities for pupils to meet with other artists or see work in galleries or museums. Pupils' work is displayed very effectively around the school and teachers make good use of all available space to display pupils' work. In some classes, pupils take responsibility for arranging displays, which is valuable experience for them. Art and design make a good contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

111. During the inspection, little teaching of the subject was taking place and only one lesson was seen. Therefore, judgements have been based also upon discussions with teachers and pupils, teachers' plans and other documents and samples of pupils' previous work provided by the school. These show that standards are in line with national expectations for pupils aged seven and eleven. They have opportunities to work with a reasonable variety of materials and techniques and a satisfactory range of skills and knowledge is being developed. There is no difference in standards between boys and girls.
112. At the time of the last inspection, standards were judged to be just satisfactory. Since then the school has adopted national guidelines to support teachers' planning and these are being implemented consistently. The rate of improvement therefore has been satisfactory. In order to

raise standards further, pupils need to be working with a wider range of equipment, materials and tools. They should learn more varied methods of cutting, jointing and fixing, and acquire the specific skills of the subject more systematically as they move through the school.

113. In Year 1, pupils make good progress, using their knowledge of simple levers and sliding mechanisms to create moving pictures. Linked effectively to their study of homes and houses, they produce labelled drawings and, using string, a hole punch and adhesive tape, they investigate the construction of simple hinges. In Year 2, they construct moving vehicles for a specific purpose from junk materials although the quality of their labelled sketches has not moved on sufficiently.
114. In Year 3, pupils design and make a sandwich snack, gaining valuable experience in evaluating a familiar product. Their work is guided by helpful prompt sheets provided by the teacher to focus their learning on the essential elements of design and technology. For example, they are required to list *What I will need*, *What I will do* and to sketch *What it will look like*. This could usefully have been extended to include a written evaluation.
115. In Year 4, pupils are set the task of designing and making a storybook with pop-up pictures. In Year 5 they make musical instruments.
116. In discussion with pupils in Year 6, they demonstrate a broad understanding of the nature of design and technology as a subject. They distinguish between what worked well and what could be improved and clearly had enjoyed their task of designing and making a rugby shirt for Saracens RFC. This provided opportunities to work with textiles and fabric paints and to experience both hand and machine sewing techniques.
117. Inspection evidence shows that, overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but it could be better. In the one lesson seen, teaching was unsatisfactory. Although the teacher provided a good range of books to stimulate pupils' interest, the strategies used were not always effective in channelling their natural enthusiasm into successful learning. While there were good links with literacy, there was not enough teaching of the specific skills of design and technology to meet the objectives of the lesson.
118. Design and technology has not been a priority for development for some time. This helps to explain why the school has not yet formed a clear enough view of standards or of the specific nature of the strengths and weaknesses in provision. As a result, the quality of pupils' designs does not show enough progression from one year to the next to enable pupils to attain higher standards. The range of tools and materials available is limited. For example, there are insufficient construction kits, including those with electrical and mechanical components, to support the design process. Information and communication technology is not yet being used widely enough to support and enhance pupils' design skills.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

119. Standards in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in geography are in line with the levels expected nationally for their ages. These standards have been successfully maintained since the last inspection. A significant improvement during this period is the whole-school plan that allocates topics for study to each age group. These are based on the national guidelines for geography adopted by the school to support teachers in their planning. This ensures that pupils cover a balanced geography curriculum and develop specific subject skills in a structured and systematic manner as they move through the school. As a result, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve satisfactorily. The limited opportunities for pupils to take part in educational visits is a significant weakness throughout the school. As a result, their fieldwork skills in investigations outside the classroom are less well developed.
120. From the earliest stages, teachers begin to promote a sense of place through the study of the school site and grounds in Year 1. This is broadened to provide opportunities for pupils to begin to make judgements about their neighbourhood when they investigate ways of making the local area safer. By the time they are seven, pupils are familiar with the 4 points of the compass and they

use simple co-ordinates to locate places on their maps of Treasure Island. Teachers encourage the accurate use of geographical vocabulary to describe features of the landscape, such as sea, sand, hotel and pier in the unit called At the Seaside.

