

INSPECTION REPORT

Whitstable Junior School

Whitstable

LEA: Kent

Unique reference number: 118364

Headteacher: Gill Moody

Reporting inspector: Paul Canham
1353

Dates of inspection: 17 - 20 September 2001

Inspection number: 194682

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Oxford Street Whitstable Kent
Postcode:	CT5 1DB
Telephone number:	01227 272385
Fax number:	01227 772075
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Joe Sharratt
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1353	<i>Paul Canham</i>	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Science; Design and technology.	What sort of school it is; The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well are pupils taught; How well is the school led and managed?
9388	<i>Anthony Mundy</i>	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils; How well does the school work in partnership with parents.
11901	<i>Par Lowe</i>	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art; Equal opportunities; Mathematics; Music.	
26292	<i>Helen Mundy</i>	<i>Team inspector</i>	Information and communication technology; Religious education.	
23658	<i>Stephen Parker</i>	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; English as an additional language; Physical education.	How effective are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
15590	<i>Susan Slocombe</i>	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography; History; Special education needs.	

The inspection contractor was:

*Westminster Education Consultants
Old Garden House
The Lanterns
Bridge Lane
London
SW11 3AD*

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved?	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	6
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	9
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	10
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	15
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	16
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	19
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	20
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	24

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Whitstable is a popular junior school which is larger than most schools of the same type. Currently, there are 358 pupils on roll, including 194 boys and 164 girls aged from seven to 11 years. The school serves the needs of pupils from a wide diversity of backgrounds. Almost all pupils are white and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is slightly below the national average. The proportion of pupils with some form of special educational need, including those with statements, is more than twice the national average. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school in Year 3 is below average when compared to national expectations, with weaknesses in language, literacy and numeracy skills.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is an effective one which meets the wide ranging needs of its pupils. The attainment of pupils in the current Year 6 is at the expected levels in nearly all subjects, and above those expected in art and music. Good teaching contributes to good levels of achievement and to the effective provision for pupils' personal development. The newly appointed headteacher, supported by committed staff and governors, is beginning to set priorities for the school's work and raise achievement further. Pupils benefit from a well-structured and rich learning environment. The school provides good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Good teaching ensures that pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in a balanced curriculum which adds richness to pupils' learning.
- Provision is good for pupils' social, moral and cultural development and reflects the school's strong values and high expectations.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their work. Their behaviour is good and they want to achieve. Pupils enjoy very good relationships with each other, and develop into mature individuals by the time they leave school.
- The school places a high priority on staffing and members of staff are used particularly well when supporting and managing pupils.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Standards in design and technology.
- The role of governors and subject co-ordinators in the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work, with the help of a detailed school improvement plan.
- Assessment procedures.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made considerable progress since its last inspection in March 1997. Pupils have continued to achieve well despite the significant changes to the school's senior management team. Standards have improved substantially in information and communication technology and art. The quality of teaching has improved significantly, and is now good overall. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has been improved and it is good overall. Weaknesses in subject guidance have been successfully addressed and teachers' detailed planning includes clear learning intentions closely matched to the needs of pupils. Good assessment procedures have been introduced in English and mathematics, though they remain underdeveloped in other subjects. The accommodation has been developed substantially to include a new classroom block, including specialist teaching accommodation, and an all-weather outdoor playing surface. The school includes all the required information in its publications to parents.

STANDARDS

The table below 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
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	C	D	C	D
mathematics	C	C	C	C
science	C	C	C	D

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	
<i>D</i>	
<i>well below average</i>	E

The proportions of pupils reaching levels above those expected for their age are similar to the average in English and above the average in mathematics. Over time, improvement in the three core subjects is just below the national trend. However, the most recent 2001 national tests indicate improvements in standards in English and science, though detailed figures are not yet available to allow comparison with other schools. A slippage in standards in mathematics is due largely to the disruption to the management of the subject, though this is now more settled. Pupils enter the school in Year 3 with below average levels of attainment and the level of progress overall represents good achievement. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that, by the time pupils leave the school aged 11, a large majority reach the expected standards in nearly all subjects, including English, mathematics and science, and above the expected levels in art and music. However, standards have yet to reach the expected level in design and technology. The school has set challenging targets for English and mathematics for the Year 2002 and the most recent results indicate that it is well on its way to achieving them. The school is in a good position to raise achievement levels and improve standards further.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes and they are keen to learn. Good attitudes contribute considerably to the progress made in lessons and to the levels of achievement overall.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good overall in lessons and around the school. Pupils clearly understand what is expected of them. Eight pupils have been excluded for limited periods during the past year.
Personal development and relationships	Good. From an early age, pupils are given a broad range of opportunities to take responsibility. Very good relationships are a distinctive feature of the school community.
Attendance	Attendance levels are satisfactory and just below the national average for similar schools.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 7 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good

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

The consistently good teaching is the main reason pupils achieve so well by the time they leave at the age of 11. Examples of good and very good teaching were seen throughout the school. A particular strength is the consistency and effectiveness with which teachers, and other adults, manage pupils both within and outside the classroom. The positive and supportive approach helps pupils to feel valued and gain confidence in their learning. Pupils benefit from detailed planning which ensures that they are given tasks that closely match their stages of learning. Lesson targets are stated clearly to the class at the outset, and lessons have a strong sense of purpose. Good and very good teaching was seen in several subjects, including literacy, numeracy, science, music, physical education and information communication technology. Careful attention is given to pupils with special educational needs and to those with English as an additional language.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and the school places good emphasis on the teaching of English and mathematics. Pupils are encouraged to develop their confidence and express themselves in music and art, although design and technology is not allocated sufficient time. Literacy and numeracy skills are used particularly well to underpin learning throughout the school. The good range of extra-curricular activities gives pupils additional opportunities to develop their skills and interests.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school makes excellent use of outside agencies. Pupils are given individual education plans, with specific targets to guide their development in language and mathematics. Their targets are regularly reviewed and updated so that the pupils make consistently good progress. Support in class is well planned so that all pupils take full part in the main activities.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	An outside specialist allows the needs of these pupils to be analysed in depth, leading to the design of good quality individual learning plans
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development and teaches them right from wrong. It helps pupils to develop personal responsibility, trust and mutual respect. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for spiritual and cultural development, particularly through English, religious education, art and music.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Some good procedures ensure that pupils are well cared for. Staff members know the pupils well, and take great care of them in a safe and supportive environment. Sound child protection procedures ensure that members of staff are fully aware of the needs of pupils. Systems for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents are involved in a range of activities, though the headteacher recognises the need to strengthen links further.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The very recently appointed headteacher is beginning to set priorities for the work of the school. These will focus on raising further pupils' achievement with the help of a stable and effective senior management team and the use of formal monitoring and evaluation procedures.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities. Members are supportive, reflective, and well informed about the work of the school. They use their professional expertise and knowledge of the community to promote and improve the school and its work. However, they have yet to monitor the school's work through formal monitoring procedures
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has yet to establish a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating its performance in all subjects. Information from assessment and test data is analysed for trends of achievement in some subjects
The strategic use of resources	The school's budget is well managed. Spending decisions are carefully considered, and the school applies the principles of best value.

Staff members work hard to overcome the difficulties caused by the layout of the buildings. The learning areas are enhanced with high quality displays, reflecting the range and depth of the curriculum. The accommodation is satisfactory, although pupils have already benefited from the recent development of a new block of classrooms and computer suite. The school places high priority on staffing, and pupils benefit significantly from additional support provided in lessons and around the school. Resources are adequate overall.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • Children are encouraged to work hard and they make good progress • The school is well managed • Children are helped to become mature and responsible, and they behave well • The good teaching • Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour • Homework that is consistently set • Information about how their children are getting on • Working closely with parents

Inspection evidence supports the positive views expressed by parents in response to the questionnaire, and at the parents' meeting with the registered inspector. In contrast to the views of some parents, behaviour was judged to be good during the inspection and the homework seen supported pupil's learning. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had been in post for only two weeks. She recognises the need to develop a close liaison with parents following an extended period of uncertainty and of disruption to the school's leadership and management.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The results for the national tests in 2000 show that standards for pupils aged 11 were similar to the national average in English and mathematics, and below average in science. When compared with those of schools having a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were average in mathematics and below average in English and science. The proportions of pupils reaching levels higher than those expected for their age were above the average in mathematics, near to the average in English, and below the average in science. When the three subjects are taken into consideration, there has been a slight downward trend when compared with the national picture, although the most recent results indicate that this has been arrested.

2. The most recent 2001 national tests and assessments indicate further improvements in standards in English and science, though detailed figures are not yet available to allow comparison with other schools. A slippage in standards in mathematics is due largely to the disruption to the co-ordination of the subject over recent years. The management of mathematics is now more settled.

3. Pupils enter the school in Year 3 with below average levels of attainment and with particular weaknesses in writing, speaking and listening. Most of those with the lowest attainment on entry are boys, and many are particularly weak in writing. Throughout the school, almost 50 per cent of pupils have special educational needs. A significant proportion of these pupils are boys with behavioural and emotional difficulties; at times, they are inattentive and have difficulty remaining on task. However, pupils with specific learning difficulties are identified early by the school and are given additional help by some experienced and well-qualified support assistants. For example, in English, pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are given simpler versions of the tasks set for other pupils. With additional support they make good progress in expressing their meaning. In consequence, boys make particularly good progress. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that by the time pupils leave school aged 11, the large majority reach the expected standards in nearly all subjects, including English, mathematics and science, and above the expected levels in the creative and performing subjects such as art and music. This level of progress overall represents good achievement. However, standards have yet to reach the expected level in design and technology.

4. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that pupils made good gains in their knowledge and understanding in 62 per cent per cent of the lessons observed, and satisfactory progress in all but 2 per cent of the remaining lessons. This good picture is mirrored in the work samples, which also showed good gains in knowledge and understanding over time. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is good when measured against their individual education plans and the appropriate National Curriculum Programmes of Study.

