

INSPECTION REPORT

ROSE STREET FIRST SCHOOL

Sheerness

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118348

Headteacher: Mrs P. Newman

Reporting inspector: Mrs J. Catlin
21685

Dates of inspection: 18th – 21st June 2001

Inspection number: 195185

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Rose Street Sheerness Kent
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D. Grover
Date of previous inspection:	June 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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2168 5	Jenny Catlin	Registered inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school managed?
9189	John Horwood	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
1233 1	Vera Grigg	Team inspector	Geography History Foundation stage	
8696	Abul Maula	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
1470 6	Brenda Knowles	Team inspector	English Music Religious education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Rose Street First School has 287 pupils on roll and is larger than most schools of this type. There are 3 pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is just under 40 per cent; this is above average nationally. Five pupils speak English as an additional language. This is about average compared to most schools. There were 52 children in total in the nursery at the time of the inspection, 19 of whom have specific and, often, acute special educational needs. There are a further 49 children in the reception classes, of which 9 were under five. Children enter the nursery with standards that are very much below those expected for their ages in all areas of learning, with the exception of physical skills. These are well below standards expected in the area of fine motor skills, although children's general physical skills are in line with expected standards. When children enter the reception classes, they have standards that are well below those expected and they rise to reach standards that are below those expected when they leave the reception classes and enter Year 1. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, nearly 40 per cent, is well above average. There are just over 1 per cent of pupils with a statement of special educational need; this figure is below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a good quality of education and gives good value for money. It is an effective and improving school. Standards have improved because there is a significant proportion of good teaching. The management of the school is good and has maintained and improved the standards which were reported in the last inspection. The very effective leadership of the headteacher gives a clear and positive direction to the work of the school.

What the school does well

- Improved standards in reading and writing across the school
- Overall good teaching in mathematics which has led to improved standards
- Above average standards in art and design
- Learning for children in the Foundation Stage
- The quality of education for pupils with special educational needs
- Leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff

What could be improved

- Greater clarity in teachers' lesson planning regarding expectations for pupils of differing abilities
- Time allocation for the teaching of geography and history
- The presentation of pupils' written work

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The areas for improvement are outweighed by the many things that the school is doing well. The school was last inspected in June 1999 and, since then, it has made considerable improvement. At that time it was found that the school was well managed with improving standards. This continues to be the situation and there is now a greater consistency in the quality of teaching, the expectations of teachers and the standards attained by pupils. There are good procedures in use to assess what pupils know, understand and can do, and, as a result, many pupils are now making good progress.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	E*	E	E	C
Writing	E	D	E	C
Mathematics	C	A	D	B

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The above table shows that standards by the age of 7 in reading and writing were well below the national average and in mathematics they were below. However, when compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, attainment in reading and writing was average and in mathematics it was above average. The trend in the school's National Curriculum results in recent years is above that found nationally. National test results have improved dramatically since 1996. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls in mathematics. However, in reading and writing last year, girls performed better than boys. The school's targets, set in conjunction with the local authority, were exceeded last year in mathematics although not at the higher levels. Targets in English were not met at the expected level 2 but there was an increase in the number of pupils achieving the higher levels. Future targets have been set and require a challenging but realistic increase in the percentage of pupils attaining national standards. The school is confident that they will achieve these targets and inspection evidence supports this view. By the age of seven, pupils attain good standards in art and design. Standards in science, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education are average. Standards in religious education match those expected for the locally agreed syllabus. The attainment of children at the end of the Foundation Stage is below average. By the age of 9, pupils' current attainment in English is below average. Standards in mathematics are slightly above average and in art and design they are also above average. In science and all other areas of the curriculum, standards are average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes to the school are satisfactory overall. All pupils are friendly and polite, leading to a welcoming environment.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour around the school is good with only a few examples of inappropriate behaviour in some lessons where teaching does not keep pupils fully engaged.
Personal development and relationships	The school's ethos, supported by the good relationships and good behaviour, enables pupils to progressively develop personal skills as they move through the school.
Attendance	The school has addressed the level of unauthorised absence which has previously been above the national average but has seen the level of authorised absence increase this year due to a large amount of illness.

The whole school community is harmonious and orderly. The school's behaviour policies have been very effective and behaviour is now good throughout the school. Pupils develop good relationships within the school both with each other and with the staff. Pupils are punctual arriving at school and also for lessons.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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 overall quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good and some very good features. This represents an improvement on the previous inspection report. Five per cent of the 65 lessons observed were very good, 43 per cent were good and 48 per cent were satisfactory. There was a small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is at least satisfactory and often of good quality throughout the school. Teachers ensure that suitable use is made of information and communication technology across the curriculum and, as a result, pupils' skills are increasing. Similarly, good use is often made of literacy and numeracy in other lessons and pupils are learning to describe what they have done, to write factually and to take notes and to record the results of experiments in science. A particular strength in teaching is the management of pupils, which ensures pupils concentrate and that there is a good working atmosphere. There are good relationships among adults and pupils and this too results in a harmonious working atmosphere. Areas for development include more effective lesson planning which makes very clear what teachers' expectations are, particularly for higher attaining pupils, and what work is to be set to ensure these are addressed. On occasions, there is a lack of pace and rigour in the teaching which results in learning that is overall satisfactory rather than good. Occasionally, pupils sit for too long on the carpet without individual activity. Consequently, time for the lesson is reduced and the quality of experiences diminished.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The planned curriculum is broad and balanced. It is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities and community links.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to the good provision provided by the school.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Additional support enables these pupils to integrate fully into lessons, and to make good progress over time.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The welfare of the pupils is good and is underpinned by the caring atmosphere created by the very good leadership of the headteacher and her staff.

There is a home-school agreement and clear evidence of regular communications with parents indicating the schools willingness to work with parents. Information for parents contained in the annual reports is good. However, there is little data included to allow parents to determine how well their child is progressing compared to expectations, except for the formal reporting of the statutory assessment test results. The implementation and monitoring of the revised National Curriculum framework suggests that there is now an appropriate curriculum in place, offering a good range of learning opportunities. The principles of equality of access are incorporated into the curriculum, although the present lack of resources prevents pupils from having full access to information and communication technology, and higher attaining pupils are not always fully or consistently extended in their learning. There are some strong cross-curricular links and the curriculum is enriched by a programme of extra-curricular activities and visits.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The dedicated leadership of the headteacher, with very effective support from the senior management team, gives a clear and positive direction to the work of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and fulfil their statutory duties effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The work of the school is effectively monitored and performance is evaluated against the success criteria of the school's development plan.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used efficiently to raise achievement and to ensure best value for money and are linked to the school's priorities.

The school is well staffed and teachers have a wide range of subject qualifications. The number of support staff is high and they are very effective in their support role. Accommodation is good: it is very clean, tidy and well cared for. A particular strength of the leadership and management of the school are the very effective systems developed for tracking pupil achievement through the school. This has enabled the teachers to improve pupils' progress and thereby raise their attainment. The school is committed to the principle of ensuring best value for money when purchasing goods and services.

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 child makes good progress. • The teaching is good. • The school is well led and managed. • Their child likes school. • The school helps their child become more mature and responsible. • The children get about the right amount of homework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A greater range of activities outside lessons. • More information about their child's progress. • The school being more approachable. • A closer partnership with parents. • The behaviour of pupils in school. • Higher expectations that their child will work hard.

Only 31 parents responded to the questionnaire. The inspection team agrees with these parents that children like school and that the school is well led and managed. Teaching and progress are fully discussed within the report. It is considered that as a result of the school's policies, the behaviour in school is good. Homework provision is satisfactory and, although quantity does vary across the school, it is always appropriate. The inspection team agree that the school helps the children's personal development. There have been significant increases in extra-curricular provision and this is now satisfactory although opportunities are fewer for the younger children. The school now has a satisfactory partnership with parents and gives them satisfactory information about the school and their child's progress, although the latter could be improved by more comparative data.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The overall attainment of children aged under three, when they enter the nursery, is very much below that expected for children of this age. By the time children enter Key Stage 1, many achieve the nationally expected early learning goals in the six areas of learning known as mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development, creative development, and personal, social and emotional development. However, in communications, language and literacy, attainment on entry to the nursery is very low and, despite making good progress, many children achieve well below expected standards in this area of their development.
2. Overall, children make very good progress in the nursery class and good progress in reception classes as a result of their needs being well catered for. Although they have made good progress overall since entry into the nursery class their attainment on entry to Year 1 remains below average.
3. In the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 2000, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 in reading and writing was well below the national average. The percentage of pupils gaining the higher Level 3 was in line with the national average. In mathematics, test results at the expected Level 2 were above the national average, although at the higher Level 3 they were below the national average. When compared to similar schools, results in reading and writing were average for these schools and in mathematics they were above average. In science, teacher assessment results in 2000 were below average at Level 2 and they were in line with national averages at the higher Level 3. When the school's end of Key Stage 1 results for 1999 are compared with 1996 they show considerable improvement. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls in mathematics but there is in both reading and writing where girls do better than boys. Although this general overall picture is similar to that found nationally, the difference is usually not so significant.
4. Early indications of national test results for 2001 show that attainment in reading and writing has improved and is likely to be below, rather than well below, average. However, few pupils are likely to achieve the higher Level 3. In mathematics, test results show that attainment is average at the expected Level 2 but below average at the higher Level 3. Nevertheless, pupils with special educational needs achieve considerable success at the expected Level 2 as a result of the school's good provision for these pupils. Attainment in science, as assessed by teachers, has improved and is now about average for this age range of pupils.