121. In Year 3, pupils learn about the major climate zones of the world. They use the appropriate vocabulary, including polar, desert, tropical and temperate to identify these locations on a world map. In Year 4, they learn about a village in India as a contrasting locality in a less economically developed country. In Year 5 they investigate an environmental issue. They gain a good insight into the impact of people on the environment, both positive and negative, in their proposed pedestrianisation of Court Crescent. They carry out surveys, write letters and make good use of information and communication technology to support their learning. Pupils achieved well in this study because the teaching encouraged them to pose their own questions and to make decisions after considering a range of options.
122. Pupils in Year 6 talk enthusiastically about their work with good recall of the topics studied. They have a satisfactory awareness of distant localities and demonstrate sound map work and research skills using an atlas, a globe and a local Ordnance Survey map. They use their scientific knowledge well to explain how the processes of evaporation and condensation contribute to the water cycle.
123. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is stronger in Years 5 and 6 where teachers demonstrate very good knowledge of the subject. As a result, they set interesting and challenging tasks designed to develop pupils' geographical study skills and promote independent learning. In Year 1, the teacher's careful questioning established a sound understanding by pupils of the need for each of them to have an address to identify a particular location. She used their contributions effectively to develop this understanding. However, there were missed opportunities to extend pupils' mapping skills. In Year 4, the teacher again used a good level of questioning, leading pupils to make thoughtful judgements about village life in Chembakolli. He skilfully showed the class how to turn their opinions into questions for further research.
124. There are no formal procedures for monitoring teaching and learning by direct observation but the co-ordinator has a clear view of standards attained by pupils through her regular sampling of their work. She has started to rectify the lack of resources for learning identified at the time of the last inspection by purchasing atlases and globes. An audit is needed to ensure that there are sufficient resources to support each of the units of study.

## **HISTORY**

125. In history the standards reported at the time of the last inspection have been successfully maintained. Pupils throughout the school attain the standards expected for their ages. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve satisfactorily. They make sound progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of history. They are introduced to a good range of sources of information, including artefacts, books and pictures, the Internet and CD-ROMs to encourage them to ask and answer questions about the past.
126. Teachers successfully encourage pupils' interest in the past initially by focusing their attention on changes in their own lives and in the lives of familiar adults. They go on to acquire knowledge about people and events in the more distant past by the end of Year 2, and by listening to stories they begin to appreciate the difference between fact and fiction. This was evident in their study of the Great Fire of London as they explored the different methods of recording history. Their knowledge and understanding of the passing of time are effectively promoted through the regular use of timelines and the sequencing of episodes in the lives of people such as Florence Nightingale. Their learning is successfully extended when they consider the impact that she has had on people's lives.

127. In Year 3 pupils explore the question *Why do people move house?* The teacher makes good use of questions such as this to focus pupils' thinking on the reasons why the Romans, the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings might have come to Britain. They begin to understand that the past may be divided into periods and begin to think about the impact of the Roman invasion on the lives of the Celts. In their study of the Tudors in Year 4, pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to practise extended writing in support of their good literacy skills. Their research and independent study skills are effectively promoted in Year 5 through their work on Victorian England.
128. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils have developed very mature attitudes to their work. They represent historical information in a variety of ways and have learned the important skill of identifying key facts when investigating a particular topic. They show considerable pride in their written and recorded work on Britain since the 1930s. Their books are well organised and the work is neatly presented.
129. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, although examples of good and very good teaching were seen. Most teachers' knowledge of history is good. This was evident in Year 3 where the teacher had prepared a variety of pictures to sort, leading to interesting small group discussions as pupils attempted, with considerable success, to identify *Invaders* and *Settlers*. They plan their lessons well and most think carefully about a variety of tasks to motivate pupils. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic learners who are eager to ask and answer historical questions. Occasionally this natural enthusiasm is not channelled into successful learning and results in restless behaviour that has a negative impact on the pace of learning. In the most successful lesson, pupils in Year 6 considered the feelings and emotions of mother and son during the evacuation of children during World War 2. Very good teamwork by the teacher and learning support assistants resulted in an all-inclusive approach that ensured very good learning by all groups of pupils including the significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs.
130. Teachers are currently doing well to maintain these standards, as there is currently no co-ordinator for the subject. Standards are being maintained through the overview of the Senior Management Team. Improvements since the last inspection include the adoption of national guidelines to support teachers' planning and to ensure the progressive development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. A particular strength of the history curriculum is the variety of links that teachers establish with other subjects, including literacy, information and communication technology, and geography. This helps to motivate pupils and make learning more purposeful. A significant weakness is the lack of educational visits to museums and other places of interest to enrich pupils' learning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

131. The standards achieved by pupils by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with what is expected nationally. This is good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be below expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6.
132. All pupils are fully included in the school's information and communication technology work. Pupils of all ages and abilities regularly use computers to draw pictures, to write stories, poems and factual text. Computers are sometimes used in other subjects. For example, in a very good history lesson in Year 6, pupils used computers to write letters in reply to a letter from their son who was an evacuee. This lesson combined learning in information and communication technology, literacy and history, and is a good, although not regular enough, example of pupils' work being undertaken within several subjects, including information and communication technology in one lesson. Pupils have satisfactory keyboard and mouse skills. Older pupils build on these skills and manipulate text and graphics on screen. Modelling and control technology are taught adequately, and there are just enough experiences for pupils to model the interior of a classroom or to control a programmable robot for them to make progress. The school has made good progress with its improvement plan for information and communication technology, and the information and communication technology suite has been opened ahead of time. All teachers have undertaken training and the suite is now used regularly by every class. The areas that need

further development are the use of computers in teaching and learning in all other subjects and the areas of modelling and control technology. These are the next steps in the school's planning.