5. The school places a strong emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills. This focus is seen in the quality of pupils' written work and in the use of number in support of several subjects, including science and information and communication technology. Pupils are encouraged to explore their ideas through discussion and there is a strong emphasis on the use of mathematical vocabulary during lessons.

6. Standards in English for the current pupils in Year 6 are above average in reading, and average in speaking, listening and writing. Although many pupils in Year 3 have difficulty in listening carefully, by the age of eleven they listen politely to the views of others. They express their meaning clearly in standard English, though most pupils speak quietly and briefly. Standards in reading are good overall, and pupils make steady progress because reading materials are clearly graded for difficulty. Pupils like reading and most have favourite authors, although few pupils are confident in reading aloud with expression. Their knowledge of how to find books in a library is not sufficiently developed. Pupils learn to write for a good range of purposes and audiences. By Year 6, pupils develop a clear grasp of the conventions of different forms of writing, and information is clearly expressed. Pupils with higher attainment use complex sentence patterns. Standards of presentation are consistently good in all subjects, reflecting the success of the whole-school policy on presentation.

7. In mathematics, standards for the current Year 6 are close to the national average. As pupils progress through the school, they become more confident in choosing appropriate methods to solve 'real-life' money problems. Higher attaining pupils are able to apply addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Average attainers can choose appropriate operations to solve problems. Lower attaining pupils set calculations correctly and use appropriate methods to solve written problems. In science, standards of work by pupils in the present Year 6 match the national expectations in all aspects, and a particular strength is the pupils' skills in making scientific enquiries. As pupils progress through the school, their understanding of science in every day life is strengthened by the systematic development of their skills in investigations and enquiry. The school has developed the provision for information and communication technology. Pupils are confident about locating information on CD Rom and the Internet, and in copying and pasting their planned work. Higher attaining pupils can locate files saved from previous years, and use skills well to support their work in other subjects.

8. In creative and performing arts, pupils become confident musicians as a result of a carefully planned scheme of work that ensures good levels of continuity and progression. In art, a particular strength is pupils' exploration of line and tone and their use of sketch-books to collect information, explore ideas, and record their work. Aspects of design and technology are successfully integrated into areas of the curriculum, but the distribution and allocation of curriculum time inhibits a systematic approach to teaching and learning, and standards have yet to reach the expected level.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They respond well to the school's strong emphasis on the importance of good behaviour and relationships, and the need for a calm and orderly working environment.

10. In keeping with the positive findings from the previous report, evidence from the current inspection shows that pupils' attitudes are good. The response of pupils during the inspection was rarely unsatisfactory, and was good or better in over 80 per cent of lessons seen. Ninety-two per cent of the parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire

confirmed that their children like school. The inspection evidence, including many conversations with pupils, endorses the parents' view.

11. Pupils come to school enthusiastically. They enjoy lessons, and frequently work independently without needing close supervision. They listen attentively to their teachers and to each other, but are sometimes hesitant or brief when answering questions and participating in discussions. Very good attitudes were seen in Year 4 design and technology lessons, where pupils in all classes were involved in an extended activity of designing and constructing lighthouses. In information and communication technology, pupils in Year 6 worked intensively when completing a challenging exercise related to spreadsheet calculations. When working in groups, pupils readily exchanged ideas and shared materials. In physical education, pupils waited their turn patiently and tried hard to improve. Very good levels of co-operation when working in pairs or in teams enabled pupils to concentrate and improve their skills. In English, pupils were seen to respond positively to well-planned tasks, understanding what is expected of them and settling to work quickly.

12. During otherwise satisfactory lessons, a small number of pupils, particularly in Year 3, became restless, but the concentration of these fidgety pupils was held well when the teacher used different teaching strategies to regain their attention. Pupils became restless during lessons in which they were seated on the carpet for extended periods of time, and for as long as thirty minutes. In general, all pupils across the attainment range respond well to brisk interactions involving them all and challenging them to learn and remember.

13. Behaviour in classes and in the open areas of the school is good, and has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils are thoughtful and mutually respectful. Parents and pupils confirm that incidents of bullying or aggression between pupils are rare and are dealt with effectively when they do occur. Pupils' good behaviour contributes to their good progress because, without frequent pauses or distractions, teachers move lessons ahead at a good pace. Brief 'golden rules' for behaviour are displayed in classrooms. Pupils conform cheerfully to the rules, and in all year groups they respond very well to teachers' skills in class management. Relative to the size of the school and the level of social deprivation among families, few pupils are excluded. In the last academic year, nine pupils were excluded for fixed periods, and one was subsequently excluded permanently.

14. Pupils' personal development is good. They willingly carry out everyday duties in classrooms and, in Year 6, have significant responsibilities throughout the school as prefects and house captains. An innovative series of job descriptions for groups of Year 6 pupils outlines duties at morning break and lunchtime, including helping to supervise behaviour, and being alert to the needs of other pupils. A school council has recently been established and a newspaper is planned. Within the curriculum, opportunities for personal development are good. For example, pupils are given good opportunities in science, art and design and technology to work independently of the teacher and solve problems for themselves. In English, pupils are responding well to the increased number of opportunities for open-ended talk in group-reading sessions outside the literacy hour.

15. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils respond politely and confidently to each other and to adults. They are not afraid to be seen to make mistakes, and they are mutually supportive. Each member of the school community has equal status and receives sensitive and effective support at work and play.

16. Attendance is satisfactory in all year groups and, overall, is close to the national average for primary schools. The regular attendance has a positive effect upon pupils'

attainment and progress. Most pupils arrive punctually at school and settle quickly to work. Registration periods are efficient, and most lessons begin promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The consistently good teaching is the main reason why pupils achieve so well by the time they leave at the age of 11. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection, when it was judged satisfactory or better in 80 per cent of lessons seen. During the current inspection, teaching was judged to be satisfactory or better in 98 per cent of lessons seen. Good teaching was seen in 47 per cent of lessons, and very good teaching in a further 19 per cent. Examples of good and very good teaching were seen throughout the school. The large majority of pupils benefit significantly from good and very good teaching in several subjects, including English, mathematics, science, music, physical education and information communication technology. A particular strength of the teaching is the consistency and effectiveness with which teachers, and other adults, manage pupils both within and outside the classroom. The positive and supportive approach helps pupils to feel valued and gain confidence in their learning. During the large majority of lessons, pupils benefited significantly from detailed planning which ensured that they were given tasks that closely matched their stages of learning. Lesson targets are stated clearly to the class at the outset and lessons have a strong sense of purpose.

18. Strong features of good teaching are the effective management of pupils and the clarity of the learning intentions. For example, the teaching of English and mathematics was judged to be good because the tasks were carefully planned to match the levels of attainment in each class. Pupils at the lower end of the attainment range are well catered for, and pupils understand what is expected of them and settle to work quickly, supported by worksheets, guidelines and resources.

19. Teachers have good subject knowledge and share their expertise well in planning together in each year group. In the best lessons, planning identifies the role of support assistants, who are therefore fully involved and effective. Pupils respond well to the supportive approach used by teachers and other adults. This reflects the school's aims, and all but a few pupils reciprocate the good relationships that have been established. In almost all lessons, the good relationships are used to raise standards in the quality of pupils' work. For example, the experienced learning support assistants make a good contribution to the pupils' understanding of electrical circuits by supporting individuals and groups, enabling them to take a full part in activities and helping them to make good progress.

20. Teachers' good subject knowledge leads to high expectations and well-paced lessons. For example, in several subjects, including English, science and physical education, brisk interactions and incisive questioning challenge pupils' learning. In Year 4, carefully crafted questions prompted pupils to think about their science and to use the information to help explain their work, with appropriate scientific vocabulary. Teaching is good in mathematics largely because of the high expectations of effort, accuracy and presentation. In consequence, pupils respond well by applying considerable effort to their work, and the presentation of their work is of a high standard. In physical education, pupils in Year 6 were encouraged to evaluate their performances and refine their skills in some well-paced and challenging lessons which led to good levels of progress. The teaching of information technology is good overall because of the good subject knowledge on the part of the teacher. However, the best teaching and learning takes place when teachers and support staff make particularly effective use of the interactive screen to demonstrate techniques. Pupils are captured by the clarity and innovative use of resources; in

consequence, they retain the information and use it successfully to support their learning in several subjects.

21. It is the school's intention that lessons are planned in such a way that there is no stereotyping and that resources are vetted for bias. Teachers' planning ensures that no child is disadvantaged, and literature, art and music from a variety of cultures are studied. Attention is given to promoting an adequate understanding of the multicultural nature of society. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are given additional help by trained support assistants. Lessons are well planned, with relevant strategies and activities to match pupils' needs. Their progress is carefully monitored, and adjustments made to their individual education plans so that future lessons meet their needs. However, these could be more sharply focussed if the targets on individual education plans were more detailed and specific.

22. The use of assessment on a daily basis is good and the information is used well within lessons and to help with daily planning. Standards of marking are good in all subjects. Teachers respond sensitively to pupils' ideas, give encouragement, and identify weaknesses that need attention.

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

23. The school offers a good curriculum, which includes religious education and all required subjects of the National Curriculum. The breadth and richness of the curriculum gives pupils good opportunities to develop their creative and performing skills in areas such as art and swimming. Official recommendations and guidelines have been adopted for all subjects and lead to the good quality of teachers' planning. Teachers' medium-term and short-term plans are now detailed, and assessment and evaluation of lessons is used effectively to guide planning. The timetable has recently been adjusted to give a better balance of time between subjects, notably giving more time to science than previously. The curriculum has been improved since the previous inspection, when it was satisfactory. Weaknesses in provision for information and communication technology have been corrected, and the programme of study for this subject now covers all required elements. Pupils' interest is boosted by occasional events that focus on aspects of the curriculum, such as the day spent on design and technology by Year 4 in the inspection week. However, although the provision for design and technology has been improved with better resourcing and detailed guidance, the limited allocation of curriculum time impinges on the systematic development of pupils' skills. In a similar way, the arrangements the school makes for the teaching of history and geography causes fragmentation to pupils' learning.

24. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been adopted, and planning is securely based on their official frameworks. Standards in English are rising as a result, particularly in reading, to which additional time is given each day outside the literacy hour. Results fell in the recent national tests in mathematics. However, the school has made adjustments to the programme of study after closely analysing pupils' performance, and this is proving successful in raising standards in the present year. A good feature of mathematics and science is the emphasis on practical investigations.

25. A new programme of study has been introduced for personal, social and health education, and this is satisfactory. Teachers are guided by an officially approved scheme of work that includes relevant aspects of citizenship, health education, and drugs awareness. Pupils take part in weekly class discussions, called "circle time", where issues of concern can be raised. Sex education is taught with the assistance of a school nurse

and the approval of the governing body and parents.

26. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. These pupils are provided with individual education plans, with specific targets to guide their development in language and mathematics. Their targets are regularly reviewed and appropriately updated, with the result that these pupils make consistently good progress. Support in class is well planned so that all pupils take full part in the main activities.

27. A specialist from the local education authority makes regular visits to support the small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Though the contact time for such specialist support is brief, it allows the needs of these pupils to be analysed in depth, leading to the design of individual learning plans of good quality. These are detailed and closely related to the topics planned for other pupils, so they give class teachers good guidance in including these pupils fully in the daily learning which takes place in their class. Such careful planning is central to the good progress made by these pupils.

28. The school takes good care to ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to benefit from the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language have equality with their peers because the provision for them is good. This is reflected in the fact that their rate of progress is commensurate with that of their peers. Where pupils have learning difficulties or other disabilities, differentiated work is available to support them. Similarly, pupils who experience behavioural and emotional difficulties receive support to allow them full access to the curriculum. There is access for pupils in wheelchairs. Learning support assistants give valuable help to pupils who experience difficulties. Where the school does not have the necessary expertise, links are made with outside agencies. Extra-curricular activities promote equal opportunities and are open to boys and girls alike.

29. The curriculum is extended effectively through a good range of out-of-lesson activities, in which many pupils take part. These experiences are used well to stimulate interest and raise attainment in the subjects concerned. There is a choir and a recorder group, and a very large number of pupils take part in end-of-term music and drama performances for parents and the public. There are several sports clubs, with a good policy of training younger pupils in skills in preparation for team games later in the school. School teams compete successfully at local level in sports, including football, rugby, netball and cricket. There are clubs for chess and country dancing and a newly formed newspaper club.

30. The local community is used well to support fieldwork in geography and history. The school takes a full part in local festivals and competitions. A range of visitors from the church and other walks of life present role models of citizenship. There are good contacts with local infants schools. Staff of the main receiving high school visit to meet Year 6 leavers to ensure they make a smooth transfer to the next stage in their education.

31. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and has improved overall since the previous inspection. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory although it is not well planned. The school has yet to address all the issues raised in the previous inspection report. For example, few opportunities are provided in religious education lessons for pupils to reflect upon their own work and on the work of others.

32. School assemblies provide good opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual

awareness. They are well planned, are generally Christian in content, and comply with statutory requirements. Music establishes feelings of spirituality, and pupils sing, pray, and reflect quietly upon current topics. The staff members select music from various cultures to evoke their own memories of previous events, though pupils do not yet have opportunities to introduce their own music. During the inspection, a good assembly was seen which focused on the subject of self-improvement, concluding with a relevant prayer. Good relationships are established with local churches, and a clergyman is a frequent and welcome visitor. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have pride in their own work, and are respectful of the work of others. All pupils in Year 6 have responsibilities within the school, including care for others and care for the environment. A series of job descriptions allows pupils easily to change roles without reducing the system's effectiveness.

33. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. A sense of value is promoted in assemblies. All adults set strong moral examples, and the very positive relationships in the school encourage good behaviour and self-discipline in most pupils. Teachers are particularly skilled in explaining to pupils why some actions by individuals have wider effects within the community. All adults make good use of praise to celebrate individual and group achievement. Pupils know and respect the golden rules displayed in all classrooms. They have great pride in their school, and show respect for teachers and the other adults who help them every day. They are encouraged to be aware of the needs of others. Instances of aggressive behaviour or bullying are rare and are dealt with sensitively and firmly by staff.

34. Provision for pupils' social development is good. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff, are very good. In the playgrounds, year groups mix amicably, although at lunchtime boys and girls tend to sit at tables in single-sex groups. All pupils are responsive to the very small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Older pupils are aware of the needs of pupils in Year 3 who are new to the school. In lessons and extra-curricular activities, pupils work amicably in small groups. Pupils learn to co-operate, share ideas and equipment, and communicate quietly. Educational visits, school journeys and visitors to the school contribute positively to pupils' social education. In all classes, pupils have responsibilities for tidiness and taking care of resources. They enthusiastically raise money for local and national charities.

35. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The school takes part in many public events, including the Whitstable Oyster Festival. Pupils visit museums to study local and regional culture, and they know how their town has developed over the years. Visits to Canterbury are organised periodically. All year groups have some knowledge of a number of faiths and cultures, and pupils in Year 4 have drawn original designs for a Sikh gurdwara. However, during the inspection, pupils in Year 6 were unaware that Jews were simultaneously celebrating their new year. Recent year-group projects have included a study of India in Year 4, and an elaborate Caribbean event in Year 6, which included musical entertainments on the beach.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The safe and caring environment maintained since the previous inspection has a positive effect on the standards pupils achieve. Satisfactory procedures are established for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare. The teachers nominated as the responsible officers for child protection are conscientious and well informed. The school has adopted the local education authority's child protection policy. All staff members understand child protection issues, and they discreetly implement the school's procedures. A training session

for teaching staff is scheduled for the autumn term. Teaching assistants and midday assistants have received some specific training, and are provided with clear written guidelines.

37. The school has implemented the local authority's health and safety policy, including procedures for ensuring the safety of pupils on site and during out-of-school visits. A rolling programme of site risk assessments by the caretaker supplements good health and safety procedures. Several members of staff are qualified in first aid, and all are sensitive to the needs of pupils. Care is very good at lunchtime, when well-trained and conscientious midday assistants supervise the grounds. The school has developed a good programme for personal, social and health education.

38. Teachers and other adults know the pupils well, and are skilled in assessing their pastoral needs. Pupils receive very good individual care and support from class teachers, and from a professional counsellor, who visits the school each week. The school's teaching assistants are skilled in curriculum and social support, and they develop very good relationships with pupils. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are satisfactory, but informal. Teachers and other adults have a good knowledge and understanding of pupils, though much of the information has yet to be recorded formally.

39. The large majority of pupils joining the school settle quickly and happily into routines. When necessary, pupils in Year 6 take special responsibility for pupils in Year 3. Good procedures in Year 6 prepare pupils for transfer to secondary school.

40. A good policy includes clear guidelines and successfully promotes good behaviour in class and around the school. Golden rules on display in each classroom reinforce the school's positive approach to behaviour. Each teacher nominates a 'star of the week' for effort or achievement and certificates are awarded at school assemblies. On occasion, when pupils are persistently disruptive in class, a 'red card' places them in the care of the deputy headteacher until they feel able to return. Parents are alerted if two red cards are awarded within a ten-day period.

41. A very good anti-bullying policy is in draft, but the main points of the document are already well known to staff and pupils and are implemented consistently and thoroughly. Pupils have few concerns about bullying. They know that staff members are always accessible at break-time and lunchtime, and discussion and reconciliation easily resolve most incidents. Last year an outbreak of bullying between girls in Year 6 was successfully countered by the formation of a social skills group, led by the special educational needs co-ordinator. Staff and governors have not yet agreed a policy on the use of force by staff, or procedures for noting incidents of restraint of pupils. In all respects, the school functions very well as a happy and orderly community.

42. Systems for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory, although the succession of management changes in the school has caused some inconsistencies. The educational welfare officer supports a number of families and regularly examines registers, but the school does not monitor attendance patterns monthly or termly.

43. Assessment in literacy and numeracy is good, but it is under developed in other areas of the curriculum. The school has identified the need to review assessment across the curriculum. Pupils are regularly assessed in reading, writing, spelling and mathematics, and class transfer sheets contain detailed records of individual attainment in these areas. Data from statutory and optional national tests in English and mathematics is used to assess future performance; it guides planning for the needs of individual pupils. For

example, recent analysis of the reasons for a decline in the school's results in the national mathematics tests for 11 year-old pupils in 2001 has led to greater emphasis on mental agility and problem-solving activities.

44. As pupils progress through the school, teachers collate the results of formal tests in English and mathematics and build up an academic profile for each pupil. These records are systematically passed on to the next teacher as pupils progress through the school and are sent on to the receiving secondary school. Progress is tracked from year to year. Pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests at the age of seven is used to predict the level that pupils may realistically be expected to achieve at the age of 11. Groups of pupils who will benefit from additional support are identified.

45. Teachers keep consistent records of formal and informal tests in English and mathematics. The annual progress reports to parents are satisfactory in English and mathematics. In other subjects there is insufficient reference to pupils' strengths or the areas that they need to develop.

46. Procedures for the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs are clear and well implemented. The special needs co-ordinator manages the process competently with pupils receiving appropriate support and additional teaching. However, some individual education plans are not sufficiently detailed to help judge pupils' progress.

47. A priority, recognised by the school, is to develop assessment, record keeping, monitoring and evaluation procedures and moderated work in English, mathematics and science. There are plans to use information and communications technology to collate information on pupil performance and to analyse it further. Opportunities for pupils to participate in their own target setting and monitoring are underdeveloped.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. Parents' views of the school are favourable and similar to those reported in the previous inspection. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, 91 per cent of parents indicated that their children make good progress, and 76 per cent indicated that the school works closely with them. These views were confirmed by parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting with the registered inspector, and by informal conversations with parents during the inspection. Parents report that communication has improved since the appointment of the new headteacher. Evidence from the inspection endorse these views and conclude that the work of the school is rightly valued and respected by parents because pupils achieve well in almost all subjects. In contrast to the views of some parents, the homework seen during the inspection supported pupils' learning.