5. These early results show an improvement in standards for reading, writing and science. However, the overall standards in mathematics at the higher Level 3, are not as high as they were in 1999. The school is aware that they have not maintained these above average standards and feel that the focus that had been placed on mathematics was probably relaxed too early. There are now plans in place to address this issue. Inspection evidence confirms that levels of attainment for higher achieving pupils could be better. One of the reasons for this is that although the quality of teaching is overall satisfactory in Key Stage 1, there are inconsistencies between classes. Where teaching is satisfactory, rather than good, it is because lesson planning does not always effectively or consistently address the needs of higher achieving pupils to enable them to make good progress overall. Also, in classes where teaching is good, opportunities are planned for the further development of pupils' numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum.
6. The standard of handwriting and presentation in both key stages is poor. Writing books are used in haphazard fashion, pages are not completed and some of the pupils' handwriting is illegible.
7. The school's targets, set in conjunction with the local authority, were exceeded last year in mathematics although not at the higher levels. Targets in English were not met at the expected Level 2 but there was a 12 per cent increase in the number of pupils achieving the higher levels. Future targets have been set and represent a challenging but realistic increase in the number of pupils attaining national standards. The school is confident that, with the existing implementation of the literacy hour and numeracy strategy, they will achieve these targets and inspection evidence supports this view.
8. Pupils, including those with English as an additional language, make good progress overall in both key stages, both in the lessons observed and as seen in previously recorded work. In almost all lessons observed, progress was at least satisfactory and often good.
9. Attainment in English at the end of Year 4 is below the national average; in mathematics it is slightly above average and in science standards are broadly in line with expectations.
10. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4 attain satisfactory standards and make sound progress in information and communication technology. They use a mouse with confidence to respond to word games and are aware of the different purposes of information and communication technology through their own word processing and personal research.
11. By the ages of seven and nine, pupils attain good standards and make good progress in art and design. Standards in design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education are average and all pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards in religious education match those expected for the locally agreed syllabus. Progress is satisfactory.

12. Pupils with special educational needs make overall good progress in relation to their targets. These targets include the development of their literacy and numeracy skills and also address behavioural difficulties, when appropriate. This good progress reflects the finding during the previous inspection. Pupils' progress is effectively monitored and assessed against the targets on their individual education plans. Their self-esteem and confidence also improves as they move through the school. Many achieve the national standard in mathematics at the age of seven. Learning support assistants develop close working relationships with the pupils for whom they are responsible, and this enhances their progress.
13. Higher attaining pupils in the school make satisfactory progress overall. However, their progress could be better if they were sufficiently challenged in all classes to enable them to make good progress and achieve their full potential.
14. Literacy skills are developed suitably in other subjects of the curriculum, for example in mathematics and history. There are some strategies for the teaching of numeracy skills across the school and across subjects, for example in design and technology.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Attitudes to school are satisfactory with most pupils enthusiastic about coming to school and all working together well. The pupils are very friendly and polite which leads to a welcoming environment. They join in the lesson activities well, although in some classes, they find it difficult to maintain concentration. Many join in the recently introduced extra-curricular activities with enthusiasm. Behaviour around the school is good, which reflects the success of the school's behaviour and discipline policies. There is no evidence of any significant inappropriate behaviour or attitudes on the playground or in the dining room, except for minor incidents that are dealt with promptly. Within the classroom, the standard of behaviour varies with very good behaviour seen in some well taught lessons but small amounts of less than satisfactory behaviour in others when pupils are not kept fully involved. The whole school community is harmonious and orderly, requiring only minimal supervision at break times to ensure pupils' safety. There is no oppressive behaviour such as bullying, sexism or racism and this is supported by the absence of any exclusions last year.
16. In addition to the good behaviour, a strength of the school is the good relationships which exist across the school and this has a positive influence on learning. The pupils have formed good relationships with each other and with the teachers, who themselves lead by example. Most children work well together, listen carefully to teachers and to each other and are good at waiting their turn.
17. The school ethos, supported by the good relationships and behaviour, enables the pupils to progressively develop personal skills as they move through the

school. The sharing of ideas and the ability to work in pairs or groups, for example, as seen in a Year 2 design and technology lesson, make significant contributions to learning. During assemblies and lessons, pupils are encouraged to think about issues and people. For example, in a personal, social and health education lesson in Year 2 pupils were encouraged to reflect on the health values associated with the food they eat out of school, as part of their homework. Within the class, all groups of pupils integrate fully and those with problems are understood and supported by their classmates.

18. There are opportunities for responsibility in all classes, such as taking registers to the office or being part of the green team responsible for playground tidiness. Pupils are keen to undertake these tasks and staff often use them as rewards for good work or good behaviour. Pupils are also involved with special activities such as performing in assemblies and they clearly take pride in these.
19. The attendance levels at the school have been below the national average with levels of unauthorised absence above. This situation has now improved because the school has been effective in its attempts to reduce the unauthorised absence, mainly through communication with parents and immediate follow-up on absence. The latest figures produced by the school show an increase in authorised absence resulting from increased illness during the year. Parents are aware of the requirement for notification of absence and the school follows up the requirement for a reason to be given. Pupils are punctual arriving at school and also for lessons.
20. The school uses praise and celebration of achievement as a major motivator. There are positive awards systems used for academic and personal achievement: the school has a book of excellence and pupils nominated receive points and certificates with a possible prize; this system is ongoing throughout a pupil's school life. Corporate awards are made for classes who have special successes in such things as tidiness or behaviour. Both types of awards form part of celebration during assemblies.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, which represents an improvement on the previous inspection report. Five per cent of the 65 lessons observed were very good, 43 per cent were good and 48 per cent were satisfactory. There was a small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching.
22. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall. In the nursery two out of five lessons were satisfactory, two were good and one was very good. In the reception classes half the lessons were satisfactory and half were good. Assessment is continuous and is used to plan future activities. Staff have excellent relationships with the children, which encourages them to attempt difficult tasks.

23. The quality of teaching in both key stages is satisfactory overall but there are some significant strengths within this. All teachers manage their classes well and have good relationships with the pupils. Standards of discipline are very good. Pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour. These factors enable lesson time to be used well and help pupils to concentrate on their work. They persevere even when the task is difficult. They achieve well as a result and complete good amounts of work in the time available.
24. Where teaching is good or very good the teachers explain carefully the purpose of the lesson and, at the end of lessons, often evaluate with the pupils the levels of success they have achieved. Most teachers give clear instructions about the lesson activities so that pupils can settle quickly to their work. Lessons usually build carefully on what has gone before and teachers often remind pupils of the stage they have reached in their learning in different subjects. They listen to pupils' contributions in lessons and treat all their answers with respect. Pupils are praised for trying. Pupils who are shy or have special educational needs are sometimes specifically asked to contribute answers so that they gain in confidence and self-esteem.
25. Teachers plan their work well for each half-term and research the content thoroughly. They liaise effectively with colleagues within the same year group and work is planned to build on most pupils' prior attainment, including for those who have learning difficulties, and also builds on their previous knowledge; they know their pupils' capabilities well and consequently pupils make satisfactory and often good progress. However, these half-term plans, with the exception of literacy and sometimes numeracy, are often not transferred effectively to their daily lesson planning. As a result, it is not always clear what teachers' expectations are for higher attaining pupils and how the work is to be modified to ensure that their needs are fully met. This results in these groups of pupils not making the progress of which they are capable. Nevertheless, the teachers' day books are used effectively by learning support assistants to record what their groups know, understand and can do. A further consequence of the brief lesson plans is that teachers do not always make clear what they want pupils to be able to know by the end of the lesson. Therefore, they are not always clear what evidence they need in order to assess effectively the progress that pupils have made in their learning.
26. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is at least satisfactory and often of good quality throughout the school. This has a particular impact on the good progress made by pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. Work is well-matched to these pupils' capabilities and is appropriately challenging and they receive good support from learning support assistants who assist in keeping them active and interested.
27. All teachers make suitable use of resources and pupils' interests are aroused as a result. In science, the provision of sufficient light bulbs, wires, switches and batteries enables Year 2 pupils to investigate the construction of a circuit for themselves. In design and technology, a suitable variety of appropriate materials is provided to assist Year 1 pupils in solving problems related to the

building of a stable structure. Year 2 pupils are offered the opportunity to select appropriate materials to make a toy using a wind-up mechanism.

28. All teachers use terminology appropriate to the subjects being taught and encourage pupils to use the correct vocabulary in their responses. Pupils are taught simple electrical vocabulary in science and about phonemes in English. There are, however, lost opportunities for the sharing of ideas. Pupils are rarely asked to turn to a partner and discuss clearly a particular question in order to develop their speaking and listening skills and assist them in the art of conversation.
29. Individual lessons often build up skills and increase in challenge as they proceed. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils were given strategies for helping them to add three numbers together. Not all pupils found it easy but the teacher improved their skills by asking the pupils to start with the biggest number and add the smaller numbers to it and their accuracy improved as a result. They then moved on to number bonds to ten and were successful because they applied the same principles. A significant feature of all lessons is the constant interaction between the teachers and the pupils, which makes pupils reflect constantly on what they are doing.
30. In two classes, good use was made of questioning to enable the teacher to check on pupils' understanding and gains in knowledge. In a Year 2 class, good consideration was also given to health and safety measures when the teacher took the opportunity to advise pupils on keeping water and electricity separate. Sometimes, simple brain-storming of associated words, as Year 2 pupils did in preparation for their design and technology work on vehicles, enables the teacher to appreciate the pupils' current understanding before particular studies are undertaken.
31. Teachers ensure that suitable use is made of information and communication technology across the curriculum and, as a result, pupils' skills are increasing. Similarly, good use is often made of literacy and numeracy in other lessons and pupils are learning to describe what they have done, to write factually and to take notes and to record the results of experiments in science. Sound links are made between subjects.
32. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good in every class. Teachers and learning support assistants collaborate well in their preparation and planning. Learning support assistants are well briefed to support these pupils; most have received good training and many display a high level of skill in their work. For example, many use good questioning skills and manage pupils well so that they remain closely focused on the task to be completed. Learning support assistants are allocated to classes for much of the school day. This ensures that teachers and support staff develop close working relationships and makes a positive impact on the quality of education offered to pupils with special educational needs.

