

## INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MARTIN'S SCHOOL**

Dover

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118394

Headteacher: Mrs V Hayward

Reporting inspector: Mr Barry Gilhooly  
21540

Dates of inspection: March 4<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> 2002

Inspection number: 196804

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Markland Road Dover Kent
Postcode:	CT17 9LY
Telephone number:	01304 206620
Fax number:	01304 242626
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Gould
Date of previous inspection:	May 19 <sup>th</sup> - 23 <sup>rd</sup> 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21540	Barry Gilhooly	Registered inspector	French Geography History Religious Education	The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management
9883	Brian Silvester	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Care and welfare of pupils Partnership with parents
18113	Carrie Branigan	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Music Science	English as an additional language
27243	Ian Tatchell	Team inspector	Art and design Mathematics Physical education Equal Opportunities Special Educational Needs	
22092	Derek Watts	Team inspector	Design and technology English Information and communication technology	Curricular and other opportunities

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St. Martin's Primary School is a community school situated on the western outskirts of Dover. It draws its pupils from the Maxton and Elms Vale, Tower Hamlets and Priory wards. The school is average in size, with 256 boys and girls from 4 to 11 years of age. Pupils' attainments on entry to the school are below average overall, although the full range of attainment is represented. At present, there are 32 per cent of pupils on the register for special educational needs, which is above the national average. However, 0.8 per cent of pupils have statements of special educational need, which is below average. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds, some of which are disadvantaged, but the number of those known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Just over two per cent of pupils speak English as their second language, which is lower than in most schools. Very few pupils come from ethnic minorities. The present headteacher took up her post eighteen months ago. Staff turnover has been high, with many new teachers joining the school within the last two years.

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

St. Martin's Primary School is an improving school with many good features that provides a sound standard of education for its pupils. Standards in English, mathematics and science have risen, particularly since the start of the school year, because the school's leadership and management and quality of teaching are now good. This recent improvement in standards has not as yet been reflected in the school's National Curriculum test results. However, pupils' attainment is sound overall by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6. Pupils behave well and are keen to learn. The headteacher, governors and staff work well as a team and are fully committed to improving standards for all pupils. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- The headteacher provides very good quality leadership, working closely and effectively with all staff and governors to overcome weaknesses and bring about significant improvements in teaching and the standards of work.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science have risen since the start of the academic year, enabling pupils to achieve well because the quality of teaching has improved and is now good.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because the school provides well for them.
- The school promotes pupils' social development very well, as a result of which pupils are well behaved, have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy very good relationships with each other and with staff.
- Teachers manage pupils very well, which helps to sustain their interest and concentration effectively.
- Teachers' lesson planning is good and work is well matched to pupils' abilities, which helps to ensure that all groups of pupils are included in lessons.

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

- Ensure that statutory requirements are met in science for pupils in Years 3 - 6, as not all National Curriculum programmes of study are covered.
- Improve planning for creative, exploratory and imaginative opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage.
- Further improve planning for the use of information and communication technology, literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.
- Use assessment information from recently established systems to better inform curricular planning.

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

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

The school was last inspected in May 1997. It has responded well to most of the issues then noted and has made good improvement, particularly in the last eighteen months. The significant

weaknesses relating to leadership and management and the quality of teaching have improved considerably and are now strengths of the school. The overall leadership and management of the school is now good. This has resulted in the quality of teaching improving from satisfactory to good, due to a rigorous programme of monitoring and support led by the headteacher. Good use of expertise from within and outside the school has also helped to bring about these improvements. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented well and consistently. In addition, there have been good improvements in design and technology, and in the opportunities given to pupils to take on additional responsibilities. There have been good improvements in pupils' achievements since the start of this academic year, particularly in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. The school is well placed to make further improvements due to a strong, shared commitment to continue to raise standards.

## STANDARDS

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

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

**Key**

Well above average A  
 Above average B  
 Average C  
 Below average D  
 Well below average E

Compared to schools of a similar context, results were well below average in English and mathematics, and in the lowest 5 per cent of schools in science. Mathematics standards have been variable over the past four years, but have followed an upward trend over the last year. Standards in English have also been variable, but have followed a downward trend over the last year. Science standards have followed a downward trend over the last three years.

Results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 were below average in writing and well below in reading and mathematics compared to all schools nationally. Teachers' assessments in science indicated that standards were well below average. Compared to schools of a similar context, results were below average in writing and in the lowest 5 per cent of schools in reading and mathematics. Writing standards have been variable over the last four years, but the trend has moved upwards over the last year. In reading and mathematics, standards have followed a downward trend over the past three years. Inspection findings do not reflect the test results above and indicate that standards are broadly average across the curriculum by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, with no significant differences between boys and girls.

Children's attainments on entry to the school are below average overall. This is significantly different from the previous inspection, when attainment on entry was judged to be above average. Last year, nearly half the pupils in Year 2 and a third of pupils in Year 6 were on the special needs register. This is partly why there are some differences between the results from 2001 and inspection judgements. Children's achievements are satisfactory overall in the Foundation Stage. Although they reach average standards in most areas of their learning by the time they leave the reception class, they do not meet the early learning goals in their creative development. This is because of weaknesses in teachers' planning for this area.

Standards by the end of Year 2 are now broadly average in all subjects. Pupils' achievement is sound, which represents good improvement since the last inspection, when their progress was described as unsatisfactory. This improvement is because they are taught well. By the end of Year 6, standards are now broadly average across the curriculum. Boys and girls are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment at the end of Year 2, as a result of good teaching. This also represents good improvement since the last report, in which pupils' progress was described as satisfactory.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen to attend the school, play a full part in its life and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils respect the feelings and views of others and are friendly, courteous and thoughtful.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils respond well to the opportunities given to take responsibility and enjoy very good relationships with each other and with staff.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance, both authorised and unauthorised, is broadly average.

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are strengths of the school, particularly in relation to the very good quality relationships they enjoy.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good overall and pupils learn well in many lessons. There has been very good improvement in teaching and learning since the last inspection. In physical education, teaching is very good. Teaching is good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, which makes a key contribution to the sound achievements pupils make in all these areas. Teaching is also good overall in information and communication technology and geography. It is satisfactory overall in religious education. No overall judgement on teaching could be made in design and technology, history and art and design, as no lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2. However, teaching in Years 3 - 6 in these subjects was good. No overall judgement on teaching in music could be made as only one lesson was seen. Teaching in French could not be judged because lessons were very short.

Basic literacy and numeracy skills are taught well throughout the school, which helps pupils to achieve well and to make good progress in many lessons. The school meets the needs of all boys and girls well, including higher attainers. The setting of pupils for English and mathematics and the use of high quality booster classes has also worked effectively to raise standards. Good support is given to pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Teaching strengths include thorough lesson planning and the very good management of pupils. In a few lessons, introductions are too rushed and lesson delivery lacks spark.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The curriculum for pupils between Years 1 and 6 is broadly based and relevant. In the Foundation Stage there are insufficient opportunities for creative, exploratory and imaginative work.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Systems are good to ensure that pupils' needs are fully met. They are taught well and receive effective help from skilled learning support assistants, which helps them to make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils receive good support from teachers and learning support assistants, particularly during literacy and numeracy lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Satisfactory for pupils' spiritual and cultural development, good for their moral development and very good for their social development.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. The steps taken to ensure pupils' welfare and health and safety are good. Staff know their pupils well, recognise their needs and give them good support and guidance.
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The school's partnership with parents is good and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils, particularly in Years 3 to 6, that enrich their learning opportunities and contribute well to their social and cultural development.

Statutory requirements are not met in science as curricular planning for mixed-aged classes in Years 3 to 6 does not sufficiently cover elements of scientific enquiry or forces. In addition, insufficient time is allocated to the teaching of music.

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

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. Very good leadership by the headteacher, well supported by the senior management team and by good teamwork between all staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory overall. Governors have reviewed their roles and responsibilities, which has resulted in more effective and efficient working, particularly through the committee structure.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. A rigorous programme of monitoring and support has made a very effective contribution to improvements in teaching and pupils' achievements.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory overall. Sound use is made of available funding to support the school's priorities.

Principles of best value are applied satisfactorily to all spending decisions. There are sufficient learning resources to support the curriculum, except in mathematics and history, where resources are unsatisfactory. Many desks are in an unsatisfactory state of repair and the Foundation Stage has insufficient large apparatus and construction toys. Staffing levels are satisfactory, with a suitable number of well-trained teachers and learning support assistants. Overall, the accommodation is satisfactory, but further improvements are still required. Some toilets need replacing and the lack of toilet provision in the hall building is unsatisfactory. Access to different parts of the main building is made through some classrooms, which is also unsatisfactory.

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

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children enjoy coming to school.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Their children are well taught, are expected to work hard and make good progress.</li> <li>• The school is approachable and responsive to their views and concerns.</li> <li>• The school keeps them well informed about their child's progress.</li> <li>• The school helps children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside the classroom.</li> <li>• The way the school works with parents.</li> <li>• The amount of homework given.</li> </ul>