49. The school has satisfactory links with parents, who are welcome to visit at all times. The inspection confirms good two-way communication and very good relationships with class teachers and other members of staff. During the day, many parents and friends offer valuable help with reading, swimming, and other curriculum activities to groups of pupils and individuals. The school broadens the curriculum or improves provision by encouraging parents to contribute their specialist skills and interests.

50. An active association of parents, teachers and friends organises regular social and fund raising events, and contributes significantly each year to the school's budget. Recently, the association funded the development of the swimming pool and purchased substantial timber 'friendship' huts for the playground.

51. The quality of information for parents is satisfactory. The headteacher welcomes parents and pupils each morning at the school gate. Regular newsletters are informative about curriculum topics, year-group and school events, and important dates. Teachers' topic plans are sent to parents at the start of each term. The school prospectus and the 2000 governors' annual report to parents conform generally with requirements.

52. Parents are invited to two consultation evenings each year where they can discuss their child's progress. Annual progress reports are satisfactory overall. They include examples of good detail about what children know and can do in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and how standards can be improved. However, the comments made in other subjects are often descriptive and do not give parents a clear understanding of the standards reached, or how they may improve. The school has already recognised weaknesses in the style of report writing and is reviewing the process.

53. Parents are well informed of the school's routines and expectations when their children enter Year 3 or join other year groups. Parents of pupils in Year 6 are well informed about the secondary selection process. Parents of pupils with special educational needs understand the school's procedures for support and discipline. Good records are maintained by the special needs co-ordinator, and she is always available to discuss pupils' progress.

54. Parents support their children in extra-curricular activities and generally make a satisfactory contribution to their learning. Pupils take home their reading books, but other homework is set irregularly in some classes. The newly appointed headteacher plans to introduce a number of curriculum evenings to improve the parents' involvement in their children's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. The school has undergone considerable change and uncertainty since the previous inspection when leadership and management were judged to be effective. At the time of the current inspection, the recently appointed headteacher and deputy had been in post for just two weeks. The headteacher, with the good support of staff and key governors, is beginning to provide the school with stability and a clear sense of direction. She has approached the task with sensitivity and with the use of effective leadership strategies. Despite the substantial changes to the senior management team during the past year the school has enabled pupils to achieve well in almost all subjects.

56. The headteacher is beginning to prioritise the work of the school. Almost immediately after her appointment, she identified specific areas for improvement, which include a full review of the school's development plan. At present, this document does not include sufficient detail or criteria against which the school's progress can be judged. In addition, she has recognised the need to review the structure of the senior management team and implement the performance management cycle. The review of the school development and the identification of the school's priorities will give members of the governing body good opportunities to become involved in the formal monitoring of the school's work, develop a strategic overview, and guide its direction.

57. Subject co-ordinators are responsible for their own resources, and help in shaping the direction of the school through their own action plans. Information from national tests and teacher assessments is used to help with planning and focus areas of support. English is well managed because the progress of all pupils is carefully monitored and results are

interpreted to identify trends. In addition, the co-ordinator has monitored teaching and learning, giving well-informed feedback to colleagues. Other subject co-ordinators have a clear understanding of their role, and provide colleagues with helpful support and advice. However their monitoring role is under developed. The very experienced special educational needs co-ordinator has a number of opportunities to monitor the work of pupils and give good support to colleagues and pupils.

58. The staff works as a cohesive and caring team, committed to the welfare of the pupils and the whole community. This creates a clear sense of purpose and, as a result, relationships are generally good throughout the school. The school's aims are reflected in its daily work. It is a friendly, supportive and purposeful community, and pupils are confident and respectful of one another. Expectations are consistently high and pupils achieve well in a climate of support and encouragement.

59. The governing body has a clear view of the school's provision for special educational needs. A special needs policy is in place, though it requires reviewing and updating. The co-ordinator keeps accurate profiles of pupils, and their progress is closely monitored. Administrative arrangements for annual reviews are good. The school fulfils its statutory responsibilities for special educational needs and complies with the official Code of Practice. Visits from an outside specialist allow the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language to be analysed. The information is used well to give class teachers good guidance. There is a conscious effort on the part of all adults to promote the achievement of all pupils. The school effectively promotes personal and community relationships. It encourages harmony through its ethos, which is based on tolerance, understanding and an appreciation of the values and contributions of others. The school is meeting statutory requirements.

60. Members of the governing body know the school well and visit it regularly. They bring a range of expertise to the work of the school, but have yet to monitor consistently and evaluate its work with the help of a clear set of criteria. Key governors are active, conscientious and well informed. They have been instrumental in the substantial improvements to the accommodation.

61. Financial planning is satisfactory. School priorities are identified in the school development plan but there is insufficient detail in the planning and little information on appropriate expenditure to establish these priorities. Subject co-ordinators have a budget to manage to support their subject. This is to be re-organised so that bids are made for funding to support areas featured as priorities in the school plan.

62. Financial management is good. The designated governor and the finance committee of the governing body monitor the budget effectively and report their findings to the whole governing body. The expertise of individual governors is used well to support the work of the school. Day-to-day administration is efficient and financial procedures followed correctly. The areas for improvement identified in the local authority audit have been addressed satisfactorily.

63. The school has built up a small surplus over the past years. However, this is accounted for well. The governing body wish to fund the continuation of the building work recently undertaken in the school. Software for use in the information communication technology suite will require replacing shortly and funding will be required for this. Grants are used well. For example the access initiative grant was used to fund the provision of a toilet and access ramps for disabled pupils. These improvements support the admission of pupils with mobility and health needs.

64. The budget for pupils with special educational needs is identified and targeted well. Additional funding from the school's resources is also used to provide teaching, support from assistants, and good resources.

65. The school applies "best value" principles satisfactorily and these are strongest in seeking cost-effective purchases. Some comparison of results with similar schools is carried out. Although the unit cost for each pupil is above the national average, pupils achieve well during the time in school, due largely to the good levels of teaching and effective use of resources, including staff. The school, therefore, provides good value for money.

66. The school places a high priority on staffing, which is well matched to the demands of the curriculum. Teachers are versatile and have good knowledge of all subjects. Teachers with responsibilities for managing curriculum areas have good knowledge of their own particular subject. The special educational needs co-ordinator is very well qualified and experienced. Learning support assistants are enthusiastic and well trained, and they make a significant contribution to pupils' progress. In lessons, they provide good support to teachers by working independently with individuals or small groups of pupils. Administrative and cleaning staff and lunchtime assistants all contribute significantly to the smooth running of the school.

67. Teaching staff and learning support assistants receive concise, clearly written handbooks. An effective induction and mentoring programme is provided for newly qualified and newly appointed teachers. The programme for staff development is good. Numerous training opportunities are available each year for teachers and ancillary staff, related to the needs of individuals, departments and the school. A good programme for appraisal and performance management has been agreed, but successive changes to senior management have prevented it from being put into practice. Job descriptions for many teachers and ancillary staff require updating.

68. Accommodation is satisfactory, and some recent developments are of high quality. The air-conditioned information and communications technology suite and the all-weather pitch are excellent facilities. The new classroom block provides very good accommodation. All classrooms are of adequate size for the numbers of pupils. Classroom furniture is generally in good condition and is suitable for all pupils in the junior age range. Displays of pupils' and teachers' work in classrooms and communal areas are often very good. Pupils' work is valued by the school and this is evident in the high quality of display. Pictures of well-known works of art throughout the school support the curriculum. Pupils benefit significantly from the school's own covered swimming pool and small wildlife area, which includes a pond.

69. The site and buildings are free of litter, and are well maintained by the caretaker and a small team of cleaners. The site and buildings present no risk to health and safety. However, signposting is poor in the school building and grounds.

70. The school's learning resources are satisfactory overall, and are good in art, physical education, music and information and communications technology. Good resources are available for pupils with special educational needs. The quality of the resources and artefacts are very good in religious education. Computers in the information and communications technology suite are modern and fully operational, but some computers and printers in classrooms require maintenance. The number of computers available to pupils is close to the national average for similar schools. The school does not have a

library, although books are available in classrooms.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

71. To improve standards of work and pupils' learning, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- Improve standards in design and technology by reviewing the allocation and distribution of curriculum time so that the subject can be taught in sufficient depth;
- Develop a school improvement plan which builds upon the strengths of the school, sets priorities for areas for development, and encourages governors and staff to monitor formally and evaluate the school's progress against clear criteria;
- Develop and implement a whole-school assessment policy so that:
 - * staff are kept informed of pupils' progress to help them set challenging tasks in all subjects;
 - * pupils are aware of their own progress and can contribute to their own improvement;
 - * annual reports for parents include clear information about the standards reached by their children in all subjects, and how to improve.