33. Teachers use a range of assessment strategies and they note pupils' success in lessons, particularly for pupils with special educational needs in literacy and numeracy. Periodically reading and spelling tests are given to track pupils' progress over time. Homework is used appropriately to support pupils' classroom work with an emphasis on reading practice, which is assisting the improved progress the pupils make.

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

34. The school has made considerable improvement since the 1997 inspection which identified the curriculum as a serious weakness in many respects, particularly in its breadth and balance, planning, documentation, teaching and assessment. Most of these issues have been addressed and the planned curriculum is now broad and balanced. The implementation and monitoring of the revised National Curriculum framework indicates that there is an appropriate curriculum in place, offering a good range of learning opportunities. The school is reviewing the situation relating to the time allocated to some foundation subjects.
35. Subjects have been reviewed in the light of Curriculum 2000 and are supported by nationally recommended schemes of work. This ensures that the curriculum meets statutory requirements and pupils' skills are built on systematically as they move through the school. English and mathematics are given appropriate priority and all classes have daily literacy and numeracy sessions. The strategies employed for development are satisfactory in core subjects, particularly literacy and numeracy. The principles of equality of access are incorporated in the curriculum, although the current limitations of computer resources prevent pupils from having full access to information and communication technology and higher attaining pupils are not always fully or consistently extended in their learning. However, the school awaits the forthcoming delivery of new computers and software. The programme of religious education is consistent with the locally agreed syllabus. There is specialist support for pupils learning English as an additional language. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Personal, social and health education are taught well and, although the governors have made a decision not to teach sex education at this age, any issues arising are dealt with on an individual basis as and when the need arises. Pupils are made aware of the dangers of drugs. The provision of homework makes a sound contribution to pupils' learning and attainment. There are some strong cross-curricular links. Some foundation subjects, such as history and geography, and art and design and design technology, are timetabled for blocks of time. While this is a satisfactory use of curriculum time there is little evidence to suggest that the amount of time allocated to these subjects enables sufficient coverage of the National Curriculum, particularly in geography and history.
36. The curriculum is enriched by a programme of extra-curricular activities and visits. The quality of the contribution made by the community to pupils' learning reflects the good links that the school has established with various agencies

such as the Family Welfare Association, Sheppey College and Swale Business Enterprise. Relationships with linked middle schools are good and these contacts support pupils' attainment and progress. Parental involvement in pupils' education and the life of the school remains to be further developed.

37. There is a good working partnership between class teachers and the manager for special educational needs, which facilitates the prompt identification of pupils with learning difficulties or behaviour problems. Their needs are efficiently assessed and an appropriate level of support is provided. The individual education plans, which are drawn up for all pupils on the special educational needs register, are used effectively by class teachers to guide lesson planning. Targets are clearly defined and regularly reviewed. Work is set at an appropriate level across the curriculum and pupils receive good in-class support from learning support assistants. The special educational needs manager and class teachers provide well-planned and clearly focused teaching for the pupils who are withdrawn for additional work in literacy and mathematics. Progress is carefully monitored against the targets set on the individual education plans.
38. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.
39. Provision for spiritual development of the children is good. There are daily assemblies in school including a weekly visit by a local minister. The local churches have a rota so that ministers from the various denominations visit and the school has an assembly content programme to ensure pupils have the opportunity to reflect on various issues. The school aims include developing spiritual awareness and awe with regard to the universe.
40. Provision for social development is good, with the school encouraging positive attitudes from the pupils and using visits and visiting speakers to broaden their knowledge of the community. There is a good personal, social and health education programme and issues involving relationships and behaviour are well addressed in the school within, for example, circle time. The school has recently increased the provision of extra-curricular activities at lunchtime and after school and these also help the children acquire good social skills. There are also responsibilities given within the classroom to encourage the pupils to be responsible for their own community, for example, by keeping the playground tidy and giving consideration to the environment. The school aims include developing self-discipline.
41. Provision for moral development is good and addressing it forms part of the school's general ethos. It is reflected by the school's aims as well as by school and class rules. Within lessons staff pay attention to explaining why things are done and they encourage discussion on right and wrong.

42. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory in the school. The school includes consideration of other faiths within the curriculum and within assemblies. Opportunities are taken to develop pupils' understanding of other cultures by parents who are prepared to visit their child's class and by celebration of appropriate events such as the Chinese New Year. Within the curriculum, there are opportunities for pupils to increase their awareness of other cultures but there are few displays around the school illustrating multi-cultural curriculum content and this is an area for future development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. The provision for the welfare of the pupils is good and this is fully described for parents in a comprehensive prospectus. It is underpinned by the ethos of the school and the caring atmosphere created by the very good leadership of the headteacher and her staff. There are good relationships within the school and this is evident from the welcoming and polite reception given to everyone by the pupils. In spite of the changes in staffing that have taken place, there are clearly close relationships between the staff and pupils, which ensures all pupils are well known to the staff.
44. There is a sound approach to health and safety and the school provides a safe environment. Activities throughout the school are adequately supervised and there are good relationships between the pupils and all supervisory staff. Within lessons staff are fully aware of health and safety issues and ensure, for example, that pupils with earrings have them taped over for physical education lessons. The school also ensures that parents are consulted and their agreement obtained, or otherwise, for their children to join school trips and special activities. Within the curriculum there are specific activities, for example Year 4 are shown the 'home safe' video, to support their safety.
45. The school has an adequate number of trained first-aid staff, who are supported by external agencies as required. All records and reporting of injuries are kept accurately and securely. Procedures for child protection and health and safety checks are good and meet legal requirements. The headteacher is the Child Protection Officer and is fully trained and conscientious in her duties, ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities, as soon as they join the school.
46. The school has good procedures for monitoring attendance and they ensure that parents are aware of the requirements to notify the school of absence, through both the prospectus and newsletters. The school is aware that much of the absence is due to family holidays and uses the newsletters to remind parents that holidays should be taken outside term time wherever possible. During the past year, attendance figures have been adversely affected by a great deal of illness. A few families do not fully support the school's attendance policies and the school is working closely with the educational welfare department to encourage attendance. The school has recently introduced a scanning system to input attendance figures into a database which will allow easier and more comprehensive analysis of the figures. At the

present time the scheme is still in its infancy and is not fully incorporated into the school's systems.

47. The arrangements for monitoring pupils' personal development are satisfactory. Through the pupils' annual reports, particularly for children in the Foundation Stage, there are informative comments on this area of their development. The school has effective policies to ensure that teachers are clearly aware of the pupils' needs and that they are addressed appropriately. Formal recording of every pupil's personal development is an area that needs attention, although the school keeps good records of pupils' with specific problems.
48. The school has good procedures for promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour and the standards seen during the inspection reflect their success.
49. The school encourages the children to look after themselves through such programmes as healthy eating studies within the personal, social and health education syllabus. They are also encouraged to consider the environment around them and to look after it; they take pride in looking after their school and keeping it tidy, taking it in turns to be part of the 'green team' who pick up litter, and there are incentives for activities such as classroom tidiness.
50. The previous inspection report acknowledged the school's draft assessment policy and the way it identified the uses of assessment, but it was critical of its failure to define procedures and of the fact that it was not implemented. The school has since made considerable improvement. There is now an assessment calendar in place and priorities have been identified with a focus on pupils' self-evaluation of their work. Teachers' expertise has improved in matching tasks to the full ability range as well as in assessing and recording pupils' progress. More use is also made of assessment information to guide planning and teaching, though the collation and use of this information could be more systematic. The school's current assessment procedures and practice are based on a careful analysis of test results involving the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors.
51. All of this applies to the core curriculum, particularly English and mathematics. Assessment procedures and practice relating to other subjects, particularly foundation subjects, are yet to develop fully.
52. Assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are good. Pupils are set targets that are realistic, but challenging. These are reviewed each half term. Targets are discussed with pupils and shared with parents. This is a good strategy which ensures that pupils feel well supported and that they develop a good awareness of their own rate of progress. The strategies by which targets may be achieved are also described in pupils' individual education plans. These are well maintained and contain sufficient information, but vary in quality of detail from satisfactory to very good. For example, some specify very precise targets and contain detail helpful to those offering support.