Inspection findings support the positive views that parents have about the school. In relation to their concerns, the team found that the range of extra-curricular activities is good, particularly for Year 3 - 6 pupils. The team also found that the school works well with parents, having made good improvements in this area over the last eighteen months. The amount of homework given is appropriate and is used well to support children's learning.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, based on average points, were below average in writing and well below in reading and mathematics compared to all schools nationally. Teachers' assessments in science indicate that standards were well below average. Compared to schools of a similar context, results were below average in writing and very low in reading and mathematics. Writing standards have been variable over the last four years, but the trend has moved upwards over the last year. In reading and mathematics, standards have followed a downward trend over the past three years. At the end of Year 6, in comparison to all schools, results were average in mathematics, below average in English and well below average in science. Compared to schools of a similar context, they were well below average in English and mathematics, and very low in science. Mathematics standards have been variable over the past four years, but have followed an upward trend over the last year. Standards in English have also been variable, but have followed a downward trend over the last year. Science standards have followed a downward trend over the last three years. Variations between the performance of boys and girls overall by the end of Year 2 were not significantly different from the national picture in reading and mathematics, but in writing, girls' attainment was lower than the picture suggested. Boys' and girls' performance by the end of Year 6 was not significantly different from the national picture in English, but in mathematics and science, boys' attainment was lower than the national picture suggested.
2. The results of the National Curriculum tests in 1997, the year of the last inspection, indicate that there has been an overall downward trend in standards since then. However, inspection findings indicate broadly average standards across the curriculum and do not reflect the test results.
3. Children's attainments on entry to the school, from observations and from analyses of the baseline assessments, are below average overall. This is significantly different from the previous inspection, when attainment on entry was judged to be above average. Last year, nearly half the pupils in Year 2 and a third of pupils in Year 6 were on the special needs register. This is partly why there are some differences between the results from 2001 and inspection judgements. Children achieve satisfactorily overall in the Foundation Stage. Although they reach average standards in most areas of their learning by the time they leave the reception class, they do not meet the early learning goals in their creative development. This is because there are weaknesses in teachers' planning for this area. Scrutiny of pupils' work and lesson observations show that standards by the end of Year 2 are now broadly average in all subjects. Pupils' achievement is sound, which represents good improvement since the last inspection, when their progress was described as unsatisfactory. This improvement is because they are taught well. By the end of Year 6, standards are now broadly average across the curriculum. Boys and girls are achieving well in relation to their National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 2, as a result of good teaching. This also represents good improvement since the last report, in which pupils' progress was described as satisfactory.
4. These significant improvements in standards and achievement are the result of the good leadership and management of the school, which has significantly improved the quality of teaching, particularly in English and mathematics. Other factors include the increasing impact of the effective and consistent implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies and the very good use the school is making of initiatives, especially booster classes, for pupils in need of additional support. In addition, pupils with special educational needs now receive good support and teaching, which helps them to achieve well. The positive attitudes that boys and girls of all abilities have towards their work, together with their good behaviour and the very good relationships they enjoy with each other and with staff, also contribute to their achievements. As a result of this and the school's strong commitment to raise standards, it is likely to meet the challenging targets that have been set.

5. In English, pupils achieve satisfactorily overall in relation to their prior attainment. Standards in speaking and listening are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Teachers provide very good opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to practise their speaking and listening skills and particular attention is paid to increasing their vocabulary. It is one of the school's key targets for improving standards in English. By the time pupils leave the school, they listen attentively to their teacher and to each other. They make thoughtful contributions to discussions, particularly higher attaining pupils, who talk with assurance and good understanding of issues. However, a minority of pupils are not confident speakers and their vocabulary is limited. Standards in reading are average. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have a good understanding of phonics and key words, can express opinions about characters and events and take delight in predicting what will happen next in a story. By the end of Year 6, most pupils read with accuracy and fluency and show sound understanding of main characters and themes. Higher attainers use inference and deduction well. However, research and reference skills are underdeveloped. This was an area of weakness in the last report that has not as yet been addressed. Standards in writing are broadly average. By the end of Year 2, most pupils write in sentences, spell simple words correctly and are beginning to make more use of interesting vocabulary. Higher attainers' writing is well structured, imaginative and clear. By the end of Year 6, many pupils' writing includes words chosen for dramatic effect. Most can identify and develop key characters, settings and plots in their work. They are achieving well in relation to their standards in reading and writing at the end of Year 2, which were well below average. Although there are some examples of pupils using information and communication technology to improve the presentation of their work, it is generally underused as a tool for drafting and editing their writing.
6. Standards in mathematics are broadly average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils achieve satisfactorily and sometimes better in relation to their previous attainment. This is a direct result of improvements in the quality of teaching and the effective implementation of the national numeracy strategy. Setting has also impacted positively on standards. By the end of Year 2, most pupils can recall addition and subtraction facts to 10, recognise two and three-dimensional shapes and use simple graphs and charts to present information. Higher attaining pupils are competent at simple problem solving using money. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have a sound understanding of the 4 rules of number and their application to problem solving, can convert simple fractions to percentages, use and interpret coordinates, and know their tables. Planned opportunities for pupils to use numeracy across the curriculum are limited and their use of information and communication technology to promote mathematical skills is underdeveloped. This results in lost opportunities for pupils to gain more experience of interpreting information and drawing conclusions.
7. Standards in science are average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. The school's recent focus on supporting pupils' scientific vocabulary is having a positive impact on their learning, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2 and well in Years 3 to 6. The difference relates to teachers' better subject knowledge and the more thorough planning of practical work in Years 3 to 6. By the end of Year 2, pupils are able to compare the shape of plasticine and can describe how their actions can affect what they make. They can also explain how distance makes sound fainter. By the end of Year 6, pupils can describe how light travels in straight lines and how evaporation and condensation are related to changes in water. They can also make and read line graphs about pulse rate. Pupils' use of information and communication technology in science is limited. Literacy skills are used appropriately in science by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Numeracy skills are used in science by Year 6 pupils, but less attention is given to their use in Year 2.
8. Standards in information and communication technology are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Considerable improvements have taken place in the subject since the last inspection, including the enlarging and updating of the computer suite. These have made a positive impact on pupils' achievement, which is now satisfactory across the school. This is an improvement from the last inspection, when standards and progress were below average for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2. By the end of Year 2, pupils can use a paint programme to create images of boats or different creatures. Pupils use a mouse competently, but are not yet confident in loading a program or saving their work independently. Higher attaining pupils can

use and interpret data correctly. By the end of Year 6, pupils can use spreadsheets to present a range of data and use formulae to solve problems. They can also use graphical modelling to produce an imaginary insect or creature. Although some pupils make use of information and communication technology to promote their learning in English and science, overall, it is underused to support learning in a range of subjects.

9. In religious education, standards are average in terms of the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of what is special, particularly in relation to Christianity. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have a sound understanding of the function of prayer, particularly within Christianity. Average and higher attainers can relate this knowledge to the significance of prayer in other religions such as Islam. They show a sound recall of facts about different faiths and are able to reflect on their own experiences to help improve their understanding of the ideas and beliefs of others.
10. By the end of Year 6, standards are average for most pupils in art and design, geography, history, design and technology, music and physical education. Pupils achieve satisfactorily and sometimes better in these subjects, particularly when their attainment at the start of this academic year is considered
11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans and in lessons. As a result they achieve well and make good gains in their learning, relative to their prior attainment. This is due to good quality, well-planned teaching and effective support from skilled learning support assistants. This represents good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in terms of the better use of individual education plans. The numbers of pupils on the special educational needs register that reach the expected levels in the National Curriculum tests broadly reflects their achievements. Higher attaining pupils now achieve well because of well-matched work and increased opportunities to extend their skills, for example, through challenging questioning. No significant differences in the achievements of boys and girls were noted during the inspection.
12. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve well because of the good support they receive.

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

13. Pupils have good attitudes to their work. They are keen to attend the school and play a full part in its life, including the good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils are keen to learn, listen with interest to their teachers and get on well with the tasks they are given. They have good levels of concentration and are enthusiastic learners. They are keen to answer and raise questions. Parents feel that the school generates good attitudes to learning. On a very few occasions, when attitudes were less good, a small number of pupils shouted out and were inattentive.
14. Pupils' behaviour, in class and around the school, is good. Parents are very pleased with the standards of behaviour achieved in the school. Pupils are friendly, courteous, thoughtful and welcoming to visitors. They respect the feelings and views of others. Termly themes are identified, like pride, respect, caring and sharing, as whole-school targets for behaviour, and this assists the maintenance of good standards. The behaviour observed at lunchtime was sometimes not as good as that observed in most lessons. For example, there was some pushing in the lunch queue and occasional boisterous play. However, no incidents of bullying were seen or reported during the inspection. There were no exclusions recorded at the time of the previous inspection and there was none in the year prior to this inspection.
15. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language have a positive attitude to learning. When working individually, or in a small group with the support of a teacher or learning support assistant, they show an improved level of confidence. They persevere with challenging tasks and enjoy the sessions.

16. Relationships, between pupils and between pupils and adults are very good. Pupils work and play together well in pairs and in groups. They are polite and courteous, for example, when asked about their work. Pupils are willing to share and take turns. They generally listen respectfully when another pupil is talking. The school successfully achieves its aim of ensuring that pupils have sympathy and understanding for others and respect their differences.
17. The personal development of the pupils is good. They respond well to the opportunities given to take responsibility, particularly in the School Council. Two pupils from each class serve on the School Council. It meets every two weeks and it is working on a charter and development plan for the school. Its achievements include extra litter bins and tables in the playground. Pupils carry out a variety of monitoring roles well in their classes and around the school. Older pupils help the younger ones in shared writing and reading and also in the playground. They also help younger pupils during wet playtimes and lunchtimes. The school choir participates in a number of local events. The pupils' successes, in and out of school, are reflected in a weekly celebration assembly. Pupils show initiative by organising fund raising events for local good causes and local and national charities. They participated in a 'Seeds for Africa' scheme. There are now many opportunities for pupils to undertake greater responsibility, which is a significant improvement from the previous inspection
18. Attendance, both authorised and unauthorised, is broadly average. The main reasons for absences are illness and term-time holidays, which the school tries to discourage. Most pupils are punctual, but a small number do arrive late. The overall good level of attendance and punctuality assists the learning and attainment of the pupils.
19. In the previous inspection report it stated that pupils' behaviour and their positive attitudes were strengths of the school. These positive features have been maintained successfully.

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

20. The school has successfully addressed the key issues related to weaknesses in teaching at the time of the last inspection. As a result, the quality of teaching is now good overall and pupils learn well in many lessons. This has had a positive impact on standards and pupils' achievements, particularly since the start of this academic year. Although these improvements are not yet reflected in the school's performance in National Curriculum tests, standards seen during the week of the inspection indicate that they are likely to do so this year. The quality of teaching was good or better in seven out of every ten lessons. It was very good, and sometimes excellent, in nearly three out of every ten lessons. Only one lesson out of 65 lessons seen was unsatisfactory. This is a very good improvement from the last inspection, when teaching was satisfactory overall, with nearly one in six lessons unsatisfactory and four out of ten judged to be good or better. Significant improvements in planning and day-to-day assessment have given teachers a clear focus in lessons, enabling them to provide appropriately challenging work for all pupils, whatever their level of attainment. A rigorous and ongoing programme of monitoring and support, including relevant in-service training, has also contributed strongly to improvements in teaching.
21. Teaching is good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, which makes a key contribution to the sound achievements pupils make in all these areas. Teaching is also good overall in information and communication technology and geography. In physical education, teaching is very good. No overall judgement on teaching could be made in design and technology, history and art and design, as no lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2. However, teaching in Years 3 - 6 in these subjects was good. Teaching is satisfactory overall in science and religious education. No overall judgement on teaching in music could be made as only one lesson was seen. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and good in Years 1 - 6.
22. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are taught well throughout the school, which helps pupils to achieve satisfactorily and to make good progress in many lessons. The national literacy and numeracy strategies are used effectively and consistently. In addition, the setting of pupils for English and mathematics has worked well to raise standards. The focus on key targets for

improving standards in English and mathematics, for example, through developing pupils' speech and language skills, is also helpful. These targets are well understood by staff and regularly reinforced in lessons. This has resulted in the good use of focused questioning, which extends pupils' knowledge and understanding. In a very good literacy lesson for Year 2 pupils, the teacher read the "Why Flies Buzz" text with enthusiasm and, through skilful questioning and careful explanation, enabled pupils to express well thought out opinions about characters and events. She made very effective use of her knowledge of pupils' needs and abilities, which enabled them to make very good progress when working in groups. For example, in their writing, pupils used new words they had learnt from the text. In a well-taught mathematics lesson for Year 5/6 pupils, the teacher gave pupils good opportunities to work together to solve measurement problems following a well-structured discussion. This not only further developed their understanding of the four rules of number, but also enabled them to apply their knowledge accurately and confidently when problem solving. The whole-school target in relation to problem solving was also well reinforced.