72. Other weaknesses, which the governors should consider for inclusion in the school's action plan are:

- The development of a library area to strengthen pupils' knowledge of how to find books and improve skills in independent research;
- Giving higher attaining pupils more opportunities to learn how to develop their own ideas and take responsibility for the process of planning, drafting and proof reading in English;
- Providing more detailed targets in all pupils' individual education plans to assist in measuring progress and guiding lesson planning.
- Improving the signposting around the school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	47
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	9	22	15	1	0	0
Percentage	0	19	47	32	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	358
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	66

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	170

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	39	44	83

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	24	25	31
	Girls	35	32	36
	Total	59	57	67
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	71 ((71)	69 (72)	81 (83)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	21	31	31
	Girls	34	38	34
	Total	55	69	65
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	67 (69)	84 (76)	80 (83)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	1
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	0
White	350
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	10	1
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:

Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	30

Education support staff:

Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	162

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

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

£

Total income	696516.00
Total expenditure	691628.00
Expenditure per pupil	1932.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	10670.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

358
172

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	48	6	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	42	49	7	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	25	51	15	5	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	16	41	26	6	1
The teaching is good.	47	45	4	2	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	44	20	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	40	8	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	42	5	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	27	49	16	7	1
The school is well led and managed.	37	45	8	4	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	49	5	3	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	46	9	0	5

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

ENGLISH

73. Children's results in national tests for pupils aged 11 have been close to the national average since 1997. In 2000, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level (Level 4) and above in English was close to the national average, but below the average for similar schools. Results improved in 2001, though figures are not yet available to allow comparison with other schools. The improvement in reading was impressive, with almost half the year group reaching the higher level (Level 5). Results in writing also improved, though fewer pupils than in 2000 reached the higher level. Inspection evidence indicates that the attainment of pupils in the present Year 6 is above average in reading, and average in speaking, listening and writing. Since 1996, there has been a significant difference between the attainment of girls and boys in the national tests. The performance of girls has been above the average for girls nationally, but that of boys has been below the average for boys. The difference begins on entry to the school in Year 3, when the range of attainment is very wide. Most of those with the lowest attainment on entry are boys, and many are particularly weak in writing. The school gives lower attaining pupils well-targeted support, with the result that boys make good progress, reducing the difference between their attainment and that of girls. By age eleven, the number of boys and girls who fail to reach Level 3 (the level below that expected) is lower than that found nationally, which is a good achievement.

74. Many younger pupils have difficulty in listening carefully to instruction in the literacy hour, and teachers have to work hard to hold their attention. Overall, they are successful and most pupils take an active part in discussions, though their answers are brief. This is in part because teachers try to give as many pupils as possible the opportunity to speak. By age 11, pupils listen politely to the views of others and reach a satisfactory standard in expressing their meaning to the class clearly in standard English. They use more formal language appropriately in class discussions, with correct use of technical terms. These skills help their learning in other subjects, where ideas are explored and developed through talk. However, most pupils speak quietly and briefly. No instances were seen of pupils taking the lead in making presentations to the class, and they need more practice in speaking formally at length at such times as the final review session of the literacy hour. Nevertheless, groups of lower attaining pupils in Year 6 made good progress in writing a script for a play during a literacy hour, guided by learning support assistants. Two pupils performed their script for the class, and one boy with special needs did particularly well in speaking in character, developing the role in response to the enjoyment of his peers.

75. Standards in reading are good overall, and pupils make steady progress because reading materials are clearly graded for difficulty. Those with special needs and those for whom English is an additional language are given additional support and carefully monitored so that they build on success. The stock in class libraries has been improved, with new non-fiction books and modern children's fiction to raise pupils' interest. As a result, pupils like reading and most have favourite authors. However, older pupils with higher attainment need more guidance in widening their range of experience to include more challenging authors. By age 11, pupils read longer texts silently and with good concentration. They know how to sound out new words to find the meaning and have a good understanding of what they read. Few pupils are confident in reading aloud with dramatic expression or in discussing and comparing books, though the school is providing more opportunity for such open-ended talk in group-reading sessions outside the literacy

hour. Pupils are confident in using non-fiction books to find information, which helps them to learn in all subjects. However, their knowledge of how to find books in a library is not well developed, reflecting the lack of a school library for borrowing and research. Not all pupils read regularly at home, though many parents give good support by hearing their children reading and taking them to the local library.

76. Throughout the school, pupils learn to write for a good range of purposes and audiences. They work hard, producing an impressive amount of writing. Older pupils have a clear grasp of the conventions of different forms of writing, with particularly good progress in letter writing as a result of sustained practice over a series of exercises. Information is clearly expressed in longer pieces, such as news reports and book reviews, and pupils express their learning effectively when they write in other subjects. Paragraph structures are well established, and pupils with higher attainment use complex sentence patterns. There is less creative and personal writing in the programme than generally found, though pupils' work in these forms shows care and thought, with sound understanding of techniques to influence the reader. Much of the writing in all year groups is closely directed, which is particularly helpful to those with lower attainment. However, the approach reduces the challenge for potentially high attaining pupils to learn how to develop their own ideas and take responsibility for the process of planning, drafting and proof reading. Standards of presentation are consistently good in all subjects, reflecting the success of the whole-school policy on presentation. Pupils make good progress in handwriting, reaching standards that are above average by age 11. Standards of spelling and punctuation are satisfactory, but basic errors persist in the work of some pupils across the range of ability because they do not learn over time to proof-read their work carefully. Little use of dictionaries or word-banks was seen during or after writing in lessons observed. Increasing use is being made of word-processing, following the improvement in information technology resources, though there is no evidence of more complex desktop publishing by older pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are given simpler versions of the tasks set for other pupils and, with additional support, they make good progress in expressing their meaning for real purposes.

77. Teaching is good overall. It was good in two thirds of the lessons seen and satisfactory in the remainder. Teachers have good subject knowledge and share their expertise well in planning together in each year group, guided by the literacy framework. Lesson targets are stated clearly to the class at the outset, and lessons have a strong sense of purpose. It is a good feature that lesson plans identify the role of support assistants, who are therefore fully involved and effective. Teachers read aloud well to lift pupils' interest in literature. The attention of fidgety pupils in one Year 3 class was held well when the teacher used different voices for characters in a story, and some pupils were inspired to answer questions using similar voices. Interaction with pupils is generally brisk and included pupils across the range of attainment with the intention of involving and challenging all to learn and remember.

78. Tasks are usually carefully planned to match three levels of attainment in each class. Pupils at the lower end of the attainment range are well catered for, though in some lessons the detail of instructions limited the challenge to pupils with the highest attainment. Pupils understand what is expected of them and settle to work quickly, supported by worksheets, guidelines and resources. Well trained and experienced learning support assistants make a good contribution by supporting individuals and groups, enabling them to take a full part in activities and helping them to make good progress. In reading sessions outside the literacy hour, teachers very effectively focus their attention on a different group in each session, an approach recommended in the National Literacy

Strategy. During writing tasks, though, teachers generally spend most time overseeing the work of the whole class, which loses the potential benefit of intensive teaching of groups on a rota. Pupils produce a good quantity of work, and most lessons end with a review of their achievements. Generally, more use could be made of this review to develop pupils' speaking skills, with a rota to ensure that all groups take the leading role in turn.

79. Standards of marking are good. Teachers respond sensitively to pupils' ideas, give encouragement, and identify weaknesses that need attention. In the best instances, pupils are required to do corrections or follow-up work to reinforce their learning. However, basic errors persist in some pupils' writing because marking focuses on the higher-level targets of the lesson, ignoring basic errors such as missing full stops.

80. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The progress of all pupils is carefully monitored and results are interpreted to identify trends. As a result, effective adjustments are made to provision, such as the formation of a small "booster" class in Year 6 to lift the standards of a lower performing group and additional support for reading. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching, giving well-informed feedback to colleagues. There is a positive and open climate of discussion amongst staff, so that good practice is shared. There are good assessment procedures for reading and writing, which allow pupils' progress to be tracked closely so that appropriate help can be given. However, more attention needs to be paid to monitoring speaking skills and the reading interests of pupils with higher attainment.

81. The poor quality of non-fiction books and the under-use of the school library were weaknesses noted in the previous report. Since then, the quality of reading materials has been improved to a satisfactory level. However, there is now no library, which restricts pupils' choice of books to those in their classroom collections while limiting their opportunity to develop skills in independent research in English and other subjects. The curriculum is very effectively extended to raise pupils' interest and enjoyment, through an exciting range of visitors, including authors, illustrators, storytellers and theatre groups. Teachers show considerable skill and commitment in the high standard of their displays of the written word throughout the school.

MATHEMATICS

82. In the end of Key Stage national tests in 2000, pupils achieved standards that were in line with the national average and the average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils who achieved the higher level was above the national average. Results in national tests for pupils aged 11 have matched the national average since 1997. Taking the three years 1998 to 2000 together, the performance of girls has slightly exceeded that of boys. Inspection findings show that the difference in the attainment of boys and girls is not significant at the present time. Results have dropped in 2001, though figures are not yet available to allow comparison with other schools.

83. Inspection findings show that pupils enter Year 3 with below average attainment but they reach standards that are close to the national average by the age of 11. Pupils did not reach their expected target in the 2001 national tests, and the school immediately took action to address this by placing greater emphasis on mental agility, problem solving, and the reinforcement of number skills. The school's strategy of teaching pupils within similar attainment groups is beginning to prove effective in raising attainment. Almost half the pupils in the school have special educational needs. This has an adverse effect on pupils' progress in Year 4, where many of the special needs are related to behavioural difficulties. However, the co-ordinator has addressed this issue by carefully arranging pupils within

groups and dispersing pupils with behavioural problems. The school has a strong focus on raising standards in numeracy. This takes the form of courses for staff, additional resources, booster classes for selected pupils, classroom support, the introduction of monitoring of teaching and learning by the co-ordinator, and target setting for pupils.

84. During the inspection, pupils in Year 3 increased and consolidated their number bonds to 30, their ability to recall rapidly the 5 and 10 times tables, the rounding of 1 and 2 digit numbers to the nearest 10, and the identification of odd and even numbers. More able pupils in Year 4 practised converting pounds to pence and pence to pounds. They became more confident in choosing appropriate methods to solve 'real-life' money problems. Average and less able pupils increased their understanding of addition and subtraction, including regrouping, using informal and formal written methods to support, record and explain addition and subtraction. More able pupils in Year 5 gained proficiency in reading and writing numbers to 1,000,000 and in partitioning numbers to 7 figures. Pupils of average ability improved their mental manipulation of numbers, gained greater understanding of place value and practised the 'grid' method for multiplication. Less able pupils developed their skills of 'counting on' in 10s, 50s and 100s from 3 and 4 digit numbers and in setting out formal addition. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 applied addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to 'real-life' problems involving money. Average attainers chose appropriate operations to solve problems. Less able pupils gained confidence in setting out calculations correctly and using appropriate methods to solve written problems.