However, in general, the success criteria outlined for each target are usually specific enough to be useful in enabling the reader to know when a target has been reached. Reviews are regular, take full account of the need to keep parents and pupils informed and are sufficiently well documented to use as a reference for progress. The school is alert to the need for the early diagnosis of special needs; this ensures that pupils receive early support for the learning difficulties they encounter. Learning support assistants regularly monitor pupils' progress towards their targets for behaviour, concentration, speaking and listening. Their comments are included in individual education plans and form a detailed and continuous record of pupils' progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire are supportive of the school although there are clearly a large number of parents who have little direct involvement. Most of those who work with the school are involved through an active parent, school and friends' association, or as parent governors, or providing help in school. Most parents think that their children like coming to school and make good progress as a result of good teaching and management within the school. Whilst most parents think the school is helping their child become mature and responsible, a few parents think that their children are not expected to work hard and to achieve their best. A number of the 31 parents who responded to the questionnaire, feel that the school does not keep them informed about their children's progress, are not comfortable about approaching the school with questions, do not think that the school provides sufficient extra-curricular activities, do not think that the school works closely with parents or that the amount of homework is appropriate.
54. A few specific points were raised by parents including concern that the homework policy was not clear and that there are still no after school activities provided for the younger children.
55. During the inspection all the points raised by parents through the meeting and through questionnaires were examined. Many of the concerns are already being addressed by the school. There is now a good range of extra-curricular activities including after school clubs and school visits, although it was agreed that many of these are not available to the younger children. There is now a home-school agreement and clear evidence of regular communications with parents indicating the school's willingness to work with parents. The setting of homework seen during the inspection was appropriate including the encouragement for pupils to take books home to read. Information for parents contained in the annual reports is good and clearly refers to individual pupils. However, there is little data included to allow parents to determine how well their child is progressing compared to national expectations, except for the formal reporting of the statutory assessment test results. This issue is currently being addressed by the deputy headteacher.
56. The school provides satisfactory documentation for parents including good quality newsletters supported by letters on specific issues, for example on the content of the curriculum and on health and social matters. Newsletters contain information on both past and future events as well as information useful to parents about the school. The parents receive an annual report which is handwritten by each class teacher and comments on each subject. Parents are required to acknowledge receipt and can ask to discuss the report. There are parents' meetings during the year for them to discuss their child's work and the school has an open door policy for parents to discuss matters with the school. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed of their child's progress through involvement in the regular reviews that take place. The total package provides satisfactory information to parents.
57. The parent, school and friends' association has regular meetings and organises social and fund raising events which also involve the wider

community. Whilst an enthusiastic group of parents supported by the staff is very active, there has been difficulty in getting additional parents to participate. The events organised are varied and whilst some are fund-raising, many are social events for parents, staff and the children. One of the aims of the association is to encourage parental help in school and, whilst there is a contribution, it is limited by the numbers of parents who are able or willing to be involved.

58. Parent governors provide support in school and are contacted by parents and staff on a regular basis as part of an overall partnership process. The inspection identified that at the present time there is a satisfactory partnership between parents and the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The leadership and management of the school are very good and as a result have succeeded in improving standards since the last inspection. The dedicated leadership of the headteacher, with very effective support from the deputy headteacher and senior management team, gives a clear and positive direction to the work of the school. Working closely with the senior management team, they have been very successful in developing a dedicated and enthusiastic staff, with a shared commitment to school improvement. The headteacher provides very clear guidance for the development of the comprehensive schemes of work, which are now in place for all subjects.
60. The carefully considered delegation of subject responsibilities ensures that, overall, teachers make an effective contribution to the development of the curriculum. Liaison between subject co-ordinators is effective. Consequently, the school has effectively addressed the key issue identified within the last report to raise pupils' attainment and progress and thus has secured considerable improvement in this area. All members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, work very well together and teachers take every opportunity to discuss and share ideas with their colleagues and advise them. The non-teaching staff are usually very well briefed about their work and make a significant contribution to the standards and the welfare of the pupils.
61. The school has clear aims, which promote the development of individual pupils. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress with very effective systems developed for tracking pupil achievement through the school and the setting of both class and individual targets. This is a particular strength of the school and has enabled them to improve pupils' progress and thereby raise their attainment. Relationships between all members of the school community are good and the caring ethos of the school is greatly appreciated by parents. As a result, the action taken to meet the school's targets is good.
62. The management by the chair of governors is sound and he is knowledgeable and supportive of the school. The headteacher's very good guidance, support and leadership have also enabled the governors to fulfil their statutory duties

effectively. They now have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and are working to rectify the latter. With support from the headteacher and senior staff, they have identified priorities and they regularly and effectively monitor and evaluate performance against the success criteria of the school's development plan, which covers staff development, curriculum development and premises. Many governors make regular visits to the school as link governors, for example, in literacy and numeracy. However, not all governors visit on a regular basis and, therefore, are not as fully informed as they could be.

63. The financial planning is thorough and the school is well funded. The school currently has a large rollover figure of 20 per cent of its total budget. This is a planned figure to cover the building of an extension in which to house a computer suite. There are also contingency plans to increase pupil numbers, which will enable the school to have single age classes in Key Stage 2. The school is committed to the principle of ensuring best value for money when purchasing goods and services. The school administrative officer makes good use of information and communication technology in managing the school's financial records and the school has Internet and e-mail access to local authority services. There is good formal evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of the spending decisions against standards of work produced by the pupils, and the school gives good value for money.
64. The headteacher and senior management team monitor teaching and learning effectively. This is of benefit to staff, helping them to evaluate their effectiveness in the classroom and thereby raise standards. Performance management has taken place and the planning for staff development is good with the available grant being used well. In-service training for teachers has been a priority and all have had the opportunity for training, both for the benefit of the pupils and of their own development. Effective induction for new staff is in place and the headteacher is a trained and experienced mentor.
65. The special educational needs manager provides very good guidance and support for colleagues throughout the school and the documentation of all matters pertaining to pupils on the special educational needs register is exemplary. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs is well-informed and supportive and liaises closely with the manager for this area. The special educational needs manager is responsible for contacts with parents and external agencies. She offers advice and suggests strategies to learning support assistants at weekly meetings and discharges her administrative duties competently. She displays a good knowledge of pupils with special educational needs and keeps parents well informed of their children's progress. Teaching resources are of good quality and there is a wide range of books and materials at appropriate levels to enrich pupils' learning experiences. The school has good procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of its special educational needs policy.
66. The school is well staffed to meet the needs of all pupils and the teaching of the National Curriculum. There is a good balance between newly qualified teachers and those with longer service. There is also a good balance between male and female staff. The teachers have a wide range of subject qualifications that have been appropriately deployed. The number of support staff is high; they have all been appropriately trained in either literacy or numeracy and are very effective in their support role.
67. The school is very clean, tidy and well cared for. Accommodation is good. The school also benefits from two suitably resourced rooms: one is a language and literacy suite and the other is a fiction library. The hall allows physical education lessons to take place inside and also provides an ideal space for

school productions. The corridors are spacious and have been made more attractive by a range of stimulating displays. The school has a large playground that is clearly and interestingly marked out with a variety of games and activities. The large grass areas provide an ideal place for many games activities.

68. Resources are used efficiently to raise achievement and to ensure best value for money; for example, the special educational needs budget and all other available grants are managed well and linked to the priorities identified within the school development plan. Most subjects have a satisfactory quantity of resources and these contribute well to pupils' learning. The only major exception is the school fiction library, which is under-funded and under-resourced. However, the school has ongoing plans to develop this area. The school has identified the development of information and communication technology as a priority for this year and there are plans to extend the school to provide a computer suite. The subject managers conduct regular reviews and keep a close watch on the adequacy, access to and the use of resources. They are responsible for maintaining a good balance between classes and subject areas and for ordering new equipment as necessary. The school is able to run efficiently on a day-to-day basis, because of the well-developed skills of the administration staff and the effective systems in place. The school makes good use of the local community and environment to support much of its curricular work with visits to places such as Hever Castle. There are numerous visitors to the school, among them resident artists, poets and theatre groups.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69. In order to build on the existing standards in the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- 1) ensure teachers' daily lesson plans make clear what the expectations are for the learning of different groups of pupils, particularly higher attaining pupils; (paragraphs 25, 89 and 95)
- (2) review the time allocation for geography and history to ensure sufficient coverage of the National Curriculum; (paragraphs 35, 120 and 126)
- (3) improve the presentation of pupils' written work. (paragraphs 6 and 86)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- I. further develop opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in investigational work; (paragraph 94)
- II. continue with existing plans to develop the use of information and communication technology in mathematics; (paragraph 94)
- III. increase opportunities to develop further pupils' speaking and listening skills. (paragraph 82)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	65
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5	43	48	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	52	235
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		93

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	10	116

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	1.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	25	23	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	14	24
	Girls	19	20	22
	Total	34	34	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (70)	71 (74)	96 (98)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	22	21
	Girls	20	22	20
	Total	34	44	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (72)	92 (87)	85 (87)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	0
White	196
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.04
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.1
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	78.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	198.25

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.7
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	602,011
Total expenditure	546,314
Expenditure per pupil	2,093
Balance brought forward from previous year	67,000
Balance carried forward to next year	122,697

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	287
Number of questionnaires returned	31

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	21	7	7	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	42	0	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	38	14	0	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	41	14	7	0
The teaching is good.	59	34	7	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	24	21	10	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	17	21	10	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	21	14	0	10
The school works closely with parents.	48	24	18	7	3
The school is well led and managed.	41	46	10	3	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	34	4	4	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	32	17	10	17

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

70. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and is a strength of the school. In the last report, standards and progress were sound to good. There are now two distinct cohorts in the nursery and reception classes. Standards are below the expected levels, but progress is good overall. Children enter the nursery from their third birthday for half-day sessions and then enter the reception classes in the September prior to their fifth birthday for full-day sessions. Children enter the nursery with standards that are very much below those expected for their ages in all areas of learning, with the exception of physical skills. These are well below standards expected in the area of fine motor skills, although children's general physical skills are in line with expected standards. When children enter the reception classes, they have standards that are well below those expected. Although they make good progress in the reception classes, standards are still below those expected when they enter Year 1. This is a considerable achievement in a very short time, and results from very good planning, assessment, and commitment from teachers and assistants.
71. There were 52 children in total in the nursery at the time of the inspection, 19 of whom have specific and, often, acute special educational needs. The nursery is staffed by a nursery teacher and two nursery nurses and there is support for one child who has a statement of special educational need. Several children have complex special educational needs and currently the provision of support from external agencies, in the form of staffing, is inadequate. The very good progress that children make is due to the staff working extremely effectively as a team.
72. Accommodation is very good. The nursery is large, which allows for the easy movement of pupils and provides sufficient quiet areas for children to read books, act out role-play and to make large constructions. The reception rooms also have sufficient space for children and all three rooms provide an exciting and stimulating environment where children's work is given prominence. Foundation Stage children's work is effectively displayed in the main school. For example, imaginative weaving using natural materials is given prominence in the school hall. There is also a very good outdoor play area, part of which is covered, which allows for the development of children's physical skills. The rooms allow the development of children from the early learning goals to the full National Curriculum.
73. The quality of teaching is good overall. In the nursery two out of five lessons were satisfactory, two were good and one was very good. In the reception classes half the lessons were satisfactory and half were good. Assessment is continuous and is used to plan future activities. Staff have excellent relationships with the children, which encourages them to attempt difficult tasks. The school's very good provision for these children successfully

promotes all areas of their development. Parents are made very welcome and are involved at an early stage. There is a parents' area at the entrance to the nursery and parents welcome the opportunity to look at photographs of their children in various activities, and other information is readily available. Visits play an important part in the curriculum, they stimulate children's interest in their environment and form a focus for further activities.