23. Other reasons for the effective teaching of basic skills include the good support given to pupils with special educational needs, particularly through the well-targeted use of learning support assistants. Good opportunities are also provided for pupils in need of extra support. For example, initiatives such as booster classes in English, mathematics and science are used very effectively because of consistently high quality teaching. The additional literacy strategy is also used successfully. Teachers make good use of opportunities to extend pupils' vocabulary in many subjects, for example, in history when discussing different points of view. Opportunities for pupils to practice their numeracy skills in other subjects are less well developed.
24. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well throughout the school. All staff have high expectations and this is reflected in the good short-term planning, which clearly identifies these pupils. Targets in their individual education plans are addressed well, particularly with the help of learning support assistants. For example, teachers and learning support assistants are skilled at using focused and thoughtful questioning to involve pupils with special needs fully in lessons. However, some targets are too broad and therefore more difficult to measure. Good thought is also given to the way pupils are grouped, which helps to give them confidence and extend their knowledge and understanding. Good systems are in place for monitoring pupils' progress. As a result of all these factors, most pupils make good progress in their learning.
25. Pupils with English as an additional language are fully included in lessons and are well supported, in the classroom or in withdrawal groups, by the bilingual support assistant. As a result, pupils are gaining confidence in speaking and are well motivated by what they are asked to do.
26. In most lessons, there are particular teaching strengths that contribute to the positive attitudes pupils have to their learning. Teachers manage their pupils very well, using a consistent and positive approach. Relationships between all staff and pupils throughout the school are very good. Teachers have a thorough knowledge of individual pupils, including those they teach in set groups who come from other classes. Lesson planning is thorough and makes clear what pupils are expected to learn. This information is helpfully shared with pupils, which gives them a good understanding of the purpose of most lessons.
27. Teachers work closely with learning support assistants. They brief and deploy them well, so that their skilled support makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. On some occasions, particularly during the start of literacy hours, the role of assistants is not always clear and opportunities to support individuals or to record pupils' responses are insufficiently developed. Many examples of good or better teaching, for example, where teachers and learning support assistants use effective questioning to both consolidate and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding, help to ensure that boys and girls of all levels of attainment are equally involved. Teachers are particularly successful at including pupils with special educational needs fully in lessons. A very good example of this was seen in a Year 3/4 science lesson on identifying questions for investigation.

28. Many teachers choose resources carefully and ensure that enthusiastic lesson delivery sustains pupils' interest in their learning. A good example of this was seen in a Year R/1 geography lesson on a seaside theme, where pupils really enjoyed talking about and using shells, rocks and seaweed in their drawings and prints. In a Year 3/4 literacy lesson, pupils were totally absorbed in the portrayal of character after the teacher read a passage about a witch very expressively and followed this by showing a video clip of the same scene. The opportunity for pupils to compare what they heard to what they saw developed their understanding of character description very effectively. In a Year 5/6 literacy lesson, the teacher used a mystery web imaginatively, which motivated pupils well when planning stories. She also used her sense of humour constructively to emphasise key points about characters, setting, plot and resolution in stories. In most lessons, teachers make good use of time, which helps to ensure the pace is brisk and purposeful. As a result, pupils listen well and work hard. They settle quickly and sensibly when working in groups, sustain concentration well and are also able to work independently.
29. The impact of such features on pupils' rate of learning was illustrated in an excellent extended writing lesson based on "The Inchcape Rock". The teacher made very effective use of questioning and explanation, which gave pupils a firm understanding of characters and events in the poem. They were then able to structure their writing well, using interesting words and phrases chosen for their dramatic effect. The constant feedback and encouragement given by the teacher motivated his pupils well and helped them improve their written work, for example, by using expressions such as "cruel and evil eyes" and "wicked laugh". It also helped to ensure the equal involvement of boys and girls. The teacher's own enthusiasm and enjoyment, together with a brisk well-judged pace, kept all pupils very well focused and keen to learn throughout. As a result, pupils worked hard and developed some good-quality ideas in their writing.
30. Although elements of good or very good practice were seen in many lessons, inconsistencies in lesson delivery sometimes made the teaching satisfactory rather than good and very good. In some lessons, for example, introductions were rushed, activities were sometimes too hard or delivery lacked spark. By contrast, in very well taught lessons, teachers ensure introductions are well paced, activities are appropriately challenging and delivery is enthusiastic. Most teachers advise pupils on how they can improve their work when they mark or discuss it. There is good attention to setting short-term targets to help pupils focus on specific areas for improvement, especially in English and mathematics. Plenary sessions are used well in the majority of lessons to help pupils to review and sometimes extend what they have learnt. In the best lessons, pupils are also told how this relates to what they will learn next. Good examples of this were seen in several English, mathematics and science lessons. In a few lessons, plenaries are too brief or are insufficiently focused on reviewing pupils' learning.
31. Teachers' own levels of skill and confidence in information and communication technology have improved since the last inspection as a result of training. They provide some opportunities for pupils to develop their information and communication technology skills through other subjects. Examples include using word processing to enhance their writing in poetry or sports reporting, recording results in science and using the internet to retrieve information in history. Overall, however, such opportunities are limited and information and communication technology is underused to support learning across the curriculum.
32. Particular improvements since the time of the last inspection are in planning and the good use that teachers make of the day-to-day assessment of pupils' work and responses. Teachers work closely together on detailed short and medium-term planning, which enables the workload and their expertise to be shared. Lesson plans show clearly what pupils are expected to learn and how different groups will be organised. This is especially challenging because all classes have mixed age groups. However teachers are good at planning for all groups, including higher attainers. Good account is taken of pupils' previous learning in most lessons, which helps teachers match activities well to different levels of prior attainment. In a very few lessons, teachers did not take sufficient account of pupils' responses or level of understanding and did not adapt the lesson accordingly to deal with this. The result was that



the pace of pupils' learning was slow. Good progress has been made in lesson planning since the previous inspection.

33. Teachers' marking is usually good, with many using comments that help pupils to recognise what they have done well. However, there is less consistency in the way comments are used to tell pupils what they need to do to improve their work. Homework is set regularly, is well related to classwork and is appropriately matched to pupils' needs. As such, it supports pupils' learning effectively.

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

34. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children in reception classes are satisfactory and all the areas of learning for the Foundation Stage curriculum are taught. However, at present there are insufficient opportunities for creative, exploratory and imaginative work. Children are reasonably well prepared for their National Curriculum studies.
35. Overall, the quality and range of learning opportunities provided for Years 1 to 6 are satisfactory. The curriculum for pupils between Years 1 and 6 is broadly based and relevant. All National Curriculum subjects and religious education are taught. Since the appointment of the headteacher, the school has revised its curricular planning and there have been sound improvements in this area since the last inspection. The planning for English and mathematics is firmly based on the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. For most other subjects, the school has adopted the Qualification and Curriculum Authority guidance for its long and medium-term planning. These plans provide a sound framework for teachers to plan their lessons and there have been clear improvements in the planned provision for design and technology, information and communication technology and physical education. However, planning in science has not paid sufficient attention to the mixed-aged classes in Years 3 to 6. As a consequence, not all areas of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study are covered. Some pupils are not being taught elements of scientific enquiry and forces. In science, the school is not meeting statutory requirements. There are further weaknesses in the balance of the curriculum because the teaching of music receives insufficient time.
36. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy well and the strategies for the teaching of literacy skills in English are good. Strategies for the teaching of numeracy are sound. However, curricular planning does not identify where and how literacy and numeracy skills can be taught and used across the curriculum. For example, science, history and geography are not sufficiently used to develop pupils' writing skills. Furthermore, planning does not yet clearly identify how information and communication technology can support teaching and learning in different subjects.
37. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils, particularly in Years 3 to 6, that enrich their learning opportunities and contribute well to their social and cultural development. These include: chess, choir, cricket, dance, football, netball, short tennis and recorders.
38. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good. Pupils receive good support from teachers and learning support assistants, particularly during literacy and numeracy lessons.
39. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, with very efficient use made of the special needs learning support assistants in lessons. Pupils' individual education plans generally match their needs well. However, in some cases targets are too broad, which makes them more difficult to measure.
40. The school's approaches and strategies for promoting equal opportunities are good. Through effective use of data analysis, the school has a good awareness of the progress different groups are making and plans action where improvement is needed. For example, one of the school's key targets in mathematics is to raise girls' attainment in Year 1 and Year 2 classes.

Good lesson planning also ensures that all pupils, including higher attainers, are included, challenged and make suitable progress.

41. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good and there is a clear programme planned. The school is successful in developing pupils' confidence and sense of responsibility. Health and safety issues are promoted well, particularly in science and design and technology. Appropriate attention is given to sex education and drug education. Good relationships and respecting the differences between pupils are promoted well by all staff throughout the curriculum.
42. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is satisfactory. The vicar is a regular visitor to the school and representatives from the police and fire service contributes to pupils' learning opportunities. Parents and grandparents have contributed to history lessons by giving accounts of the past in Dover. The school has a partnership with a local dance club. The club uses the school premises and some pupils attend the sessions.
43. The school has established a sound partnership with the local secondary school. The staff of both schools liaise effectively, particularly about English, mathematics and science. The secondary school provides a science day for Year 5, which has been a popular event.
44. Overall, the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
45. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils have suitable opportunities for prayer, reflection and stillness in assemblies. For example, pupils were asked to consider the consequences of their own actions on others. Assemblies now meet statutory requirements for daily collective acts of worship and this is an improvement since the last inspection. While opportunities for spiritual development were seen in a Year 6 science lesson on light, opportunities were rarely evident in other lessons during the inspection.
46. Provision for moral development is good and this results in good pupil attitudes and behaviour. The school has effective codes and rules to promote good behaviour in school and in the playground. These are clearly displayed and consistently applied by staff. Teachers, learning support assistants and other adults in the school are good role models to pupils in terms of courtesy, respect and fairness. Staff promote moral and social development well as a natural part of their work. Their calm, caring and positive approach has a favourable effect on pupils. Praise and encouragement are used effectively to build pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
47. The provision for pupils' social development is very good and this leads to very good relationships within the school. Pupils are given opportunities and encouraged to work in pairs and small groups in most areas of the curriculum. Pupils are also encouraged to work co-operatively and share in using equipment and learning resources. They show initiative and responsibility when working in groups. In a number of lessons, pupils are given opportunities to share and celebrate each other's work. This is particularly successful in English. All pupils, particularly those with special educational needs of whatever nature or difficulty, are included well in all activities by adults and other pupils.
48. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. A variety of stories and poems are used well in English lessons to promote an appreciation of literature and to develop pupils' own writing skills. Stories from Africa, India and the Caribbean are used effectively in Year 2 to promote reading skills and an understanding of non-western cultures. In geography, Year 3 and 4 pupils study Chembakolli and gain an insight of life in an Indian village. Pupils are introduced to a variety of music. For example, 'The Entertainer' by Scott Joplin was played in assembly. There are opportunities for pupils to receive instrumental tuition. The works of famous artists as Cézanne, Seurat and Van Gogh are used well to promote an appreciation of art and help to inspire pupils in painting landscape scenes. Pupils are taught about the principles of major world religions through religious education lessons.

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

49. The steps taken to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. The teachers know their pupils well, recognise their needs and give them good support and guidance. The school has a good health and safety policy and governors and staff have health and safety responsibilities. A safety audit and risk assessment have recently been carried out and annual updates are planned. Action has been taken on the high priority recommendations in the audit report. Fire drills are held termly and the school completed the Kent Fire Brigade Schools' Community Fire Safety Programme. There are three fully qualified first aiders in the school and the nurse comes in on request to complete eye and hearing tests and to speak to staff about pupils with particular health problems. The school has set up a successful "Walking Bus Scheme", which encourages parents to allow their child to walk to school in an organised group rather than be driven by car.
50. The school has an appropriate child protection policy, which is in the process of being revised. The headteacher is responsible for its implementation and has received the necessary training. The school keeps proper records of child protection cases. Staff have had some child protection training, the local education authority child protection officer has spoken to staff and more training is planned. The midday assistants receive ongoing training and child protection training is planned to be included.
51. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. For example, teachers keep a termly profile on each pupil and monitor the awards of certificates, stars and rewards to ensure that all pupils are properly encouraged by these incentives. This promotes pupils' personal development well and comments about their progress in this area are included in their in their annual reports.
52. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support within the school from teachers and learning support assistants. Sound systems are in place to enable pupils to cope with difficult situations. Their progress is monitored well and specialist support from a variety of external agencies is sought when needed and used effectively. This helps pupils with special educational needs to make good progress.
53. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. This helps to ensure that attendance rates are in line with the national average. Attendance is monitored by teachers and the office staff. If a pupil is absent without a known reason, the parents are rung on the first day of absence. If there are concerns about a case of non-attendance, the headteacher communicates with the parents and contact is made with the educational welfare officer, if necessary. The educational welfare officer pursues such cases and makes home visits. Attendance awards are presented for full attendance over the year and there are some individual awards for pupils who make a great effort to improve their attendance. Registers are marked regularly but, in a few cases, teachers do not always make clear whether all pupils are present or absent. Pupils who arrive late have to report to the office, where their late arrival is recorded.
54. The schools' procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. There is an appropriate behaviour policy, which contains a suitable range of rewards and sanctions to encourage good behaviour. The rewards given are on an individual, group and class basis and one of the aims of the rewards system is to raise the self-esteem of the pupils. Each class negotiates its own class rules, based on the behaviour policy, and there is a set of playground rules, which are well displayed around the school. As a result, pupils' behaviour is good overall and very good in lessons. When a pupil persistently misbehaves, his or her behaviour is monitored throughout the day and recorded on an orange report card. There was no anti-bullying policy in place at the time of the last inspection, but the school now has such a policy. Incidents of bullying are infrequent, but when they do occur they are dealt with speedily in accordance with the policy. Parents are involved where it is necessary, and records are kept of incidents.
55. The school has recently reviewed its assessment procedures with assistance from the local education authority. Clear targets are set for groups of pupils in reading, writing and

mathematics. Pupils know their targets and what they need to work at in order to improve. A system for assessing and recording attainment in writing has been introduced and a similar system is planned for reading. Procedures to track individual pupils' progress in writing were introduced in November 2001. Pupils produce written work for assessment at the end of each term. This work is assessed against National Curriculum levels and is a good system, but there are some inconsistencies in the quality of assessments made. In mathematics, the school uses end of unit tests and optional National Curriculum tests to track pupils' progress. Assessment data is effectively analysed.

56. Assessment systems are now in place and are being further developed in design and technology, information and communication technology, music, geography, history and art and design. Except in art and design, assessments are appropriately linked to National Curriculum standards. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are sound and there have been significant improvements in this area since the last inspection. However, many of the assessment systems are recent and not yet sufficiently well established to inform future curricular planning.
57. In the previous inspection report it stated that a feature of the school was the good support it gives to the pupils and the good arrangements for child protection. This is still the case.

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

58. The school's partnership with parents is good. Parents are supportive of the school and the links it has with parents have a positive impact on the pupils' learning. The quality of information provided is satisfactory overall. Regular newsletters, which are clearly numbered, are sent out by the headteacher and teachers also send out useful information letters. Letters from the school association are sent out on yellow paper to distinguish them from other letters. Parents are informed termly about curriculum coverage, physical education days and homework, so that they can support learning at home. The pupils' targets in reading, writing and mathematics are communicated to parents, at least four times a year. Meetings are arranged to inform parents about the Year 2 and Year 6 National Curriculum tests. New entrants to the school are given an information pack about the Foundation Stage. Children spend some time in the school before entry and parents have a pre-school interview and visit. Parents' evenings are held in the autumn and the spring terms to enable parents to discuss their child's progress. There is a further opportunity after the parents' annual reports are sent out in the summer. These reports are satisfactory overall. They tell parents what their class has studied, but there is not enough information about what each individual child knows, understands and can do. Not all the required statutory information is supplied in the governors' annual report to parents.
59. The parents' views of the school are very good. The school's links with its parents are effective and their involvement has a good impact on the work of the school. The contribution parents make to children's learning is satisfactory overall. The St Martin's School Association (SMSA) organises a wide range of fund raising and social events, which are generally well supported by parents. The money raised is used to extend the educational opportunities of the pupils by the purchase of resources and funding visitors like theatre groups. Parents also collect vouchers to obtain resources for the school. They are encouraged to help in school and a large number take up this opportunity, especially in the infant classes. They hear readers, help with baking and crafts and assist on trips. Parents are also invited into the school for special events.
60. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved and informed at all stages of the assessment and review process. In addition, good contact is maintained at other times on an informal basis. Parents have good access to class teachers, who work closely with the special educational needs co-ordinator. This maintains a steady and useful flow of information.
61. Parents of pupils with English as an additional language are fully informed of their progress through regular contact with class teachers and the bilingual support assistant.

62. The school consults parents on their views by sending out questionnaires on a variety of subjects, including homework. There is a homework policy, which outlines the level of homework, which increases as the pupil moves through the school. Reading-record books are used well as a line of communication between school and home. Parents are generally happy with the homework provided but parental support of their child's work at home is mixed. A few parents have low academic expectations for their children. In the parental questionnaire prior to the inspection, a substantial minority of parents was not happy with the extra-curricular activities provided. The inspection evidence does not confirm this view. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good.
63. At the time of the last inspection, parents were satisfied with the information provided by the school, and this is still the case. The report also expressed concerns about the school association not being independent and not having a committee. Suitable action has now been taken to address this.

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

64. The overall leadership and management of the school is good. This is a significant improvement from the previous report, when serious weaknesses were identified in this area. There has been a good response to all the key issues identified previously, particularly since the appointment of the current headteacher eighteen months ago. In particular, those relating to leadership and management, including monitoring and evaluation, and the quality of teaching, have improved sufficiently from areas of weakness to become strengths of the school. The quality of teaching has improved from satisfactory to good. The headteacher has established and led a rigorous programme of monitoring and support, and has made good use of expertise from within and outside the school, for example, advanced skills teachers, to bring about this improvement. The national literacy and numeracy strategies are implemented well and consistently. The impact of these changes has not as yet been reflected in National Curriculum test results, although there have been good improvements in pupils' achievements since the start of this academic year, particularly in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
65. The headteacher is well supported by the senior management team and provides very good leadership. The successful improvements made by the school are largely due to the positive and challenging climate for change she has created and maintained. In doing so, she has motivated and developed the staff team, gained the confidence and support of parents and secured a whole-school approach and commitment to school improvement. Staff have risen to the challenge well, through good-quality teamwork, a willingness to learn, an ability to provide mutual support, and by their hard work and dedication, resulting in good-quality teaching and learning for pupils. There is a clear sense of direction and common purpose, demonstrated, for example, by the key targets set for improving standards in English, mathematics and science. These are called "pin to your chest targets" by the headteacher because they have a high profile with the whole school community. The school's aims and values are seen in practice on a daily basis: for example, through the very good relationships between pupils and staff; teachers' good knowledge of their pupils, the way achievements are praised and recognised; and the good inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. These make a valuable contribution to the positive attitudes and good behaviour of the pupils.
66. The senior management team, which includes the deputy headteacher, contributes effectively to the leadership and management of the school and is fully involved in all decision-making. Good improvement has been made in this area, following identification as a significant weakness in the last inspection. The presence of the key stage leaders on the team is helpful as it enables them to monitor curriculum developments not only in their own year groups, but also across the whole school. Many subject leaders are new to their roles and their development is seen as key for raising standards by the headteacher. Some subject leaders are already using their expertise to raise standards and pupils' achievement, for example, in English, science and information and communication technology. All subject leaders have produced useful action plans for developments in their areas, which are included in the school improvement plan. Many monitor teachers' planning, displays and pupils' work, but the monitoring of teaching, although planned for, is currently limited.

67. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides sound leadership. She is new to the post and receives good support from the headteacher. The register for special educational needs is carefully maintained and up-to-date, and is in line with the requirements of the new Code of Practice. Pupils' individual education plans are reviewed regularly and are shared with parents. However, some targets are too broad, making them harder to measure. The co-ordinator ensures that teachers have a good awareness and understanding of which pupils are on the register and what their needs are. She works closely with the headteacher to monitor the progress of all pupils with special educational needs. Suitable training has been planned for the co-ordinator and staff to further develop their expertise. The governing body supports and monitors the provision for pupils with special educational needs appropriately. It reports this provision and how resources have been allocated in its annual report to parents, in line with reporting requirements.
68. The headteacher uses data analysis well to ensure that all pupils, including those with English as an additional language, are included and make suitable progress in lessons. The school's systems for tracking pupils' achievements also help to ensure that its inclusion policy is effective.
69. The performance management process compliments the school's determination to raise standards through improving the quality of teaching and learning. It is linked to teachers' end of year standards targets and also to the school's key priorities, for example, the development of pupils' speech and language skills. The process is also linked to well-focused in-service training as outlined in the school improvement plan. A regular pattern of lesson observations has been set up involving the headteacher and senior management team. The subsequent feedback, action points and relevant support agreed with teachers have already contributed well to improving the quality and consistency of teaching and learning. It is planned to involve subject leaders more in this process as part of the development of their roles.
70. Good use is made of performance data to track pupils' progress through the school. Test results are carefully analysed to identify any weaknesses in the curriculum or in the achievements of particular groups of pupils so that appropriate action can be taken to address them. For example, all classes make good use of the key school targets for English, mathematics and science. In addition, more time has been allocated to English in order to improve pupils' writing and speaking and listening skills. Results are also used to identify those pupils in need of additional support through booster classes and the additional literacy strategy. These initiatives have worked successfully, particularly the booster classes. Pupils' performance in English and mathematics is carefully analysed and used to set challenging end of year numerical targets for each child, which contributes to class and whole-school targets. A new assessment information system is in use, which will make the management of data more efficient and adaptable.
71. Since starting at the school, the headteacher has involved all staff, governors and parents in a useful self-evaluation covering all aspects of the school in order to identify strengths and areas for development. These helped to inform the first two school improvement plans following the headteacher's appointment. The first plan (2001-2002) focused mainly on establishing management systems. This was appropriate, as this area was a major weakness in the previous report and had not been fully addressed until the new headteacher was in post. Management roles and responsibilities are now clearly defined, representing very good progress from the previous inspection. The current school improvement plan (2002-2003) is much more curriculum focused, with every subject covered by an action plan. Staff involvement has been good, with informative and useful evaluation and feedback given to governors about progress within each subject. Given the school context of high staff turnover and criticism of curriculum issues in the previous report, it is understandable that such a broad-brush approach was chosen. However, although the plan's format is sound, for example in clearly identifying actions, resources and personnel, key priorities for raising standards are not identified specifically within it. Key targets for raising standards in English, mathematics and science have been identified, but the useful list of "pin on your chest targets" is not specifically included in the school improvement plan itself. The plan covers a period of one year and would benefit from a longer time span. The school plans to have a three-year school improvement plan following a review of the current one.

72. Governors are committed and very supportive of the school and carry out most of their statutory duties satisfactorily. However, statutory requirements are not met in science and there are some omissions in the governors' annual report to parents. Over the last eighteen months especially, they have reviewed their roles and responsibilities, which has resulted in more effective and efficient working, particularly through the committee structure. Although some governors have taken part in training, governors report that the inconvenient location of training venues has limited their uptake of courses. Governors are linked to key curriculum areas and make school visits in relation to these responsibilities. Several governors work regularly in school on a voluntary basis. Governors receive good quality, detailed information from the headteacher about the school's progress towards meeting its school improvement plan targets. This, together with feedback from visits, has helped to inform governors' views of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and of what action is needed to move forward. It is also enabling them to develop their strategic planning and monitoring roles in a more structured way. Very good improvement has been made since the previous inspection, when it was reported that inaccurate information underpinned the previous headteacher's advice to governors.
73. The quality of financial planning and management is sound and the knowledgeable, efficient administration officer makes a good contribution to this. The funds received by the school are used effectively to improve standards and achievement and to provide a good quality of education. A significant part of the budget surplus last year has also been used to support both these areas, particularly in relation to improving resources. Good use is made of specific grants, for example, to provide booster classes and to increase the level of support from learning support assistants.
74. Best value principles are applied satisfactorily overall. Through obtaining and evaluating a range of quotes, the school ensures it is getting best value for money when purchasing resources and services, for example, computer equipment for the suite. Processes for evaluating the effectiveness of spending decisions, particularly in relation to raising standards, are beginning to be developed. The headteacher is leading useful work with governors in this area by relating many key spending decisions to their likely effect on standards, for example, the extra hours for learning support assistants. Parents are consulted regularly through letters and questionnaires about various aspects of school life.
75. Although staff turnover has been significant, there is now a suitable number of well-trained, qualified teachers. They are generally deployed effectively to promote higher standards and good quality teaching. For example, through being mostly organised in parallel classes, teachers are able to share the workload as well as their expertise effectively. Learning support staff provide skilled, effective support for pupils' learning, especially those with special educational needs. During lunchtimes, midday supervisors offer good support to pupils and, like other staff, act as good role models for them. The caretaker and two cleaners look after the school well, despite the limitations of the buildings. Overall, the accommodation is satisfactory, but much work has been done to improve the fabric of the main building over the last two years. Work was ongoing at the time of the inspection. Further improvements are still required: for example, some of the existing toilets need replacing. In addition, the lack of toilet provision in the hall building is unsatisfactory, as it is some distance from the main school. Some access to different parts of the main building is made through classrooms, which is also unsatisfactory. Displays are used well to provide an attractive learning environment. This contributes to pupils' good attitudes and interest in their work. As found in the last inspection, resources are satisfactory overall. Resources in art and physical education are good, but they are unsatisfactory in mathematics and history. In addition, the Foundation Stage has insufficient large apparatus and construction toys. Many desks are in an unsatisfactory state of repair, but appropriate action has been planned to address this.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

76. In the context of the school's many strengths, the governors, headteacher and staff should address the following matters in their action plan in order to raise standards and the quality of education further:

1 Ensure that statutory requirements are met in science by:-

- covering all National Curriculum programmes of study in Year 3 - 6 classes, particularly in relation to elements of scientific enquiry and forces;
- providing consistent experiences in science within the same year group, particularly in Year 4.

(See paragraphs 35, 72 and 128.)

2 Improve planning for creative, exploratory and imaginative opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage by:-

- developing the use of dance, art and role play in the curriculum;
- ensuring role-play areas are inspiring and promote children's imaginative play;
- providing more experiences for pupils to explore a variety of materials when creating pictures, collages and models.

(See paragraphs 34, 79, 81, 82, 102, 103 and 104.)

3 Further improve planning for the use of information and communication technology, literacy and numeracy across the curriculum by:-

- increasing the use of information and communication technology in all classes to support learning in other subject areas;
- providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in subjects other than English;
- providing more opportunities for numeracy to be used in other subjects, particularly information and communication technology.

(See paragraphs 36, 112, 124, 130, 146, 151, 156 and 161.)

4 Use assessment information from recently established systems to inform curricular planning by:-

- ensuring that assessment information from individual year groups within mixed-age classes is used more consistently to inform medium-term planning;
- reviewing how best to ensure that pupils in each year group are able to build on similar experiences as they move through the school in mixed-age classes.

(See paragraphs 56, 118, 126, 128 and 163.)

77. In addition to the above, the following points for development should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:-

- Reviewing the time allocations for music and French in order to improve the balance of the curriculum (see paragraphs 35, 164, 168 and 172);
- Improving resources in mathematics, history and the Foundation Stage (see paragraphs 75, 79, 126 and 157);
- Ensuring all targets in pupils' individual education plans are specific (see paragraphs 24 and 67);
- Improving pupils' research and referencing skills (see paragraphs 5 and 111);
- Ensuring that the governors' annual report to parents includes all statutory information (see paragraph 72).



## 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	42

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	17	26	18	1	0	0
Percentage	5	26	40	27.5	1.5	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	256
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	28

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	82

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	14	22	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	12	12
	Girls	17	19	19
	Total	27	31	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (84)	86 (78)	86 (73)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	12	10
	Girls	18	19	18
	Total	29	31	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (81)	86 (81)	78 (81)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	21	18	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	16	12
	Girls	16	15	16
	Total	27	31	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (65)	79 (68)	72 (81)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	18	19
	Girls	16	17	18
	Total	31	35	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (68)	90 (74)	95 (87)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	215
Any other minority ethnic group	3

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.7
Average class size	28.4

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	167
<i>FTE means full-time equivalent.</i>	

**Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

**Financial information**

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	504,301
Total expenditure	487,963
Expenditure per pupil	1,885
Balance brought forward from previous year	49,515
Balance carried forward to next year	65,853

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Results of the survey of parents and carers**

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	256
Number of questionnaires returned	58

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	34.0	7	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53.0	41.0	3.0	0	2.0
Behaviour in the school is good.	26.0	67.0	5.0	2.0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32.0	61.0	4.0	4.0	0
The teaching is good.	43.0	53.0	3.0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40.0	53.0	5.0	0	2.0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69.0	26.0	5.0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56.0	40.0	2.0	0	2.0
The school works closely with parents.	36.0	53.0	10.0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	47.0	45.0	3.0	0	5.0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	34.0	53.0	7.0	0	5.0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39.0	39.0	16.0	5.0	2.0

**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**

78. There have been many very recent changes to the organisation of teaching in the reception and Year 1 classes. Children's experiences, until recently, have not followed an appropriate curriculum, but, because of the generally good team work between the teachers and classroom assistants, this situation has improved. The activities teachers plan for are now more varied and cover the nationally prescribed "areas of learning" appropriately. However, children's creative, imaginative and exploratory experiences, such as dance, art and role play, remain limited and planning is at an early stage of development. Children in Year 1 are taught in separate groups from the younger children in each class and are appropriately challenged in the work they do.
79. The new co-ordinator for the reception-aged children is very aware of the weaknesses in the recent organisation of the classes and has begun to devise new teaching programmes to ensure improvement in children's overall achievements. She is also very aware of the need to improve resources, including play facilities. Although there remains some inconsistency in the quality of teaching between each class, teaching is satisfactory overall and is good in literacy and numeracy. There are important weaknesses, however, in teaching creative, imaginative and exploratory aspects of the curriculum.
80. In the last few years there have been inconsistencies and inaccuracies in the way children have been assessed. However, for the current reception classes, the new team have been very careful to ensure that each child has been assessed appropriately and accurately. As a result, the school is in a better position to measure children's achievement as they go through the school.
81. When children started the reception class this year, their standards were below average, particularly in their reading, writing, speech and independence skills. In addition, children were not confident in following routines. These results are different from the previous inspection, where attainment on entry was above average. At the time of the current inspection, children's standards were average overall but below average in the creative, exploratory and imaginative aspects, such as dance.
82. During their time in the reception classes, children achieve satisfactorily overall, including children with special educational needs. Children achieve well in their reading, writing and speaking skills. Children achieve less well in some areas because of weaknesses in teaching. By the time children reach the end of the reception year they will be in line to meet the expected Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning except creative development.