85. The quality of teaching and learning is good, leading to good learning on the part of all pupils. In the lessons observed, teaching was never less than satisfactory; it was good in almost two thirds and very good in just under a third. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is good and they teach the basic skills well; as a result, pupils make good gains in knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers plan effectively, with differentiated tasks to meet the needs of all pupils. Learning objectives are made clear to pupils. They know what is expected of them and are confident in their approach to their work. Opportunities are provided for them to assess the extent to which they have achieved the objectives, thus helping them to gain a sound knowledge of their learning. Teachers use methods that help all pupils to learn effectively; they have high expectations of effort, accuracy and presentation. Most pupils apply considerable intellectual effort to their work and the presentation of their work is of a high standard. Management of pupils is very good and leads to good learning. Ongoing assessment is used well to support learning in lessons and to inform planning. The results of formal and informal tests are recorded and used to build up an academic profile for each child. Time and resources are used well. Learning support assistants give valuable support to pupils with special educational needs. Pupils work productively and their pace of working is good. Most pupils enjoy mathematics, and they show interest, enthusiasm and application. Their good behaviour and relationships promote good learning. Pupils show a developing sense of responsibility for their own learning and for the care of resources. They respect the contribution of others during oral activities. They do their homework regularly, thus consolidating and extending their learning within the lesson.

86. There are links with other areas of the curriculum. Pupils' literacy skills are developed through discussion. There is a strong emphasis on the use of mathematical vocabulary and appropriate vocabulary is displayed in classrooms. Pupils' information technology skills are used to put information from surveys in graphical form on the computer.

87. The quality and range of learning opportunities is good. The appropriate statutory curriculum is in place, and the breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum is good.

Equality of access and opportunity for all pupils is good, as is provision for pupils with special needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Strategies for teaching numeracy skills are effective.

88. The subject has been managed by three co-ordinators over the past few years and temporary schemes of work have been in place. The new co-ordinator is well qualified to bring about improvements and has produced an action plan. As yet, he has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning throughout the school.

SCIENCE

89. Results in national tests for pupils aged 11 have been close to the national average since 1997. In 2000, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level and above in science was below the national average and below the average of similar schools. Results improved substantially in 2001, though figures are not yet available to allow comparison with other schools. Attainment on entry in Year 3 is below average but the most recent results of pupils in last year's Year 6 indicate that no pupil failed to reach the expected level (Level 4); this proportion is higher than that found nationally and shows that these pupils achieved well by the age of 11.

90. Inspection evidence indicates that the attainment of pupils in the present Year 6 matches the national expectations in their knowledge of life processes and living things, materials and their properties, and physical processes. A particular strength is the pupils' skills in making scientific enquiries. Owing to the focus the school has placed on practical investigations, pupils develop good skills in conducting the process of planning independently and carrying out experiments. Pupils take pride in their written work, which is well presented.

91. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the previous inspection and it is good. In the lessons seen, teaching was never less than satisfactory; it was good in a third, and very good in the other third. In the best lessons, interesting tasks were well chosen, with a good balance of direct teaching and opportunities for pupils to apply their enquiry skills to find things out for themselves. The very good learning seen in a Year 4 lesson was the direct result of the teacher challenging pupils to consider, plan and construct an electrical circuit. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, were highly motivated by the teaching and the opportunities for independent working. Good levels of additional adult support ensured that pupils understood the tasks and were able to discuss their findings. When pupils are challenged by the teaching, they behave very well, concentrate on what they are doing, and work hard to overcome the challenges set by the well-crafted tasks. These good attitudes make a very significant contribution to pupils' learning. As pupils progress through the school, their understanding of science in every day life is strengthened by the systematic development of their skills in investigations and enquiry. Pupils develop a thirst for knowledge, largely because of the quality of teaching and the range of differentiated tasks which successfully build upon their learning. For example, in Year 6, pupils developed a good understanding of chemical changes through practical work which drew closely upon their knowledge of previous work. Higher attaining pupils made some well-informed predictions and discussed the outcomes with confidence, using appropriate scientific vocabulary.

92. Teachers plan well, and clear learning intentions are shared with pupils. The good quality provision made for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is as an additional language ensures that they have full and equal access to the

curriculum. As a result, these pupils make progress that is comparable to that of other pupils. Teachers expect work to be neatly presented, and the quality of their marking is good, with comments that challenge pupils to think about how their work can be improved. Opportunities for pupils to record their work independently, and the teaching of the correct scientific vocabulary, mean that the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy skills. The development of pupils' numeracy skills is also well supported, as pupils measure temperature, mass and capacity, and record their findings graphically. The school gives pupils opportunities to gain an understanding and appreciation with visits to the school's wildlife area.

93. The subject is effectively managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in provision, though his monitoring role is under developed. He has successfully updated the subject guidance, though he recognises the need to develop the assessment procedures.

94. During the inspection, it was not possible to see sufficient lessons taught in all subjects to be able to make valid judgements about all aspects. In a few subjects, for example, it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching, although some conclusions are drawn from the few lessons seen, and the scrutiny of previously completed work.

ART AND DESIGN

95. The attainment of pupils at the age of 11 is above expectations for their age. The school's inclusion policy ensures that all pupils, including those with special needs and those for whom English is a second language, have full access to the curriculum and receive appropriate support. They make good progress and achieve well. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when attainment was in line with expectations for their age and progress was satisfactory.

96. A strength of pupils' work in all year groups is the exploration of line and tone and pupils' use of sketchbooks to collect information, explore ideas, and record their work. By the age of 11, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of colour, tone and line in their painting and drawing. Pupils have studied and appreciated the work of Picasso, Monet, Constable, Turner, Holbein, and many other great artists. Pencil, chalk, charcoal, watercolours and oils are used successfully in close observational drawings. Pupils design wallpaper in the style of William Morris. They reproduce shapes and patterns in flowers, plants and fruits, and draw sections of plants and flowers. Pupils study shape, line, colour and form in the local landscape and the work of artists who concentrated on rural settings. Pupils also study the work of several sculptors and produce a sculpture of a figure in a typical pose of war. Pupils study textiles from a range of cultures and use embroidery and collage techniques to make a textile hanging.

97. The quality of teaching and learning is good, thus maintaining the position reported in last inspection. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is good, and they teach the basic skills well, with the result that pupils make good gains in knowledge, understanding and skills. Teachers plan effectively and engage and retain pupils' interest, which encourages them to apply creative effort to their work. Teachers use a wide range of methods that enable all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is a second language, to achieve well. Differentiated work provides challenge for all pupils and leads to the good development of skills. Learning objectives are communicated clearly to pupils and they are given the opportunity to assess the extent to which they have achieved the objectives, thus ensuring that they have a good knowledge

of what they have learned. Ongoing assessment is used to support learning in lessons and to guide planning. The management of pupils is very good and promotes learning. Time, support staff, and resources are used well. Productivity and pace of working are good, and learning is maintained throughout lessons. Pupils show enthusiasm and interest, initiative, and responsibility, and have a developing respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. There is respect for resources and for the work of others. Pupils' good behaviour and very good relationships actively promote learning.

98. The subject has strong links with other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils' literacy skills are developed through discussion, and mathematical skills are enhanced through the study of pattern and shape. Links are also made with history. In their study of ceramics, pupils in Year 3 make clay pots, depicting a Greek myth or story, related to their work on Ancient Greece. Pupils in Year 4 make masks and head dresses, in connection with their study of the Ancient Egyptians. Pupils in Year 6 emulate Henry Moore's style as they produce sculptures of figures in a typical pose of war in connection with their studies of the work of great artists and the Second World War. Throughout the school, pupils gain a limited experience of using information and communication technology in their work on colour and design. Homework is used to reinforce and extend the work in the classroom, for example in the research on the patterns created by William Morris.

99. The quality and range of learning opportunities is good. There is equality of access and opportunity for all pupils, and their cultural development is enhanced through the study of the work of great artists. They develop their social skills through discussion and their work in pairs and groups. The curriculum is enriched through work with local artists. The Arts 2000 project focused on a historical timeline that involved all local schools. All the pupils designed and made their own tile, depicting images relevant to a given era. Their work, displayed in the school, is of a high standard. There are examples of Greek masks and ceramics designed by pupils in Year 3 and sculptures of the local environment made by pupils in Year 5, with the help of a local sculptor, earlier in the year. Pupils in Year 6 have worked very effectively, alongside a local artist, on a beach project.

100. The subject is led well by the co-ordinator, who builds effectively on the work of her experienced predecessor. She has revised the policy and has produced a comprehensive scheme of work that ensures continuity and progression. The co-ordinator monitors children's work and is developing a useful portfolio. The quality and use of sketchbooks has improved considerably since the last inspection. They show evidence of progression, the use of a variety of techniques, and increased attention to the work of great artists. As yet, the co-ordinator has had little opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom. Resources are good and fully support the suggested range of experiences in the scheme of work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

101. Design and technology was considered to be a significant weakness in the previous report. The school has made a substantial number of improvements to the planning and resourcing of the subject, but the distribution and allocation of curriculum time inhibits a systematic approach to teaching and learning and standards have yet to reach the expected level.

102. Aspects of design and technology are successfully integrated into other areas of the curriculum, and they enhance pupils' understanding in several subjects, including science and art. Evidence from the small number of displays and from a narrow range of pupils' previous work shows that pupils' skills in designing, making and evaluating are developed

to a limited extent, and there are examples of good practice. Examples of pupils' work included toys that make use of moving parts, and models which support pupils' knowledge and understanding in their science work. Pupils assemble models and structures such as houses, and they investigate how structures can be increased when formed into different shapes.