Personal, social and emotional development

74. Children make very good progress in this area, as a result of good teaching, to reach standards that are below those expected when they leave the reception classes. The aims of the nursery and reception classes strongly emphasise personal and social development and there is good provision for this area of learning. There are very good opportunities for children to begin to co-operate with one another, such as in the 'Travel Agent' corner. They confidently join in activities which are organised for them. They form good relationships with others in the class and with adults. They show increasing independence in selecting and carrying out activities. Children select and plan their activities, knowing that they have to tidy away when they have finished. They gain confidence in speaking and singing and this was seen in the nursery where children happily sang their own choice of song. Their levels of concentration by the end of the Foundation Stage are still below those expected and the teacher caters for this by providing children with short and varied activities. Some children find it difficult to stay with one activity without an adult and even in the reception classes, children want the approval of an adult. This was seen when a child made a satisfactory sandcastle and had to have it noticed by a teacher. Teachers and other adults provide a secure and caring environment in which children can learn. Staff successfully provide opportunities for children to join in class activities and encourage them to take responsibility, such as handing out milk and sandwiches. Ensuring that children understand the importance of washing their hands before handling food develops good standards of personal hygiene. Staff develop good manners in the children through gentle reminders, such as saying 'please' and 'thank you'. They also encourage children to take turns and to line up without pushing in. This has created a calm environment in all rooms, in which children can enjoy learning and playing.

Communication, language and literacy

75. Provision and the quality of teaching for this area of learning is good. Children quickly recognise their names through the good system of self-registration and every opportunity is taken to reinforce language skills. Children's listening skills are enhanced by careful questioning about the day, to which they are encouraged to answer. An excellent game where instruments are played which children have to listen to and recognise encourages good listening. When making sandwiches, children were encouraged to talk about the cress that they had grown, to describe the fresh and hard-boiled egg and also the bread that they were using. At the end of the reception classes, pupils' development in this area is below that expected because of their poor vocabulary. This was seen when children found it difficult to describe how they had made fragrant flowers, which involved several processes. They preferred to point to the perfume used, rather than use its correct name. Reading and letter sounds are given a very high emphasis. Children are encouraged to take books home from their start in the nursery and to read them daily in the reception classes. The reading diary, which is well used, forms an important dialogue between home and school. All children enjoy books and are eager to

read. Children quickly gain confidence in making marks to show writing, and they take care when copying letters in handwriting sessions in reception. They are encouraged to write their names on all work that they do and they try very hard to do this.

Mathematical development

76. Children make very good progress in this area of development due to good teaching and reach levels of attainment that are below those expected when they enter Key Stage 1. Every opportunity is used to develop children's skills in this area. For example, when making sandwiches, the square shape of bread was emphasised and explored. Counting is constantly reinforced and this was seen when children were asked how many daisies they had put on their bookmarks. Counting rhymes are used and children count the number of boys and girls, how many have milk and how many do not and they are so confident that they count objects and children without being asked. The majority of children in the nursery know the number sequence to five, although not all are able to count objects accurately. The variety of activities in the reception classes reinforces difficult concepts, such as adding on. Many can recognise and count numbers to 9, although some are unsure what the number represents. They show a developing understanding of the signs for 'plus' and 'equal'. When searching for objects in a treasure hunt, the majority understand mathematical language, such as 'bigger than'.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

77. Pupils make very good progress from a very low base, although standards are still below those expected for children at the end of reception. Through a daily discussion about the day, they gain an understanding of days of the week, of the months, and special features, such as June having the longest day. They also learn weather features. Nursery children quickly learn the primary colours and every opportunity is taken to reinforce these. This was seen, for example, when a child counted beads, and was then asked the colours of the beads. Children learn the names of the parts of their bodies through songs. They know that seeds grow into plants, which have leaves, flowers and roots. Through their visits, reception children learn that greengrocers sell fruit and vegetables and they were delighted to show the flowering plants that they had received. However, despite good teaching, children's poor vocabulary limits their understanding; for example, a child insisted that a pine cone was a coconut.

Physical development

78. The nursery and reception classes provide many opportunities for children to develop their skills of cutting, sticking and using construction kits. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. All children have the opportunity to play on wheeled toys, to climb and to balance. Children use space with an awareness of others and travel around the hard paved area without collisions. Their skills of balancing, climbing and riding two and three-wheeled toys are as expected for their age, both on entry to the nursery and throughout the foundation stage. However, their cutting and sticking skills are poor on entry to the nursery and are below those expected by the end of the Foundation Stage. For example, few children accurately cut out a large design to make a flower and some have difficulty in holding a pencil correctly.

Creative development

79. Progress in this area of children's development is very good, although they do not meet the expected standards by the end of reception. Few children have an understanding of colour and sound on entry to the nursery. This area of development is enhanced in all classes by displays, children's paintings and the good teaching they receive. They are encouraged to use paint to represent what they see or imagine. Children's drawing of people is very poor. On entry to the nursery, people are often drawn without faces and arms. In reception, some children draw faces that are a good representation of what they see, but some children still draw figures without hands or feet. By the use of rhyme and song, children develop a sense of pitch. Through the use of instruments, children learn about the different sounds that can be made. Through painting and modelling, children explore shape and texture. For example, children made minibests in paper and also modelled them. These showed an accurate representation of insects such as ladybirds. Imaginative weaving and painting shows clearly the development of their creativity.

ENGLISH

80. Attainment in English at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4 is below the national average.
81. Baseline assessments, completed on entry to the nursery class, show that current pupils in Year 2 entered the Foundation Stage with very low attainment, especially in their language and literacy development. The current attainment of these seven-year-old pupils, although still below the national average in speaking and listening, reading and writing, shows that their attainment is now comparable to standards achieved in similar schools. This is because of the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, the good use of the dedicated language and literacy room and effective target setting. Girls continued to achieve more highly than boys in reading and writing. Results from the last five years' national tests for seven-year-old pupils in reading and writing have shown an overall steady upward trend. The latest results show that more pupils are reaching a higher reading standard. The number of pupils achieving the higher level in writing is low.
82. Although pupils' speaking and listening skills are not well developed, there has been improvement since the last inspection, with teachers continuing to take opportunities to develop these skills. Opportunities for pupils to speak occur frequently and in a dramatic presentation of the prodigal son in assembly, six-year-old pupils spoke confidently into a microphone to listening parents and children. Although they were given the words to say, their confidence was boosted. Pupils who have limited focused vocabulary, for example about the market, are helped to extend their vocabulary. This focused attention is extended through Key Stage 1 by means of good language enrichment support, where pupils work individually and in groups with trained learning support assistants. Pupils extend their means of expression by, for example,

sequencing picture cards and telling the story or by means of a dice game, where they are required to name three objects with wings. Some limited class opportunities were seen in speaking games where pupils gave one-word answers. Persuasive argument, which was the focus of writing during inspection week in Key Stage 2 classes, was not used effectively enough for pupils to express their own ideas further in speaking. More opportunities for verbal exchange of ideas could be developed. Pupils have confidence in their own playground language but need practice in speaking in Standard English. Listening skills are continually emphasised in the morning assembly and are evident when they listen to music being played and identify the composer, while hearing a story about a child who forgot his key and was welcomed by a neighbour. Some teachers maintain control by their own continuous speaking, not allowing sufficient balance of pupils' speaking and listening during the day. Key Stage 1 classrooms are provided with excellent, adaptable areas for role-play, for example, a puppet theatre or weather and newsroom. There are speaking and listening areas equipped with headphones and story tapes. On an individual and class level, facilities abound to increase speaking and listening skills. The use of these facilities is insufficiently exploited for developing further pupils' skills of listening and speaking, which are at a low level on entry to Year 1.

83. Reading skills are developing well. Pupils take books home and in most classes parents hear their child read at home, writing their comments in the reading diary. Where reading skills are less developed, there are timetabled sessions during the week for teaching to focus on individual education plan targets both in classrooms and in the language room. Targets include the most commonly used hundred words, sentence building and reading comprehension. As in the last inspection, learning support assistants provide invaluable support in language and reading development. This is a significant strength of the school. Analysis of test results has shown more work is needed in teaching inference, deduction and interpretations.
84. Reading is well organised and a reading scheme has been augmented because of the need to appeal more to boys. Books now provided are effective in claiming boys' as well as girls' attention. There are a good number of books for other curriculum subjects in the language room. The library has been improved with good non-fiction sections but at present there are few fiction books as the school is in the process of re-designing the library to incorporate a fiction lending facility. As well as well-planned assistance from learning support assistants, the school uses volunteers who help to hear pupils read. It is evident that some teachers do not encourage books to go home, as sometimes they are not returned. Also, as inspection week followed closely on the end of the national tests, average and less able readers were not being heard as regularly as usual.
85. Questioning is used well by some teachers to draw out meaning that is hidden, for example, when sharing a book about football at the end of the day. The school is well-organised and uses non-verbal test scores alongside tests of what pupils can do. As a result, there is constant tracking of pupils'

achievements and action taken to target weaker areas. As a consequence of a higher number of pupils with special educational needs taking the 2000 national tests, targets set by the local authority in reading and writing were not met. Higher attaining pupils are not always challenged effectively to ensure that they achieve standards commensurate with their ability.