133. Pupils thoroughly enjoy working with computers and all have equal opportunities to do so. They show very good co-operation when asked to work in pairs and good skills when working alone. Their behaviour is always very good in these situations.
134. Five lessons in information and communication technology were observed during the inspection. The quality of teaching in three of these was good and it was satisfactory in the other two. Combining this with evidence in displays around the school, from watching pupils using computers during their breaks and lunchtime and from talking to pupils, the quality of teaching in information and communication technology is good overall.
135. The school has improved its use of the resources available since the last inspection. There are computers in all classrooms. There is very good provision of equipment in the "Techno Lab", named by the pupils. This is Internet linked and pupils use it for e-mail and Internet research, within appropriate procedures for safe use. Teachers regularly plan to use computers, and pupils of all ages and abilities, including those with special educational needs, regularly use the machines in all classrooms.
136. The co-ordinator has a clear view of future development and the school is well placed to improve even further.

## MUSIC

137. Pupils aged seven and 11 attain the standards expected nationally for their age and enjoy their music-making activities, particularly enjoying the challenge of singing or clapping in rounds. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make at least satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
138. In lessons and assemblies, pupils in Year 1 and 2 build up a good repertoire of songs and switch their singing to different speeds and other moods because the songs are chosen carefully. Pupils sing rhythmically and tunefully. Their diction is clear and they listen carefully to the music that comes between verses. They enjoy singing songs as two-part rounds. Pupils in Year 1 listen carefully as they tap rhythms with their feet or clap with their hands whilst the rest of the class sing. They try hard to explain the difference between beat, pulse and rhythm.
139. Pupils in Year 3 listen carefully to a short passage from a Beethoven sonata and use notation to write down the rhythmic pattern they hear. The majority of pupils know how to write crotchets and quavers and write the pattern confidently and correctly. When pupils clap the rhythm in a three-part round, they hold their rhythms well and show the same skills when listening to a second piece of music. Pupils in Year 5 show great concentration and good skills when they work in small groups to write a graphic score about one of the planets. They know Gustav Holst's 'Planet Suite' well and create a composition that illustrates the differing moods of the music. Pupils make thoughtful alterations to their work as they listen to the finished piece. They evaluate each other's music in a positive manner so that they are clear about the strengths of what they have done and what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils who are learning to play the cornet and clarinet with a visiting teacher share their skills with others and make a valuable contribution to the quality of the music.
140. Pupils in Year 6 know that South Asian music, and music in some other countries, has different rhythm patterns. They maintain a clapping rhythm in a five-part round well and enjoy leading the class in switching from one rhythm to another, clapping on knees, hands and shoulders. Pupils do this very successfully and enthusiastically.
141. Pupils enjoy playing instruments. They work very sensibly together and share instruments well. Levels of concentration are good and pupils listen well.
142. The quality of teaching in the lessons seen was good overall. Teachers provide a wide range of interesting opportunities and musical experiences that enable pupils to learn how to listen to music and improve their skills in playing instruments and composing. Teachers plan lessons effectively to include appropriate practice and extension of what pupils know and can do. Staff encourage pupils to participate with enthusiasm.
143. The selection of music for assemblies is helpful in providing pupils with opportunities to listen and reflect upon the music they hear around them. Pupils provide musical items for school productions and some attend the very successful and enjoyable Swanley Music Festival. There are recorder and choir clubs during the year and a few pupils learn good skills in playing clarinet, trumpet, cornet and saxophone with visiting teachers. They are given opportunities to play in assemblies and special services, which they appreciate.
144. The co-ordinator, who has a considerable interest in and enthusiasm for music, provides good support for other colleagues. There are clear guidelines for teaching all elements over the year. Resources are satisfactory overall but there is very little space available for careful storage of the instruments. Music makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION



145. Standards in physical education are in line with those normally expected nationally at the ages of seven and eleven.
146. The school has a hall, which is an appropriate size for physical education, and the school is well equipped with large-scale and high-level equipment. Dance is a well-developed aspect of physical education throughout the school and pupils are used to enjoying dance. Although no lessons were seen in dance, this was judged from talking to pupils.
147. The teaching of the skills of traditional games is good throughout the school and a satisfactory range of extra-curricular sports clubs supplements this. These include soccer, for boys and girls in Years 3 to 6, and teams are entered into local mixed-gender leagues. Other games and sports, including athletics are provided according to season. The attendance at these clubs is good and they have a positive effect on the standards of the pupils who attend.
148. The school has established very good links with sports organisations in the area, such as the Saracens rugby union team, Charlton Athletic Association Football team and Kent County Cricket Club. Soccer and cricket coaching are provided at regular times of the year. These links enhance the standards achieved by the pupils involved. The school provides coaching in cricket, soccer and athletics according to season and takes part in competitions with other local schools.
149. The standards achieved in gymnastics are in line with expectations for many pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils learn to build sequences of movement, changing both their pace and level of movement as they progress. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are fully included in all physical education lessons.
150. The organisation of swimming is good. Parents deliver their children to the local swimming pool at the normal time that school starts. This means that the time taken for travelling to and from the pool is drastically reduced. Almost all pupils achieve the standards expected nationally in swimming by the time that they leave the school.
151. Because of other timetabling pressures, only two lessons could be observed in physical education, consequently no overall judgement on the quality of teaching is possible. Teachers' planning is satisfactory and is linked to the schemes of work. Teachers dress appropriately for physical education. They provide good opportunities for warm up and cool down at the beginning and end of lessons. Teachers demonstrate exercises effectively to the pupils during lessons and, consequently, pupils are able to improve their own skills. Teachers are aware of pupils' abilities and monitor their progress accordingly. All pupils enjoy their learning in physical education and their attitudes to the subject are good. Almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress throughout the school.
152. The level of leadership in physical education is good. The quality and range of resources are good and effective use is made of them. The co-ordinator has developed a system of assessment for the subject but this is not yet fully in place.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

153. Throughout the school, pupils' standards and progress in religious education are in line with the expectations of the Kent Locally Agreed syllabus. This constitutes satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.
154. In Years 1 and 2, pupils write in their own words and draw pictures about "My favourite toy". They study and write about the story of "The Loaves and Fishes", showing a good understanding of the story and can retell it in their own words. In Year 3, pupils have sent postcards home telling the story of when they met Jesus and saw him cure the sick man. The stamps for these postcards have been designed on a computer and are representations of Jesus entering Jerusalem on a donkey. In Years 5 and 6, pupils have written about the Islamic faith in "How do Muslims express their beliefs through practices?" They consider and write about Wudu, Shahadah and Haji. Year 6

pupils have also made bright colourful masks in a celebration of “Chinese New Year”. They study the parables and develop an understanding of the meaning behind the stories.

155. Religious education is often taught using the school’s good range of religious artefacts. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 6 when the teacher was helping pupils to understand what a synagogue is, he used a model of the scrolls, a Kippah and a large picture of a Rabbi. These were focuses for pupils to use as reference points when expressing their opinions and, together with the very good quality of the teacher’s questioning and the pupils’ very good attitudes and behaviour, learning was very good for all. This lesson also included an example of the very good level of inclusion of all pupils when an Islamic pupil was encouraged to talk about their regular Arabic classes because it was important to their religious beliefs. All in the class showed the greatest respect. This made a very good contribution to pupils’ personal and moral development. All pupils study stories from other major belief systems, including Judaism, Islam and Buddhism. They gain a satisfactory understanding of festivals such as Divali and study the story of Rama and Sita.
156. The learning from Years 1 and 2 is built upon satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6. Pupils continue to study the Bible, writing stories from the lives of Jesus and the Apostles in their own words, showing a clear grasp of the salient points. They learn about major Christian festivals and also about those of other major religions such as Hanukkah and Passover.
157. Two lessons were observed; one was a satisfactory lesson in Year 2 and the other a very good lesson in Year 6. The quality of the teaching, considering the standards reflected in the scrutiny of pupils’ work, confirms that standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with expectations. Taking all evidence together confirms the judgement that teaching of religious education is generally satisfactory. There is a good range of resources, including artefacts, to support the guidelines. The subject is well planned and links with the local church are good. Religious education makes a sound contribution to pupils’ spiritual and moral development.
158. Together with the charitable fund-raising undertaken by pupils and their families, the school’s social values are well supported by assemblies and the teaching of religious education. There are some good cross-curricular links with literacy, history, geography and personal, social and health education. The school recognises the need to develop local visits to, and visitors from, other places of worship to extend pupils’ understanding of other faiths.