103. During the inspection, pupils in Year 4 used a small range of materials and simple tools to construct a lighthouse, using the knowledge and understanding of electrical circuits from work in science. Pupils followed the instructions carefully and helped to produce a plan to tackle the practical work. They were encouraged to plan and evaluate their work by using clear criteria, guided by a design sheet. The teacher, who also provided the narrow range of materials, directed much of the work. Pupils worked with commitment and enthusiasm, but they progressed very slowly and struggled to successfully join the materials and follow the sequence of work. They approached the task with enthusiasm and talked about their work in simple terms. The higher attaining pupils showed a good understanding of electrical circuits and talked about their work with confidence. The school's inclusion policy ensures that all pupils, including those with special needs and those for whom English is a second language, have full access to the curriculum and receive appropriate support. Pupils across the range of attainment worked together well, irrespective of gender or ability, so that all were given equal opportunity to learn in a harmonious and productive atmosphere. The small proportion of higher attainers explained their choices with some confidence.

104. Teachers place a good emphasis on the whole process of designing, making, evaluating and refining. However, pupils' designing and making skills are under-developed and they make unsatisfactory progress through the key stage. This is despite the good teaching seen in the small number of lessons. This teaching was well focused, and gave pupils very good opportunities to design and make products, and to evaluate their effectiveness. Nevertheless, pupils do not achieve well over time, largely because of the lack of time given to the subject and the fragmented approach to the teaching of skills.

105. The subject is managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator, who is well organised and has built up the resources to support the teaching. However, the subject is taught for a whole day at infrequent intervals and pupils are not able to develop their skills systematically throughout the year. The policy includes helpful curriculum guidance matched to topics, though formal assessment procedures have yet to be introduced.

GEOGRAPHY

106. Standards were judged to match the nationally expected levels by age 11. Pupils' progress and levels of achievement are satisfactory; this picture is similar to that reported in the previous inspection.

107. On entry to Year 3, pupils begin to develop an understanding of their immediate environment by studying and mapping the local area. They undertake surveys, examining physical and human features, and can use the resultant information to reach relevant conclusions. Pupils were observed drawing a plan of their classroom, identifying the range, shape and size of the furniture and equipment. On these plans they could identify the location of themselves and all the other pupils within the classroom and record the positions accurately. In all years pupils develop their skills by using atlases, maps and reference materials. They become increasingly proficient at gathering information, analysing the assembled data and reaching and recording conclusions. They gain a sound knowledge and understanding of the different conditions and cultures in a variety of

countries throughout the world. In Year 5, pupils were observed identifying areas around the school where movement was impeded or where there was excess noise. They discussed the issues well and suggested several ways by which the problems might be resolved. Fieldwork in Year 6 provides good opportunities for pupils to gain a greater understanding of environmental issues.

108. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They are well supported and encouraged in their work by learning support and classroom assistants. However, the targets on pupils' individual education plans are not specific enough. In consequence, strategies to assist learning are not always sufficiently focused to help teachers measure their progress.

109. The quality of teaching and learning was judged to be satisfactory overall, though good teaching was seen in the small number of lessons observed during the inspection. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Pupils know and understand the classroom rules and follow them well. Good relationships help to foster an atmosphere of calm and purposeful working. Teachers plan appropriately and lesson objectives are clearly stated and shared with pupils. Written tasks are well presented. Opportunities for developing literacy and numeracy skills are not well documented, although specialist vocabulary is taught and used in lessons. Suitable pace and a variety of tasks and activities help to maintain pupils' interest and motivation. Pupils listen carefully to instructions and answer questions confidently, though briefly, often needing considerable encouragement to expand and develop their answers and ideas. Teachers do not always allow time for this. Work is generally well planned to match the needs and abilities of pupils with special educational needs. The use of information communication technology (ICT) is built into planning. Assessment and recording of pupils' progress are unsatisfactory, as opportunities for assessment are not clearly identified and documented but left to individual teachers' volition.

110. Curriculum planning for geography and history involves the alternate teaching of topics on a complex one and two term basis. In Year 6 for example, the geography topic is not covered until term 3. In consequence, teaching and learning is fragmented, with pupils having to revise knowledge and skills learned some months previously.

111. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and has identified areas for improvement but has not yet had time to implement plans. At present, there is little opportunity to develop the monitoring of the subject to ensure standards are maintained and improved. Displays around the school are informative and well presented.

HISTORY

112. Standards were judged to match the nationally expected levels by age 11.

113. Pupils' progress and levels of achievement are satisfactory; this picture is similar to that reported in the previous inspection.

114. By age 11, pupils have the skills to produce to a good standard well researched projects on eminent Victorians and their contribution to the life of the time. Pupils understand and can document significant events and changes in Whitstable life over the

years. They show an understanding of how the Fire Service has changed, by comparing the first fire engine to arrive at Whitstable with the appliances used today. Evidence in pupils' books show satisfactory progress, with improving written descriptions, illustrated with suitable drawings and diagrams.

115. During their time in the school, pupils develop a sound understanding of the past and the present, and how things have changed in the intervening years. In Year 3, pupils learn about the Romans, Anglo-Saxons and Vikings, and their invasions of Britain. Examples of pupils' work indicate satisfactory knowledge and understanding of aspects of life in Roman times. Pupils can describe the food, dress and leisure pursuits of the Romans, and information on Roman villas has been well researched. The topic on ancient Egyptians in Year 4 extends pupils' knowledge and understanding and their work is well illustrated with words and pictures about Egyptian life. In particular, work on Egyptian gods and their rituals in preparation for the after life shows a satisfactory range and depth of knowledge. In Year 5, pupils demonstrate their understanding of chronology by researching and drawing time lines of major events up to and including Tudor times. They can explain the causes of the Reformation and describe its effect on the life of ordinary people.

116. No teaching was seen during the inspection, but planning is satisfactory. Teachers ensure that the schemes of work provide full coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study. The range of written tasks is relevant and interesting for the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported through tasks planned to match their stage of learning. They are appropriately challenged by the work and make satisfactory progress. However, assessment opportunities are not sufficiently identified within planning and there is no systematic recording of pupils' progress.

117. Learning is fragmented, as history and geography topics alternate, with an adverse effect on continuity and progression of learning. The subject is effectively managed by the co-ordinator, who has a clear understanding of the role. She provides advice and guidance to staff and recommends relevant resources for topics, but the strengths and weaknesses of the subject are not clearly identified at present as teaching is not monitored. Visits to local places of interest are well planned and organised and provide a useful resource. Displays and artefacts of historical interest around the school are of a good standard and help to promote learning. Information communication technology (ICT) is used for research and presentation of pupils' work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

118. Information and communication technology was considered to be a significant weakness in the previous report. The school has developed the subject well and standards are now at the expected national level for pupils aged 11.

119. By age 11, pupils are confident about locating information on CD Rom and the Internet, and copying and pasting relevant material. Higher attaining pupils can locate files saved from previous years, and demonstrate and amend a musical composition. A scrutiny of pupils' work from the previous year's class showed evidence of good quality desktop publishing materials. For example, pupils had produced high quality brochures, posters and tickets for a Caribbean geography project. Pupils are familiar with e-mails, though average attaining pupils showed little understanding of the technology. During the inspection, pupils were seen to develop well their knowledge of spreadsheets. After the challenging exercise, which involved reducing the catering costs on a Christmas menu, pupils showed a good understanding of spreadsheets and how they can be used to keep accurate calculations. The higher attaining pupils achieved the task within the limited time

and shared their results with the rest of the class. In all the lesson seen, pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language were very well supported by experienced learning support assistants, and they achieve well.

120. Pupils begin Year 3 with sound skills and they quickly gain confidence with the help of supportive and skilful teaching. Pupils benefit significantly from using the equipment and being taught in the information technology suite. During the inspection, pupils were seen to start programs, open files, and print their work. However, weak literacy skills limit pupils' progress in word processing. For example, in a good English lesson, many average attaining pupils could not respond with full sentences to questions on screen, and a significant number could not type their names accurately. In a mathematics lesson, pupils used the keyboard to transfer figures from a tally sheet to bar charts and pie charts. Higher attaining pupils changed the colours on the pie chart. In Year 4, pupils can select word-processing fonts and styles for specific purposes. For example, they know that a bold typeface is most suitable for brief, instructional signs. Evidence of work from the previous Year 4 pupils showed their use of a digital camera and colour printer to record the outcomes of a technology project. Pupils in Year 5 continue to extend their range of keyboard skills. Higher attaining pupils know alternative methods of saving and retrieving files.

121. Control technology was not seen during the inspection. However, the school's scheme of work includes adequate provision for the investigation of control technology which is extended through the use of programmable toys. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 talked about their programming of the Roamer. Such activities reinforce understanding of direction, angles and distance, as well as developing skills associated with writing commands which follow a sequence.

122. The development and use of the computer suite is beginning to have a significant impact on standards throughout the school. Teachers' knowledge and confidence have improved and pupils now have early opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills. Pupils respond well to the high expectations and the range of challenging task, particularly when these are well paced and build on their previous work. Pupils are beginning to achieve well, responding particularly well to the very good learning opportunities that are being made available in several subjects.

123. Teaching is good overall. All lessons seen were satisfactory or better; three were good and two were very good. In the best lessons, teachers and support staff make particularly effective use of the interactive screen to demonstrate techniques. Good management skills ensure that pupils are encouraged to work successfully in pairs. A wide range of opportunities are given to higher attainers to develop their speaking skills, and lower attainers benefit from individual guidance. However, the learning support assistants do not always probe pupils with questions that would help them to improve their understanding of what they are doing. For example, in Year 6, pupils with special educational needs successfully placed new data into columns but they were not asked to interpret the information.

124. The knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator has recently written a good whole-school subject policy. This document contains clear and helpful guidance, although assessment procedures have yet to be implemented. Some teachers have identified the need for more training to supplement their enthusiasm for the subject. The recently developed air-conditioned suite provides the school with outstanding accommodation. Resources in the suite are very good.