86. The standard of handwriting in both key stages is poor. Writing books are used in haphazard fashion, pages are not completed and some of the pupils' handwriting is illegible. Handwriting lessons in Key Stage 1 teach the pupils correct letter formation and size but not how to join letters and therefore few pupils write in a cursive script. All work is done in pencil, a "pen licence" being required before they transfer to pen. No pupils had reached the stage of having a licence. For each piece of work, instructions are given to write the date in full and the title and not to begin a new page until the previous one is complete. This policy on the presentation of pupils' work is not adhered to and consequently standards of presentation in literacy and extended writing books are well below average. Spellings are largely not corrected. Staff have recognised that this area needs attention. Weekly lists of spellings are taken home to learn for homework with teachers making good use of the short lesson period to give words in three degrees of difficulty, checking for errors before they are learnt. One teacher employed ingenious methods of remembering confusing spellings, for example "there" and "their". An extended writing lesson in a Key Stage 2 class was seen where the teacher realistically announced that Tony Blair had decided to end playtimes in schools. Pupils responded well in this lesson, writing a letter of complaint, drafting and redrafting their persuasive writing. A few pupils write with imagination and clarity and there is evidence of a wide range of reasons for writing, for example, limericks, giving directions and some writing showing awareness of the reader. Individual writing targets are attached to the pupils' exercise books reminding them of their objectives. In a Key Stage 1 lesson, six-year-old pupils, following discussion about prayer in different religions, were asked to write a prayer about something they give thanks for, is special to them and they can use in the future to reflect upon. Some pupils have good dictionary skills and use various resources to find a word they need. A writing exercise often follows an activity that has interested them, but they often turn to writing as a chore. This was seen following the Bible story of David and Goliath. There is insufficient exploration of the possibility of presenting evidence in different forms and, consequently, negative attitudes to writing are reinforced.
87. Close attention is paid to targets on individual education plans by teachers and learning support assistants and this ensures that pupils with special educational needs make good progress. When the previous work of pupils with special educational needs was scrutinised, there was evidence of some good progress by Key Stage 1 pupils. However, in some instances, this progress is not maintained in Key Stage 2.
88. Overall, pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory and, when teaching is enthusiastic and lively, attitudes are good. However, the immature attitudes of a small number of pupils take up too much of teachers' attention and patience.

89. Teachers in a year group mostly plan their lessons together so all pupils have the same experience. Medium and short-term plans are clearly established but the daily teaching objectives contained in teachers' daybooks consist of little detailed planning of what is to be achieved in each lesson and little provision for different ability groups. Assessment is not used to aid daily lesson planning for many pupils in the class. Nevertheless, these daybooks are well used by learning support assistants to assess the progress of pupils with special educational needs. In a lesson about tongue twisters the teacher had not planned the lesson in enough detail to indicate what the pupils were to learn and how she would assess that they had been successful. As a result, the pace of learning was far too slow and pupils made little progress. The literacy hour is organised into timed periods of work, which is sometimes well planned by teachers for different ability groups. Marking is usually up to date and encouraging, but there is little evidence of errors being corrected. Some lessons lacked pace, excitement and enthusiasm. For example, in a Key Stage 2 lesson on how an information book is laid out, pupils found it difficult to concentrate and remain on task and therefore did not make good progress.
90. The subject manager is effective in monitoring and evaluating standards in this area of the curriculum. She has concentrated much effort since the last inspection on improving systems to ensure that pupils, especially those with special educational needs, achieve their full potential. However, the provision for higher attaining pupils is not so effective, although a plan is under consideration for streaming children in English in a similar way to mathematics at Key Stage 2. Pupils are not achieving the higher levels in national tests as they might if stimulated by each other in imaginative thinking, improved handwriting, vocabulary and punctuation skills.

MATHEMATICS

91. Inspection findings are that standards of attainment in mathematics are average at the end of Key Stage 1 and slightly above average for the current Year 4 pupils. In the 2000 national tests, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level of attainment was above the national average. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels was below average and inspection evidence confirms that levels of attainment for higher achieving pupils could be better. As a result of the below average number of pupils gaining the higher levels the average points score for these tests, indicates that overall attainment in 2000 was below average. The school is aware that they have not maintained the above average standards achieved in the 1999 tests and feel that the focus that had been placed on raising standards in mathematics was probably relaxed too early. There are now plans in place to address this issue. Nevertheless, the number of pupils reaching average standards at the age of seven, compared with pupils in similar schools, is above average.
92. The number of Year 4 pupils achieving satisfactory standards by the time they leave the school is slightly above average. This is an improvement from the

last inspection and is due to pupils being put into sets by ability in Years 3 and 4. This ensures that the needs of pupils, particularly those of higher attaining pupils, are better met and, as a result, their progress since they entered the school has been good. The upward trend in test results since 1996 has been significant.

93. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can count to 100 and put numbers in order, reading and recording them accurately and matching the number word to the correct digits. In mental arithmetic, most pupils readily identify odd and even numbers. Pupils understand simple place value, use number bonds competently and predict missing numbers when sequencing. Pupils are beginning to learn their two and five times tables when they record multiples of these numbers. There is a strong emphasis on mental arithmetic, which is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' recall of number facts. Pupils can double numbers up to eight accurately in their heads. They can weigh a variety of objects using non-standard measurements. Higher attainers are not always challenged by the work they are given and this aspect of teacher's lesson planning is, overall, a weakness within Key Stage 1. Correct mathematical vocabulary is used from the reception classes onwards and most pupils learn to write the words accurately.
94. By the end of Year 4 average pupils are able to classify 2D and 3D shapes according to the number of sides, corners and faces. Higher attaining pupils can organise information and answer questions using diagrams. The majority of pupils, by the end of Year 4, can also add and subtract numbers less than 1000 and use the four rules of number in problem-solving situations. Higher attaining pupils convert simple fractions to decimals. Pupils of all abilities show increasing speed and accuracy in using their mental and oral arithmetic skills. They occasionally use their numeracy skills in investigations involving the four rules in fractions and decimals. Mathematical investigations and the use of information and communication technology are insufficiently developed. Those with special educational needs are supported well in smaller groups and reach appropriate levels of attainment.
95. The quality of teaching is good overall; it ranges from very good to satisfactory. The improved quality of teaching has been effective in raising standards across the school, particularly for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Many of these pupils have made good, and often very good, progress and as a result the majority are attaining national standards at the end of Key Stage 1. However, higher attaining pupils are not achieving the higher standards of which they are capable because their needs are not always effectively considered in teachers' lesson planning. This is a result of weaknesses in teachers' lesson planning rather than low expectations of what pupils are able to know, understand and do. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 are making at least satisfactory, and often good, progress due to the effective teaching of pupils in ability sets which meets the needs of most of these pupils. Teachers are implementing the national numeracy strategy thoughtfully with lesson planning that is usually based effectively on this strategy. Teachers are well qualified in mathematics and have a good understanding of the subject, which

means that they make clear teaching points and are able to answer pupils' questions accurately. Direct teaching of the basic numeracy skills is now thorough and opportunities are provided for pupils to use them in problem-solving, which they enjoy. The management of pupils is a distinct strength. Pupils generally concentrate hard and persevere when given challenging work and the teacher's attention, but those left to work more independently allow their attention to wander away from their tasks. Teachers assess progress regularly and pupils are informed of their individual targets in all year groups. Marking of work is satisfactory, but the marking does not consistently inform pupils of their strengths and of areas for development. Homework is given fairly regularly and pupils are encouraged to complete set tasks. At present parents are not asked to assist the school by practising money problems involving times tables practice. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good overall. In many classrooms they answer questions keenly in plenary sessions, so that pupils develop a deeper understanding of mental strategies. In some classrooms, where the teaching is less successful, pupils do not always listen to the teacher and inappropriate vocabulary is used by teachers, which could confuse pupils in their learning.

96. The implementation of the national numeracy strategy is a key feature in the school's efforts to raise standards. Much time and effort was given by the subject manager to ensure that members of staff were well prepared for the numeracy initiative. Classrooms have lively notice boards listing mathematics vocabulary and large and small number lines are used to good effect in numeracy. Stimulating displays of work around the school help to give the subject importance in pupils' eyes. There are many bright and colourful resources, especially now at Key Stage 1, which are used well in lessons. There has been some effective monitoring of mathematics on a regular basis to ensure that all the teaching is of an equally high quality. There is good use of pupils' developing numeracy skills in other subjects, for example, in science and design and technology.
97. The leadership and management of mathematics are good. The subject manager has worked hard to provide support for teachers' planning and their delivery of warm-up sessions. He samples the pupils' books, monitors teaching and has ensured that many members of staff are well trained to teach problem solving. Test results are analysed in detail and the resulting information is used to modify the curriculum if necessary and to set whole school, class and individual pupil targets. There have been considerable improvements in mathematics since the last inspection. Teachers have raised expectations of staff, pupils and parents. Realistic but challenging targets for improvement based on National Curriculum test results have been set. There are now very good procedures for tracking pupils' progress through the school using information from end-of-topic assessment. The school is in the process of developing a portfolio of pupils' assessed, levelled and moderated work to assist teachers in reaching a whole school agreement about pupils' standards of work, and this is a positive new initiative. This development, which needs to be coupled with a greater focus on the needs of higher attaining pupils, is intended to ensure that all pupils make good progress.