**Personal, social and emotional development**

83. Teaching is satisfactory in this area of learning and all staff in the reception class work together to support children in developing their skills. As a result, children are able to form positive relationships with each other and clearly understand classroom routines and the expected behaviour. However, when teaching is less effective, such as when activities planned are not stimulating, children's behaviour can be less than satisfactory.
84. In both classes children are happy to come to school and should there be any upsets in separating from their parent or carer, these are dealt with very efficiently and with kindness. As a result, children are confident with staff and have a good sense of belonging to the class.
85. All staff have a positive and secure approach to children who are beginning to recognise the differences between right and wrong, for example, by not upsetting somebody else's work. When incidents do occur, children are supportive of each other and the good level of observation by adults ensure that any incident is understood and quickly dealt with.

86. Children show improving levels of independence such as when choosing from a selection of activities in the afternoons. In addition, children organise themselves and are able to undress and dress for physical education efficiently, with little help.
87. When doing tasks, children in both classes are willing to work with others and show appropriate levels of sharing such as in the role-play shopping activities when making and labelling the objects for sale. In addition, children are able to take turns and listen to any adult instructions to do so, such as when catching and throwing a ball when learning to play a game. These levels of success are directly related to the quality of the activities that teachers plan.
88. As a result of the appropriate approach to developing children's personal, social and emotional skills, children achieve satisfactorily in both reception classes. By the time children reach the end of the reception year they will have met the national expectations of the Early Learning Goals.

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

89. When children start the reception class, many have communication, language and literacy skills that are generally below average. Through good teaching overall, and good support from other adults, children achieve well. The higher attaining children, who tend to be the older ones, show good levels of confidence in being able to talk about what they are doing. Lower attaining children, who tend to be the younger ones, show less confidence in conversation and will give one-word answers to questions, for example, when relating to the events in a familiar book. However, all children are willing to talk to others and higher attainers are beginning to ask questions such as "Was the book funny?" and "Can you help me?" All children show good levels of enthusiasm when they speak French during the register time.
90. All children in the reception classes are taught to handle books carefully and, as a result, they are recognising illustrations and the use of words when a story is being read to them. Some children will readily read to themselves and work very well together during group reading sessions. Children are also recognising the different emotions associated with stories and are able to sympathise with the characters either through the story being read to them or through the illustrations. Children are beginning to read some familiar words, such as "dad" and "box" and are beginning to use phonics as a way of working out what a word says. The "contact" book is used appropriately as a way of making comments about children's reading shared between the school and parents.
91. One of the successful elements of teaching reading is the way teachers openly discuss the text they are reading with children. For example, they help children recognise how the size of the print is used to convey excitement or worry in the story. As a result, children show good levels of enjoyment and concentration and are able to talk with confidence about the story.
92. During different sessions in the day, children will readily attempt to write their names, make shopping lists and write simple sentences with pencils and crayons. Children's handwriting generally follows the school's style, but letters are not always formed properly. Although there is some inconsistency between the classes, children's achievement overall is good, particularly in their reading skills. As a result, children will meet the Early Learning Goals by the time they finish in the reception class.

### **Mathematical development**

93. When children start school their standards are average and they achieve satisfactorily because teaching provides children with a clear focus on practising counting, the use of numbers and ideas about shape. Children enjoy singing number songs and count objects regularly and are particularly successful when counting beyond ten.
94. When counting most children are accurate in counting each object and are beginning to understand the idea of adding and taking away. In addition, when teachers use role-play

situations, such as shopping, children are able to develop their language well and begin to recognise a variety of coins and their value. As a result of good teaching in this area of learning, children should meet the Early Learning Goals confidently by the time they reach the end of the reception class.

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

95. Children's standards are average in this area of learning. Children achieve appropriately because teaching is satisfactory and staff provide an appropriate range of experiences that ensure children are aware of the world around them. For example, they were able to talk about their visit to the park and the local area, naming the interesting things they saw.
96. The more confident speaking children in both classes are beginning to talk about events that happened yesterday and can anticipate what will happen tomorrow, with levels of success appropriate to their age. For example, they talked about events such as Mother's Day or their hobbies.
97. The use of the topic area on "The Sea" provides an appropriate set of learning experiences for children such as sorting shells, stones and floating boats. As a result, children are able to notice the similarities and differences between shells and stones and are able to select the most appropriate for making beach pictures.
98. Children show good levels of interest in using the computer and are happy to work with another child on a particular problem. They will readily ask adults what to do if they get confused about the programme and show good levels of satisfaction as the task is completed.
99. By the time children leave the reception class they are likely to meet the expected level within the Early Learning Goals.

### **Physical development**

100. When children start the reception class they generally have good movement skills. They are able to move around the play area with confidence and are able to ride bikes and other vehicles forwards and backwards with very few collisions. Children are confident in physical education lessons and outdoor activities where their skills are well developed in catching and throwing, including the use of a target. Children are less confident in their dance skills when teaching has weaknesses and children do not fully concentrate on what they are doing. Children's use of pencils and paintbrushes are developing appropriately.
101. Children achieve satisfactorily overall because teaching is satisfactory. However, there are weaknesses in teachers' planning which affect how well children develop their physical skills. Children are likely to meet the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the reception year, particularly in using equipment and tools.

### **Creative development**

102. Children's creative skills are below average and they are not achieving as well as they should do because there are few opportunities planned by teachers. However, when children are given opportunities they involve themselves well and work alongside other children effectively, such as when singing songs and rhymes or 'painting' on the computer.
103. The role-play area is currently uninspiring in its use as a pirate ship and children do not sustain their play for very long periods. However, with adult support, they play very successfully and imaginatively, such as using milk crates as the pirate ship sailing to a treasure island or in finding treasure buried in sand. These opportunities are few and the overall topic focus is not entirely suitable for all children's experiences. In addition, children do not have many experiences to explore the variety of materials they could work with to create pictures, collages and models.

104. By the time children leave the reception class it is likely that they will not meet the expected levels within the Early Learning Goals unless teachers plan more varied activities within a relevant topic.

## ENGLISH

105. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for Year 2, results were well below the national average in reading and below average in writing. When compared with similar schools, these results were very low in reading and well below average in writing.
106. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for Year 6, standards were below the national average. When compared with similar schools, results were well below average. The girls performed better than the boys. Test results have fallen over the past four years. While still below average, the 2001 results were better than those in 2000.
107. The finding of the inspection is that standards in English are broadly average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, are achieving satisfactorily. These are similar judgements to those made during the last inspection. The standards in the work seen are significantly better than the National Curriculum test results. Since the appointment of the current headteacher, the school has improved its curricular planning. There have also been improvements in teaching. Lessons are more clearly focused and maintain a good pace. Teachers promote the acquisition and use of vocabulary and provide a wider range of writing opportunities. These recent improvements are having a positive effect on pupils' learning and standards. In the work seen, there was no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
108. In the current Year 2, standards are broadly average in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Most pupils in Year 2 listen well to their teacher and others during discussion. They are beginning to show confidence in speaking. Higher attaining pupils talk with assurance and show a clear understanding of the discussion. In reading, most pupils read simple passages correctly and express opinions about the characters and events. They take delight in predicting what will happen next in a story. Pupils are arranged into ability groups for reading tasks. Their needs have been effectively assessed and a range of interesting and suitably matched group texts are selected. Books include traditional stories from Europe, Africa, the Caribbean and Asia. Teachers and learning support assistants are well deployed during reading sessions and show competence in the teaching of skills. This helps to ensure that pupils make good gains in their learning. Effective explaining and skilful questioning by the teacher enables pupils to learn new words from the class text. For example, from the book "Why Flies Buzz", pupils discovered words like precious, dejectedly and raucous. They use these words correctly in their speech and their writing. Higher attaining pupils read with accuracy and fluency. In writing, lower attaining pupils communicate meaning through words and phrases. Sentence structure is not well developed unless the work is copied. Some letters are incorrectly formed and joining is not fluent. Medium attainers develop their ideas in a sequence of sentences. Capitals and full stops are used correctly. Letters are correctly formed and joined. Spelling is effectively taught through demonstration and use of letter and digraph cards. In one lesson, pupils showed a clear understanding of the spelling of 'er' sound in words such as girl, burn, her and shirt. Higher attaining pupils' writing is well structured, imaginative and clear. For example, one pupil wrote, "The trees were enormous. The houses looked so tiny compared with the trees." Writing is structured into sentences, which are correctly punctuated with capital letters and full stops. Spelling is generally accurate. Handwriting is legibly formed and joined. Higher attaining pupils employ alphabetical knowledge in locating information. Dictionaries and other reference books are used well to develop spelling, vocabulary and knowledge.
109. In Years 3 and 4, pupils were studying fantasy genre. "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" and "The White Witch" were used as class texts to help pupils understand how writers create imaginary worlds. Pupils realised that the more expressive the language, the more vivid the image created. Pupils used their imagination and expressive language to create an interesting fantasy scene. For example, a pupil described snow covered trees and frozen lakes. Another pupil described the smell of bark and a fire burning. They also chose interesting adjectives



and phrases to make their characters come alive. Higher attaining pupils use similes and adjectives to good effect. For example, "The white witch's face was as pale as a snowflake. She had a golden shimmering crown".