MUSIC

125. Standards were judged to be above the nationally expected levels by age 11. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, have full access to the curriculum and receive appropriate support. For example, the learning needs of a pupil in a wheelchair were specifically planned for by the inclusion of the song, 'Head, shoulders, knees and toes' in which he could participate physically. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. This maintains the position at the last inspection.

126. By the age of 11, pupils are becoming confident musicians, due to a carefully planned scheme of work that ensures continuity and progression. In two lessons observed in Year 3, pupils demonstrated that they are able to sing familiar songs from memory, with good expression. They were able to internalise a rhythm. Pupils enthusiastically selected and explored percussion instruments, used sounds to create musical effects, and sustained a repeated rhythm. Pupils are developing a good awareness of pulse and pitch. During the year, they explore descriptive sounds in 'Animal Magic' and rhythmic patterns in 'Play it again'. Pupils learn to echo a melodic pattern and recognise ascending and descending scales. They begin to recognise changes in dynamics, use sound descriptively and expressively and perform simple compositions. Pupils in Year 4 explore pentatonic scales and sound colours. They enjoy singing games, such as 'Salt, pepper, vinegar, mustard' Year 5 pupils develop their understanding of rhythm and pulse. They explore rounds and sound sources. Pupils in Year 6 explore lyrics and melody through 'Songwriter'. They develop their composition and performing skills and explore musical processes. There is also improvement in their understanding of notation, changes in structure, beats in a bar and phrasing. They are given opportunities to explore, create, select and organise sounds in musical structures and use sounds and structures to achieve a specific effect.

127. The quality of teaching and learning was judged to be good in the two lessons seen. This is a similar picture to that reported in the previous inspection. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is good. They are confident and teach the basic skills well, with the result that pupils enjoy music and develop their knowledge, understanding and skills. Teachers plan effectively and engage and retain pupils' interest, which encourages them to apply creative effort to their work. Teachers' expectations are high and pupils are motivated to succeed. The teaching methods used enable all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, to achieve well. There is appropriate challenge for all pupils, enabling them to develop their skills further. The management of pupils is very good and learning is maintained for the full time available. Ongoing assessment is used during lessons to ascertain pupils' progress and to help with planning. Self-assessment by pupils is encouraged, enabling them to develop a sound knowledge of their own learning. Homework is used where appropriate, for example to develop pupils' knowledge of musical works and composers further. Time and resources are used well. Pupils maintain concentration and work at a good pace. They enjoy music and put creative effort into their work. They contribute to discussions and perform with confidence. They behave well and form very good relationships, and this promotes a positive climate for learning. Pupils show respect for the contribution of others, treat resources with care, and show a developing sense of responsibility.

128. There are links with other areas of the curriculum. The computer program, 'Music Explorer' enables pupils to use their developing communication technology skills to compose music at four different levels of difficulty. The music is viewed as it is composed, enabling children to develop an understanding of notation in a variety of forms, pitch and

rhythm. An interactive CD, 'Musical Instruments' is used to develop pupils' understanding of instruments. The CD 'Music Maker' programme introduces pupils to the idea of pitch without the use of formal musical notation. Pupils' literacy skills are developed through discussion and dramatic productions, such as the 'Caribbean Evening'

129. The quality and range of learning opportunities is good. There is equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. Provision for pupils with special needs and for those for whom English is a second language is good. Pupils' cultural development is enhanced by listening to music from other countries, for example the Caribbean and Peru. Extra-curricular clubs are available to pupils of all ages and musical ability and include recorder clubs, hand chime clubs, a choir and a school band. Specialist teaching is available for violin, brass and woodwind instruments. Pupils regularly give performances at the local infant schools, the community centre, care homes and the local Oyster Festival, and they benefit from workshops by visiting musicians. Last year's Year 6 pupils worked with a visiting Caribbean musician and storyteller and performed Caribbean music and stories to parents and pupils and to the public at the harbour. Visitors to the school include bands from the local secondary school, a military drummer from the Canterbury band, a brass instrument teacher, and other visiting musicians.

130. The subject is led well by two experienced co-ordinators, who provide effective support for their colleagues. They have revised the policy and scheme of work, which is very comprehensive and ensures continuity and progression. They have not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning throughout the school. Taped and photographic records are kept of pupils' concerts and compositions. The scheme of work is supported by good resources, which are stored centrally and used well. Music lessons take place in a large, purpose-built studio. There is a comprehensive selection of music, which is available to each class, and a wide range of percussion instruments and instruments from a number of cultures.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

131. Standards were judged to be above expectations at the previous inspection over a broad range of activities. A direct comparison is not possible with the present inspection, when swimming and elements of games were the only parts of the programme observed. Current standards in these elements meet the nationally expected levels by age 11 and pupils of all ages, abilities and backgrounds are making good progress.

132. By age 11 all pupils are confident in the water and very few cannot swim 25 metres. Many swim much further and those with higher attainment are competent in crawl, backstroke and breaststroke. In netball, pupils pass and catch the ball accurately, and have a sound understanding of the rules. In hockey, pupils have sound stick-handling skills in travelling with the ball and passing, and take part confidently in team competitions. They show respect for the rules, and collaborate well with other team members. Levels of overall fitness are sound, and pupils commit themselves to activities energetically and with enjoyment. Pupils across the range of attainment work together well, irrespective of gender or ability, so that all are given equal opportunity to learn in a harmonious and productive atmosphere.

133. Teaching is good overall. All lessons seen were satisfactory or better, and two were very good. Pupils change quickly into the recommended kit and join in activities with energy and enthusiasm. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan activities as a well-structured sequence that keeps up a high level of challenge throughout the lesson. Lessons begin with warm-up activities, followed by explanation of the objectives so that

pupils know what is expected of them. They respond promptly to instructions and so most lessons have a good pace. Detailed explanations and careful demonstrations of technique are high quality features of the best lessons. Pupils make good progress when such demonstrations are followed by well-focused practice, as seen in a netball lesson in Year 4 and a swimming lesson in Year 6, when individuals were given skilful intensive coaching to lift their performance. Activities are generally very well directed and controlled, so that pupils for the most part behave well, waiting their turn patiently, concentrating on the activity and trying hard to improve. Levels of co-operation are high in pair and team work, so that pupils are able to concentrate on improving their skills. Some teachers make good use of the performance of higher attainers to encourage others, though pupils generally could be given more opportunity to discuss and evaluate their own performances. In some lessons, teachers raise pupils' motivation by including an element of competition, where new skills are put into practice under pressure. At these times, pupils show respect for each other and there is a good atmosphere in their friendly competitions.

134. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has been effective in guiding the improvement of resources, which are now good, and in advising colleagues. The all-weather pitch, in prospect at the previous inspection, is now in place. The swimming pool is used well, but it is only large enough to hold one third of a class at a time. At present, pupils spend a lot of time waiting their turn, but the school is considering alternative arrangements to eliminate this waiting time. The subject policy needs updating, and assessment procedures do not give enough specific information on pupils' levels of skill to inform teachers' planning or end-of-year reports. Pupils who wish to develop their skills further have access to a good range of after-school clubs, and school teams compete successfully at local level in several sports. Pupils develop their skills in adventurous outdoor activities during the residential visit for pupils in Year 6.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135. By Year 6, standards reach the objectives set out in the locally Agreed Syllabus. These standards are similar to those reported in the previous inspection, though pupils now benefit from particularly good links with several other subjects, including information and communications technology and geography. In all years, pupils take pride in the presentation of their work, and the quality of written work is of a good standard. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make satisfactory levels of progress throughout the school. However, the small proportion of higher attaining pupils is not sufficiently stretched because they are not given enough work which matches their needs.

136. By Year 6, pupils develop a good chronological knowledge of the old and new testaments. For example, pupils know where to locate the story of Noah and they can relate brief stories of Jesus, though they do not know the meaning of a 'parable'. During discussion, pupils expressed concern for the environment and suggested a good range of activities for increasing recycling and reducing pollution. Scrutiny of completed work by pupils in the previous Year 6 class shows a good understanding of the meaning of the Lord's Prayer and a detailed knowledge of Jewish requirements for kosher foods.

137. In Year 3, pupils have a sound understanding of religion and its practice. For example, pupils know where Jesus lived and died, and that he had twelve disciples. Pupils are aware that Jesus performed miracles, though they are not encouraged to think enough about the magnitude and rarity of such events during class discussion. Pupils know that

Muhammad is the prophet, and that Islam translates as 'obedience to God'. In Year 4, pupils develop a good knowledge of Sikhism and Christianity. For example, in the course of a topic which combined religious education and geography, pupils learned that Sikhism began in the Punjab.

138. Average attaining pupils show a sound understanding of different faiths and beliefs. Higher attaining pupils showed a deeper understanding when they discussed in some detail Guru Nanak's belief that all people are equal in the eyes of God. In Year 5, pupils continue to develop their knowledge of Christianity and Islam, though many are confused by the traditions of various faiths. For example, a higher attaining pupil was uncertain whether the Koran is a holy Jewish book. Pupils can explain the importance of the festival of Ramadan.

139. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. All but one of the lessons seen were satisfactory; one was judged to be unsatisfactory. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject, though the planned tasks do not always match the needs of the higher attainers. Pupils benefited most from the lessons which gave them opportunities to build upon their knowledge and become involved in discussion whilst sharing their views. In these lessons, pupils showed a willingness to contribute and improved their understanding of different faiths, beliefs and values. However, during one unsatisfactory lesson seen, resources were not well used and pupils were talkative and unsettled and paid little attention to the teacher. The school has developed a very good range of resources but these are not used enough to support teaching and arouse pupils' interest. The school places a strong emphasis upon the quality of pupils' written work, which is well presented. Good quality marking includes positive comments which help pupils to improve further. However, all pupils would benefit from teachers making use of a further range of teaching methods, giving opportunities for discussion, and building upon pupils' imaginative ideas.

140. The co-ordinator has good expertise and knowledge, although her monitoring role is under developed. She has yet to monitor planning or teaching. A systematic approach to assessment has been agreed, though the procedures have yet to be put into practice.