SCIENCE

98. Standards of pupils' attainment in science are broadly in line with the national average by the time pupils are seven and in line with the average for their age by the time they are nine. A minority of higher attaining pupils in both age groups are working towards higher levels of attainment. This reflects an improvement on the last inspection findings and 2000 national test results for Key Stage 1.
99. Many Key Stage 1 pupils demonstrate a developing concept of a circuit with a minority of higher attaining pupils showing a relatively better knowledge and understanding of electricity. They know how to make a circuit to light a bulb, though they have not yet learnt the names of relevant pieces of equipment. Younger pupils have started describing, with support, sounds made by different objects and musical instruments. They were observed having difficulty with suggesting appropriate words to describe these sounds and in recording them. Most Year 4 pupils know that humans have teeth which have different functions. The small number of higher attaining pupils demonstrate fairly well developed knowledge and understanding.
100. The quality of teaching is often good and impacts positively on the quality of learning. Most teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and this enables them to use questioning effectively to enhance pupils' participation and promote their learning. This, for example, led to an interesting discussion in a Year 3 and 4 class when pupils were engaged in finding out about the functions of their teeth. Teachers also encourage pupils to explain their thinking to help them clarify their understanding. Most teachers have started placing appropriate emphasis on investigative skills and using a wide range of resources that hold pupils' interest. They expect pupils to behave well. Insufficient emphasis is, however, placed on planning work to meet the needs of the full ability range in classes, particularly the more able, an issue raised by the previous inspection.
101. The quality of learning is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Younger pupils learn to observe, draw and label various components of a circuit while older pupils develop appropriate terminology relating to the study of teeth. All of this enables pupils to think through scientific processes and some have started giving reasons for their answers. Some are unable to concentrate or record their work neatly, but many behave fairly well in lessons. There is no significant gender difference in learning and pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make satisfactory to good progress over time.
102. Pupils throughout the school have positive attitudes to science. They respond to investigative work with enthusiasm, and practical activities are especially beneficial to pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. Pupils generally relate well to each other and to adults.

103. The school offers a broad and balanced science curriculum. The scheme of work has been reviewed in line with nationally recommended guidance and this ensures that as pupils move through the school, they progress systematically in their learning. End-of-unit assessment is used and there is an appropriate record keeping system. The school is currently involved in a pilot project with all First schools on the island trying to ensure that there is consistency in assessment practice.
104. The level of resources is satisfactory and the subject is well managed. Improvements since the last inspection include progression in learning, more secure teacher knowledge and an enhanced profile of the subject through science week and an exhibition on growing plants. However, lesson planning for groups of pupils with differing learning needs is not always clearly or consistently focused. Pupils' presentation of work is generally poor and opportunities are limited for the use of computers in science lessons.

ART AND DESIGN

105. There is insufficient evidence to form a secure judgement about the teaching of art and design, as it was not possible to see any lessons during the period of the inspection. Evidence of good standards, at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4, was obtained from examination of pupils' work, discussions with pupils, displays of work and teachers' planning. Overall, pupils make good progress in the development of skills and techniques. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language also achieve good standards and make good progress. A particular strength in the art and design work in the school is the successful cross-curricular link, so that pupils learn about art and design and apply their skills in a variety of subjects.
106. In Key Stage 1, pupils have experimented with tools and techniques and are familiar with the work of Paul Klee and Chagall. Their observational drawings to express ideas and feelings show good control and the use of a variety of materials.
107. In Years 3 and 4, pupils make good illustrations to enhance their work in different areas of the curriculum. They have also designed and made a plate of food using collage as part of their science topic on healthy eating. They are able to use various printing techniques effectively using paint and crayons to produce a finished product. By the time pupils leave the school they have a thorough grounding in art and design skills and techniques and a knowledge of different artists and the use of a range of media and materials.
108. Since the inspection in 1997 the school has improved standards in this subject and pupils make good progress. Art and design is taught both as a subject in its own right and to support selected school topic areas. A good balance is obtained from the two approaches. Allied to this is the careful teaching of basic skills, which are progressively developed as pupils move across the school.

109. The subject is managed effectively and a detailed policy and comprehensive scheme of work has been developed. The standard of display throughout the school is good. Displays are well mounted, well presented and consist of work by pupils. The school uses information and communication technology well in providing labelling and sometimes written explanations of the displayed work. The school uses artefacts to help the links with topic areas. Resources for the subject are satisfactory and easily accessible. The school has its own gallery displaying and celebrating work from different classes and from the well-attended after-school art and design club.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

110. Standards in design and technology in both key stages are in line with expectations for pupils of this age. This reflects an improvement in levels of attainment since the last report.

111. In Key Stage 1 pupils successfully develop their designing and making skills. Their designs are thoughtful and they take time and care when selecting the materials they are going to use. Pupils make sensible choices and use a variety of methods when joining and attaching sections of their models; they can confidently justify their decisions. When making a multi-coloured coat for Joseph, as part of their religious education work, they test a variety of designs and many are willing to adjust their ideas when necessary. Having designed and made moving vehicles, pupils test and evaluate their efforts. Many pupils demonstrate well-developed motor skills when using tools such as scissors, hole punchers and spreaders and when twisting, tying and squeezing materials. They understand that tools and materials must be used sensibly and carefully. No lessons were seen in Key Stage 2. However, the pupils have the opportunity to work with a suitable range of materials, although the use of information and communication technology, including equipment to control events, is limited for older pupils.

112. Pupils in both key stages, including those pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. They enjoy the wide range of opportunities offered to them. In Key Stage 1, they work with a satisfactory level of co-operation, willingly sharing resources and ideas and positively responding to the efforts made by their peers. Pupils listen carefully to instructions and persevere until they are satisfied with their finished products.

113. The quality of teaching throughout the school is satisfactory. Lessons are suitably planned and teachers ensure that pupils fully understand what is expected of them. Activities are interesting and usually challenging. Teachers know their pupils well and appropriate support is provided, enabling all pupils to make satisfactory, and on occasions good, progress. A good range of resources is readily available for pupils and adequate time is allocated, ensuring that pupils make sound progress and successfully complete their tasks. Pupils are encouraged to consider carefully the designs and the

materials they will need; skilful questioning by teachers guides them to make sensible selections. Careful planning over time encourages pupils to develop skills such as making rigid and moving joints and to broaden their knowledge of the ways in which materials such as plastic, wood, metal and fabric may be used. Teachers regularly assess pupils' knowledge and skills, record their progress and note particular aptitudes and difficulties so that pupils can continue to develop as they move up the school.

114. The subject manager is committed to continuing the improvement in standards and plans to strengthen links with other areas of the curriculum. She offers regular support to all teachers and is available to advise on lesson planning. She monitors standards informally and reviews the curriculum when assessment suggests that certain topics would be better addressed in different year groups. Opportunities are provided for pupils to work with professional artists and designers. Each class is given the opportunity to design the Christmas party menu and price it. This activity makes good use of pupils' developing numeracy skills. The subject is suitably resourced and the broad range of opportunities offered makes a significant contribution to the personal development of all pupils in the school.

GEOGRAPHY

115. It was possible to see lessons only in Key Stage 1, but extensive discussion with pupils and scrutiny of work show that standards are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 4 and Year 2 and have improved since the time of the last inspection.
116. Year 4 pupils' knowledge and understanding of the local area is at an expected level. They explained that the docks are an important aspect of Sheerness and that they deal with fruit and that there are ferries which cross the Channel. They also added that there is farmland beyond the town. However, knowledge of other places is limited. Pupils have sound views on how the environment can be improved. For example, they talked animatedly about the pollution that is caused by cars and emphatically stated that people should walk more, use bicycles or travel by train. They were also very concerned about pollution in rivers and the sea and a pupil adversely compared the quality of the sea at Sheerness to that in Cornwall. Pupils were against the current widening of the M2, because it destroyed the habitat of living things. Pupils gave sound reasons for their views on the effects of pollution, citing global warming and the resulting melting of the ice caps and rise in sea level.
117. Pupils in Year 2 describe the features of Sheerness to a satisfactory level. They explained its function as a port and added that it used to be a naval port and therefore is different from many other towns. They described the play area in the park as being 'good', because it is safe for small children and dogs are kept outside. They did not like the amount of litter in some areas in the town and suggested that there should be more litter pickers and signs saying 'No Dropping Litter'. Pupils use maps appropriately, they draw their own, and point out places of interest on local maps.

118. Pupils are interested in geography when lessons are stimulating; they then behave well and work hard. In these lessons teachers encourage pupils to contribute and use homework to stimulate pupils to observe their local environment. The use of Barnaby Bear's travels around the world also encourages pupils to be interested in areas other than their own. When lessons are poorly planned, pupils show little interest in geography and do not apply themselves or behave well.
119. The quality of teaching varies, with one in four lessons good, one satisfactory and two unsatisfactory. It has not improved to any great extent since the time of the last report. In the unsatisfactory lessons, teachers' planning was poor which resulted in tasks which did not further pupils' learning. An example was copying an outline of an island from the board. Tasks were the same for all pupils, although their abilities differed. Learning objectives were not followed and in one lesson there was poor behaviour management and negative feedback to pupils. In the good lesson, pupils extended their knowledge of the island of Struay to include 'man made' and 'natural' features; their knowledge was then further extended to understand the geographical terms of 'human' and 'physical features'. The teacher also ensured that pupils were fully involved and that their contributions were valued. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils, with the support of the class teacher and the learning support assistants,
120. On occasions the allocation of time to geography sometimes results in an insufficient depth of coverage of the programmes of study, for example of other places. This does not allow pupils to gain sufficient knowledge to fully meet the expected level of understanding. A subject manager has been appointed since the time of the last inspection and long term planning has improved. Assessment, to record what pupils know and understand, is not yet an integral part of teaching, nor is it used to aid planning for future lessons.