110. Pupils in the current Year 6 are attaining average standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Most pupils listen and talk with reasonable confidence. They describe characters from texts or television programmes clearly. Higher attaining pupils speak and listen with greater assurance. They draw on their experience in expressing their opinions about characters such as Sherlock Holmes and Poirot. For example, one pupil explained the function of a pawnbroker using the knowledge gained from visiting a pawnshop in Canterbury. A minority of pupils are not confident speakers and their vocabulary is limited.
111. In reading in Year 6, higher attaining pupils are confident and read with accuracy and expression. They identify crucial characters and themes in text. Inference and deduction is used well. They make reference to the text to justify their views and opinions. Most pupils read with accuracy and fluency. They show a sound understanding of the main characters and themes. Lower attaining pupils read simple text with reasonable accuracy and fluency. Some struggle with new words, but are able to talk about the plot. Research and referencing skills in Year 6 are underdeveloped. Even higher attaining pupils are not confident in using the library to locate specific information. From discussions with pupils, the Internet is used to find information but there are insufficient opportunities to use the library for independent study. The teaching of library skills and the use of the library were identified as weaknesses in the last inspection. This has not been effectively addressed.
112. In writing a mystery or detective story, Year 6 pupils plan their work well using a planning framework provided. They identify and describe key characters, describe the setting and outline the plot imaginatively. Words are chosen adventurously in order to make characters and settings interesting. In another lesson, the teacher used "The Inchcape Rock" poem extremely effectively to encourage and inspire pupils to use dramatic phrases and to show strong characters in their own writing. Using a clear planning sheet, pupils began to retell the story. They described the characters in the plot and planned their work into paragraphs. Pupils' writing was well structured and words were chosen well for dramatic effect. There are a few example of pupils using word processing to improve their presentation in writing poems and sports reports. However, information and communication technology is generally underused as a tool for pupils to draft and edit their writing. The study of pupils' work shows that there are few examples of detailed and extended writing in other subjects particularly science, geography and history. At present there is insufficient planned provision to develop pupils writing skills in subjects other than English.
113. The quality of teaching is good overall and this leads to positive pupil attitudes, good learning and behaviour. During the inspection, a number of examples of very good and excellent teaching were seen. This high quality teaching is a firm basis for raising standards further. Teaching in English has improved since the last inspection. Lessons are well planned and clear objectives are identified. These are effectively shared with the class so that pupils know what they are to learn. Teachers have implemented the National Literacy Strategy well and show considerable competence in the teaching of literacy skills. Learning support assistants are effectively deployed and contribute significantly to pupils' learning, particularly those with special educational needs during group tasks. However, they are less effective at the start of lessons. Teachers are effective in promoting the acquisition and use of a wide and interesting vocabulary and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Furthermore, pupils have opportunities to write for a range of purposes and audiences. Writing styles include persuasion, discussion, mystery, instruction and poetry. The range of writing is an improvement since the last inspection.
114. In the very best lessons, the teachers demonstrate tremendous enthusiasm for the subject. For example, they read texts with animation and expression. This motivates and inspires the pupils. Teachers' use skilful questioning to challenge pupils' thinking and to check that they have a firm understanding of characters, events and vocabulary. Teachers' expectations of learning and behaviour are high. Explanations and instructions are clear and pupils make very good gains in knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils are encouraged and shown how to

use words adventurously for effect. Pupils respond well as their imagination has been "sparked". Work is well matched to the different abilities within the class. This helps to ensure that all pupils are appropriately challenged. Pupil management and control are outstanding and high quality relationships have been established. As a consequence, pupils display very good attitudes and behave very well. The lesson maintains a brisk pace and pupils are highly productive. Learning time is therefore maximised. The plenary of the lesson is used well to review learning by revisiting what pupils are expected to learn. Pupils also are given good opportunities to review the extent they have achieved these expectations. Most show a good knowledge of their learning. Pupils are encouraged to share their work with the class and are encouraged to discuss the work of others in a supportive and constructive way. Their evaluative and social skills are well developed in this area and pupils learn from their peers.

115. Where teaching is satisfactory, the pace and levels of challenge are sometimes not high enough. Pupils require more direction in developing vocabulary and writing skills. Their concentration is not so good and a few wander off task. As a consequence the rate of learning is satisfactory rather than good.
116. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported in reading because of the detailed work of the bilingual support assistant and the good support by teachers. As a result, pupils are reading with some confidence and independence. Pupils with special educational needs receive good quality support from teachers and learning support assistants, which helps them to make good progress, particularly with speaking and listening skills.
117. Pupils' written work is marked regularly and thoroughly. It provides praise, encouragement and, in the best examples, guidance to help pupils to improve. A part-time teacher is used extremely well to help raise standards in Year 6 through booster classes.
118. The co-ordinator is keen and enthusiastic and provides good leadership. Curricular planning is firmly based on the National Literacy Strategy framework. The co-ordinator monitors planning and reviews pupils' work with teachers. This helps to ensure that there is continuity and progression in pupils' learning. She has non-contact time to develop the subject, but has not yet observed and supported teaching and learning in the classroom. This restricts the chance to share outstanding practice. The school has recently reviewed its assessment procedures with assistance from the local education authority. Clear targets are set for groups of pupils in reading and writing. Pupils know their targets and what they need to work at in order to improve. A system for assessing and recording attainment in writing has been introduced and a similar system is planned for reading. These systems are not firmly established and are not yet effectively informing curricular planning. A system to track individual pupils' progress in writing was introduced in November 2000. Pupils produce written work at the end of each term. This is assessed against National Curriculum levels. This is a good system but there are some inconsistencies in the quality of assessments made. Learning resources have improved since the last inspection particularly in terms of big books and reference books. Overall, the school has made good improvements since the last inspection.

## **MATHEMATICS**

119. The school's performance in national tests at the end of years 2 and 6 has been variable, but the results indicate an upward trend since 2000. Standards during the previous inspection were similar for pupils by the end of Year 2, but were judged to be above average by the end of Year 6.
120. The evidence from the inspection confirms this upward trend. This is because of significant improvements in the quality of teaching over the last eighteen months. It represents sound achievement for pupils in Year 2 and good achievement for Year 6 pupils, whose test results at the end of Year 2 (in 1998) were below average.
121. By the end of Year 2, standards are broadly average, which is the same as during the last inspection. Most pupils can count and use and have sound recall of addition and subtraction facts to 10. They recognise two and three-dimensional shapes and some can describe their

properties in simple terms. They make sets of small numbers of objects confidently and most can recognise and create simple number patterns. They use addition and subtraction in simple problem solving and order two digit numbers correctly as a result of their sound understanding of place value. Higher attaining pupils know the value of coins up to 20p, can add the cost of two items and calculate their change. Pupils know the correct names for direction and can distinguish between straight and turning movements using this knowledge when programming a floor robot or in gymnastics lessons. They also construct simple graphs, charts and tables to present information and a few are beginning to interpret the data more confidently. For example, Year 2 pupils constructed a birthday pictogram by placing pupils' portraits above the birthday month, creating a large colourful display showing the most popular birthday months. Many were able to say which months were the most or least popular.

122. By the end of Year 6, standards are average. Standards were judged to be above average during the last inspection. However, the school's intake has changed significantly since then and staff turnover has been high. Most pupils can confidently explain the strategies they use when making mental calculations and have sound reasoning skills. They use the four rules of number competently and can apply them correctly when problem solving. Many can convert fractions to percentages and can calculate fractions and percentages of three-digit numbers accurately. Pupils use and interpret co-ordinates confidently and higher attainers are particularly competent at calculating perimeter and area. Most pupils know their tables well. They have a sound understanding of negative numbers, for example, when considering temperature. Average and higher attaining pupils have sound and often good mental recall skills. However, for lower attainers, these skills are insecure. Higher attaining pupils can measure angles accurately and know that the sum of the angles of a triangle is 180 degrees. Many pupils can interpret graphs correctly, for example, when converting imperial units into metric units.
123. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of effective setting by prior attainment. Teachers planning takes good account of pupils' individual education plans. The additional help from learning support assistants is directed to sets for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, which makes a good contribution to their learning.
124. There are some examples of mathematics being used in other curriculum areas. For example, pupils in Year 1 and 2 practised using directions during physical education lessons. They also used information and communication technology lessons when carrying out a survey of favourite foods to create a pictogram. Older pupils develop their concept of time in history lessons and make good use of their measuring skills in designing and making items as part of design and technology lessons. However, overall, there is a lack of planned opportunities for pupils to use numeracy across the curriculum, particularly in relation to information and communication technology.
125. The quality of teaching is good and often very good. Targets for pupils' personal mathematics goals are agreed with them and shared with parents. In addition pupils are set by ability from as early as Year 1. Teachers plan carefully, using the structures of the National Numeracy Strategy to match the work carefully to the needs of different groups. However, medium-term planning is not secure, which results in difficulties in the consistency of what is taught from year to year within mixed-age classes and sets. Learning support assistants make an important contribution to pupils' learning, which, because of the quality of the help they give, is good and often very good. Teachers and learning support assistants use questioning very effectively, which helps to reinforce pupils' understanding of the concepts being taught. For example, this worked particularly well with younger pupils in their understanding of using coins. As a result of well-planned lessons and focused questioning, pupils have positive attitudes towards mathematics. They work hard in lessons, listen carefully to teachers, are very well behaved and co-operate well during group work. Teachers are effective at helping pupils to explain their strategies when doing mental and written calculations. Often this is with the whole class and helps pupils both to reason through what they have done and to reflect on alternative ways of arriving at accurate solutions. However in a few lessons, plenaries lack

rigour because of insufficient time for pupils to reflect on their learning during the lesson. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.

126. There is a new co-ordinator, who has written a useful action plan for mathematics. This includes the recognition of the need for a more consistent approach to medium-term planning to ensure that all pupils receive a mathematics programme which builds appropriately on their knowledge and understanding as they move from year to year. The management of the subject is sound overall. The school also recognises the need to improve resources in this area, which are currently unsatisfactory.