HISTORY

121. It was possible to see lessons only in Key Stage 2, but extensive discussion with pupils and scrutiny of work show that standards are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 4 and Year 2 and that they have improved since the time of the last report.
122. Year 4 pupils explained that there are different periods in history such as the Romans and the Vikings, but were only able to give full details of the Tudors, which is the period that they were currently studying. Pupils were clear that the reason for Henry VIII having six wives and creating the Church of England, was because he wanted an heir. Pupils explained that this action resulted in the break with Church of Rome. The pupils explained that these are facts because there are written documents, also that there are places where we can see how they lived, and portraits which show other details, such as Henry's love of hunting. This identification of the different kinds of historical sources is satisfactory.

123. Pupils in Year 2 are very clear about what happened a long time ago, such as the Great Fire of London. They explained why it occurred: they said that the narrow streets, the wooden houses, and the 'hay' on the roofs contributed to the fire sweeping through London, helped by the strong winds. They explained that they know this because Samuel Pepys wrote a diary, which we can read today. Pupils also explained the impact of Florence Nightingale when she went to the Crimean War. They described the dreadful conditions that she saw, for example the dirt and the rats. Pupils explained that it was her actions that led to the creation of the nursing profession. Their knowledge is to an expected level. Pupils also explained that people are a 'real' source of information about history and talked about their grandparents not having television and that people older than their grandparents used candles, as the use of electricity had not been discovered.
124. The stimulating visits, which form the focus of pupils' study, such as to Hever Castle, result in pupils' fascination with history. Pupils work hard and behave well and respond to teachers who show their own interest in history and encourage further research. In the school library the display of Tudor buildings stimulates pupils to think about how the rich and poor lived at that time.
125. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory, with one in three lessons good. It has improved since the time of the last report. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which encourages a wide exploration of a topic. Different tasks are well suited to pupils' abilities. In a good lesson, opportunities were given to enable pupils to learn independently and to develop research skills, such as the use of the Oxford Interactive Encyclopaedia. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well, with the support of the class teacher and the learning support assistants. Teachers' comments are always positive, which encourages pupils to answer and they therefore feel valued. This contributes to the good relationships that exist.
126. On occasions, the allocation of time to history results in an insufficient depth of coverage of the programmes of study. This does not allow pupils to gain sufficient knowledge to fully meet the expected level of understanding. A subject manager has been appointed since the time of the last inspection and long term planning has improved. Assessment, to record what pupils know and understand, is not yet an integral part of teaching, nor is it used to aid planning for future lessons. Visits considerably enhance the curriculum. Resources are inadequate to fully meet the curriculum in Key Stage 1, for example, artefacts are insufficient to allow pupils to fully understand changes over time. History makes a positive contribution to pupils' cultural development, in, for instance through the study of people over time.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

127. Standards of attainment are in line with those expected for both seven and nine-year-old pupils.

128. Most seven-year-old pupils become familiar with the mouse and show a developing awareness of the keyboard. They use the mouse correctly. Some show fairly well developed skills while others do not know basic terminology. Some nine year olds demonstrate sound word processing skills in using the spell checker. One group was observed researching information about teeth as part of a science activity. Other pupils have limited skills in using the mouse, or typing or changing fonts.
129. Teaching observed had good features, mainly at Key Stage 1. Teachers' levels of subject knowledge vary but, in the majority of cases, are secure for the group they teach and some have well developed skills. The interactive approach employed enables pupils to pay attention and keep on task, though teachers' planning does not always incorporate differentiated tasks. Opportunities to practise skills are built into work in some other subjects, encouraging pupils to apply their knowledge and skills in meaningful activities. Effective use is made of resources and pupils are managed well.
130. The quality of learning is good, particularly in Key Stage 1. Most pupils are enthusiastic about hands-on experience of computers. They collaborate reasonably well in sharing equipment. Many are well behaved and benefit from well established relationships. Pupils' positive response contributes to their learning. The opportunity to use the computer over a period of time has a positive effect on the pupils who find difficulty with sustaining concentration. There is no significant difference in the way boys and girls develop their computer skills. The pupils learning English as an additional language and those having special educational needs make good progress, overall, in developing their skills. Those who have access to computers at home make rapid progress.
131. The information and communication technology provision has improved since the last inspection. Resources have been upgraded. The adoption of nationally recommended guidance for the scheme of work has ensured continuity and progression in learning. All of this has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to this area of the curriculum. There is some evidence of monitoring of teaching and learning. However, no procedures are, in place for formal assessment. The school has rightly identified the need for staff training in respect of the wider use of computers and its integration into subject teaching. The subject is well managed. The availability of a single computer in the classroom, due to constraints on space, limits the scope of direct whole class teaching of skills, but sufficient laptops are available. The projected information and communication technology suite has the potential of making a good contribution to pupils' progress and attainment.

MUSIC

132. Two lessons in Key Stage 1 and two lessons in Key Stage 2 were observed in the inspection and also music in assembly and choir. It is judged that standards in music are average

133. At the end of Key Stage 1, children clap rhythms, use simple percussion instruments and learn to conduct the group to keep in time. Pupils are urged to listen carefully and concentrate, responding when it is their turn and counting out the beat. They listen to a drum rhythm and identify which of three nursery rhymes is being played. In another class, younger children in the key stage showed excitement at noises representing a thunderstorm, handling instruments sensibly. The second lesson of the week is a joint key stage lesson where children sing together in unison and in two-part rounds.
134. Key Stage 2 children identify notes on a staff and can name a scale. They are familiar with music vocabulary, for example crotchet, and they can use chime bars in a controlled way.
135. Listening to music plays an important part in assembly. Pupils identify a week's composer, for example Chopin, and the instrument being played in a recording. They listen attentively. Pupils follow up this music input by printing out, on their own initiative, from computer disks, details of the composers and pictures to put in "Our Assembly Music Book"
136. Progress made by all pupils, including those with special needs, is satisfactory. The specialist teacher who is qualified in music is also a learning support assistant. She has a good knowledge of the subject and started music teaching this year. She is helped by the class teacher to manage behaviour. Sometimes this help is intrusive and hinders progress in the lesson but as a specialist music teacher, who is also employed as a learning support assistant, she is able to train class teachers who lack confidence in the subject. The nationally recommended guidance that is used as the scheme of work is being reviewed. It is hoped to integrate drama with music. Minimal planning of lessons is recorded but there is good coverage of several of the attainment targets of the National Curriculum. Assessment is made but not recorded, as the teacher does not know all the pupils' names. Resources are good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

137. Standards across the school are average. The majority of Key Stage 1 pupils display appropriate ball skills, particularly dodging and blocking, showing a good awareness of space. Some younger pupils have developed simple gymnastic skills with basic control and coordination. Others demonstrate a developing control in their activities such as skipping, batting and throwing/catching. Higher attaining pupils have relatively better control of their body, but some pupils have difficulty in catching small balls while others lack confidence in combining skills. Nine-year-old pupils demonstrate sound teamwork in a game situation. This was observed in an outdoor game of triangle rounders. A significant minority of pupils have not yet developed appropriate skills in throwing, catching or fielding. Improvement in performance through pupils' evaluation of their work also remains to be developed fully.
138. Teaching observed in both key stages was satisfactory, showing some good features in Key Stage 1. Careful planning and explanation reflect teachers'

secure subject knowledge whilst ensuring pupils keep on task. Teachers manage resources and pupils well, but occasionally some pupils are not sufficiently challenged. This affects pupils' motivation and progress. Pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to learn from each other through evaluation. When teaching is good, pupils' learning is re-inforced leading to consolidation of skills.

139. Pupils' learning shows that many respond positively to physical education activities, though some are unable to pay attention or sustain concentration. They show co-operative and collaborative skills and when encouraged, try to develop individual skills or group strategies. Many use equipment with care. However, the pace of learning tends to slow down in group games. There is no significant gender difference in pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make good progress in developing skills relating to physical education.
140. Documentation reflects a broad physical education curriculum being offered. The focus was on games during the week of inspection. There is evidence of dance being covered and resources are satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection includes focus on pupils' critical skills and awareness of technical terminology. The subject is well managed, though opportunities for assessment and staff training are limited. Warm-up activities vary in quantity and quality, and there is some inconsistency in teachers' insistence on pupils wearing appropriate physical education kit. Guidance and advice on issues such as the wearing of jewellery is understood not to be readily available.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

141. At the end of Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2, attainment is in line with that expected in the local authority's agreed syllabus. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have celebrated Christmas and Easter festivals. They understand the symbols of baptism and know the Bible creation story. They know about the account of Moses in the bulrushes, the Torah and have some knowledge and understanding of Islam. They know Old Testament stories were from the time before Jesus.
142. In Key Stage 2 pupils have thought about holy places, for example the river Ganges for Hindus, Jerusalem for the Jews, Mecca for Muslims and Rome for Catholics. In a lesson seen during the inspection, pupils were taught about the importance of the Qu'ran for Muslims and they had a demonstration of how to use it.
143. At both key stages, progress was satisfactory with interesting work and building on pupils' prior attainment. Although the content of lessons interested pupils, they were less ready to record what they had learnt with independent writing. The use of suitable worksheets with less demand provided a realistic reminder of the lessons learnt.

144. Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory with some moments of awe as they handle a holy book written in Arabic. They are interested and knowledgeable about Bible stories, for example David and Goliath. The week's assembly theme of parables contributed well to pupils' spiritual development.
145. Teaching seen was satisfactory or good. Lessons are delivered with respect for the subject and this transfers to pupils who generally behave well. One Key Stage 2 class did not have a positive attitude to the subject and this disrupted the concentration of others, while half the class remained quiet but without working very hard. Marking of written work encouraging in tone.
146. The subject is efficiently managed and support is given where necessary to class teachers. The subject manager monitors books termly. Combining the agreed syllabus with the Kent syllabus for middle schools, she has arranged a two-year rolling programme for Key Stage 2, which mean subjects are not unnecessarily repeated. There are artefacts for all religions taught and library books and poster packs to support teachers and to interest pupils. Most classes have displays about the religions being studied.