## SCIENCE

127. Pupils' standards by the end of Year 2 are average, which is the same as in the last inspection. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall although pupils need more practice in carrying out their practical work independently. Pupils are able to compare the shape of plasticine and can describe how their actions can shape what they are able to make. Some pupils are beginning to explain why plasticine made into a boat shape is able to float. In their books, pupils show how they have investigated sound and have begun to measure and explain how distance makes sounds fainter. As in Year 6, pupils' literacy skills are used appropriately but less attention has been given to pupils using their numeracy and information and communication technology skills in Year 2.
128. By the end of Year 6 pupils' standards are above average, which is the same as in the last inspection. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching and the recent renewed attention to the subject in the school. However, many pupils in Years 3 to 6 have missed parts of the National Curriculum and, therefore, the subject does not meet statutory requirements. In addition, the use of mixed-age groups has caused inconsistencies in pupils' experiences within the same year group, particularly in Year 4.
129. The school clearly recognises that pupils' experiences in science have been inconsistent and is beginning to review the situation appropriately. For example, the school has successfully organised focused teaching groups in Year 6 to ensure that pupils meet the challenging targets set for them in the 2002 tests, which will be a significant improvement on test results in previous years. In addition, the school's recent focus on supporting pupils' scientific vocabulary is having a good impact on pupils' learning, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
130. In Year 6, pupils are able to describe how light travels in straight lines and show in diagrams how light travels from a light source reflecting from an object and into the eye. In addition, pupils' work shows that they are able to make and read line graphs about pulse rate and describe how evaporation and condensation are related to changes in water. All these examples show above average standards and pupils are able to use their literacy and numeracy skills appropriately. However, pupils' use of their skills in information and communication technology in science is very limited.
131. Teaching is good overall and ranges from excellent to satisfactory. Teaching is good overall in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. The difference in the quality of teaching is related to teachers' subject knowledge and the way they plan pupils' practical work. Excellent and very good lessons focused clearly on pupils having to explain what they were finding out using the evidence available. For example, in Years 3 and 4 pupils were expected to raise a question, based on a poem written by a teacher, for investigating and then collecting evidence accurately when comparing their length of arms and legs. As a result of the clarity in the teacher's planning, explanation and challenge pupils were very clear about the need for evidence and concentrated very well on the tasks they carried out in a group.
132. Where teaching is satisfactory, teachers are clear about what they want pupils to do but do not always choose the best methods to help pupils carry out their work. For example, in a Year 1/2 class, pupils' practical work was restricted by the amount of resources and in the Year 4/5 class the use of a worksheet to guide the practical work was confusing. In addition, some pupils' books show an overemphasis on worksheets throughout the school. These weaknesses are similar to those within the previous inspection.

133. Pupils generally enjoy science and their attitude to work is good overall. They are keen to carry out their activities and work well with each other when necessary. Pupils respond well to challenging work and enjoy discussing what they have found out.
134. The new subject leader for science is very knowledgeable and shows very good leadership. She has analysed pupils' standards through test papers and through reviewing teacher's plans and the school's resources. As a result, she is very clear about the shortcomings of the subject and has begun to monitor pupils' experiences, working alongside colleagues very successfully.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

135. It was possible to observe only two lessons in art due to timetable arrangements. However, on the basis of the wealth of art displayed in classrooms and around the school, and scrutiny of pupils' work, standards in art are broadly average for pupils by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is because the school has a clear policy and a developing scheme of work based on the Qualification and Curriculum Authority guidelines, which ensures that pupils build on their skills year-on-year. In addition, teachers are committed to raising standards, recognising the contribution art makes to pupils' learning. Standards are similar to those reported in the last inspection.
136. Since the last inspection there has been sound improvement. The quality of teaching has improved and the new co-ordinator has a clear vision to improve the opportunities for pupils by providing a good range of resources and opportunities for them to explore a range of media.
137. Pupils' achievement is good overall. Their drawing skills develop well throughout the school, working from observation, personal experience and imagination. Their developing skills in using line and shape are also used effectively to support work in design and technology. The use of colour and pattern in painting, often in the style of various great artists, is good. The youngest pupils are encouraged to mix and use paint carefully to create a range of colours and to experiment. For example, they use fluorescent paints in different ways to make firework patterns. Pupils achieve well in collage work, using a range of materials including textiles. They use different textures, patterns and colours in their work, sometimes designing in pencil before making thoughtful choices from a range of materials. Pupils also achieve well in observational drawing. Younger pupils' art books show good development in their pencil drawings of, for example, sketches of pine cones and fossils which show their skills of shading developing well. Older pupils use sketchbooks to experiment with ideas and different aspects of drawing, for example, developing three-dimensional sketches and using perspective in their landscapes. Good use is made of pupils' artistic skills across the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils designed and made Tudor printing blocks as part of a history topic.
138. Although there is some evidence of three-dimensional work by pupils of all ages, this is less consistent than the other areas of experience and standards are lower. Because sculptural work is more spasmodic, pupils' understanding and use of form is less well developed than is the case with line, shape, pattern and texture.
139. As pupils move up through the school they study a wide range of artists from different periods and cultures. Many attempt to use the artists' styles in their own work, rather than attempting a mere copy. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils used the work of Lowry as part of their topic on movement.
140. Sketchbooks show the pupils' pencil sketches of figures moving, some using Picasso's "Three Dancers" as inspiration. Other work by older pupils included some very good watercolour landscapes based on sketches made on a visit to a local park. A study of landscapes by Cezanne, Seurat and Van Gogh provided pupils with techniques that were reflected in their work. They selected materials carefully to create the effect of figures in movement.

141. Only two art lessons were observed during the period of the inspection and teaching and learning were good in both. The lessons were clearly structured and the high expectations of the teachers were reflected in the pupils' work. Teachers and learning support assistants give good support to pupils and effectively demonstrate techniques to enable pupils to achieve good results.
142. The co-ordinator has been in post for almost a year and has a good understanding of what needs to be done. She plans to build on the whole-school policy and long-term plan for art and design to create a scheme of work with guidelines for teachers to ensure that pupils have every opportunity to reach high standards. The co-ordinator has plans to audit all resources and introduce assessment procedures as part of the new scheme of work. Resources in art are good.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

143. During the inspection, only two lessons in design and technology were seen. Judgements about standards and provision were made from assessing the quality of pupils' past work, discussions with the co-ordinator, and viewing teachers' planning.
144. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils attain broadly average standards and are achieving satisfactorily. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be below average across the school.
145. In Years 1 and 2, pupils designed a playground. This project was supported by a visit to a local playground. Pupils produced labelled drawings and plans to show their designs. As part of a topic on "Homes," pupils designed and made different types of dwellings. Wigwams were constructed with art straws and cardboard tubes were used for log cabins. Pupils had selected appropriate materials and tools for their work. Also in Year 2, pupils develop designing and making skills by working with a range of construction kits. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 designed and made burglar alarms to protect a special item. Using their knowledge and understanding of electric circuits, they produced annotated sketches of their design. In small groups they selected materials, components and tools and assembled their alarm systems. Higher attaining pupils evaluated their work and suggested improvements. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 designed and made slippers. They produced annotated sketches of their design, identified the tools and materials needed and set out a step-by-step plan for construction. Pupils used a range of textiles to make their product, including felt, rubber and artificial fur. They used appropriate cutting and joining techniques in making the slippers. Some higher attaining pupils used particularly good stitching techniques in order to produce a strong and attractive join at the sole. During the inspection, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were designing and making musical instruments. These included drums, harps and guitars. They produced plans of their designs and selected appropriate materials, tools and techniques for the construction. They considered and modified their design as the work progressed. Pupils have opportunities to work with a reasonable range of materials, tools and mechanisms. However, at present there is no evidence of older pupils working with pneumatics or controllable vehicles.
146. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was good and this resulted in pupils making good gains in the acquisition of designing, making and evaluating skills. Lessons are well planned. What pupils are expected to learn is identified and shared with the pupils so they are clear about the purpose of the lesson. Good instructions and explanations promote learning well. In one lesson, diagrams were used to show the pupils a circuit, but these were too small for all pupils to see clearly. Learning resources are well selected and organised. Learning support assistants and volunteer helpers are used well in lessons. For example, they are effective in demonstrating cutting and joining techniques to pupils. They contribute significantly to pupils' learning, particularly those with special educational needs. Pupils are given opportunities to work collaboratively when designing and making. Safety issues are promoted well and pupils are responsible when using tools. Pupils are well managed and this leads to positive attitudes and good behaviour. Pupils show interest and enjoy their design and technology lessons. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson, pupils were highly motivated as they constructed their musical instruments. They were all on task and worked well together. The lesson had a clear sense of

enjoyment. There is little evidence of information and communication technology being used to support teaching and learning in the subject.

147. The coordinator provides effective leadership. The school has revised its curricular planning and schemes of work are based on the Qualification and Curriculum Authority guidelines. These help to ensure that pupils learn in a steady and systematic way as they move through the school. They provide a good basis for teachers to plan their lessons, but there are some areas of the scheme still to be implemented. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. A system for assessing and recording pupils' attainment against National Curriculum standards has recently been introduced, but is not yet firmly established. Overall, the school has made good improvements in this subject since the last inspection.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

148. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are average in terms of national expectations. This reflects the standards seen during the last inspection. In relation to their prior attainment, pupils achieve satisfactorily across the school.
149. Pupils in Year 1 have a sound understanding of seaside features and a good awareness of differences between these and their local environment. Some ideas are expressed imaginatively and include sharks and seahorses as creatures that might be seen. Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of the key facilities Dover has to offer, for example, the ferry service to France, and can apply this knowledge to produce informative brochures and posters. They are beginning to use local maps and make good use of postcards, photographs and key questions to inform their work. Most pupils contribute well to lessons, with no particular difference between boys and girls.
150. Year 4 pupils have a good understanding of the similarities and differences between where they live and the inhabitants of the Indian village of Chembakolli. For example, they have a sensitive awareness of the difficulties caused by water problems on farming and the lack of medicines on people's health. They apply this knowledge well in discussions about comparative environments and in their work, for example, when designing posters for a charity. Pupils in Year 6 have a sound understanding of pollution and its effect on the environment. They can recall key features of their studies on rivers such as the Amazon, Nile, Seine and Thames, and many can relate these well to their work on soil erosion and pollution. Most can locate countries quickly using an atlas, but their knowledge of continents in relation to countries is less secure. Boys and girls contribute equally to lessons.
151. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers make good use of key questions, which helps pupils to develop their ideas, for example, when designing brochures or considering village life in India. Their subject knowledge is at least sound and often good, which contributes to making lessons well paced and interesting, for example, when pupils are designing charity posters. Additional adults are well used to support the variety of learning needs and this helps to ensure all pupils are actively involved in lessons. For example, the development of speaking skills is a particular focus of such support, which helps pupils to improve their geographical vocabulary and their ability to express their ideas verbally. Teachers also make good use of previous work covered, for example, on Dover's features as a seaside town, which helps to reinforce and further develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. Literacy is helpfully supported, particularly through the focus on pupils' speaking and listening skills through questioning. Opportunities to support numeracy or to use information and communication technology to help pupils to develop geographical skills are less well developed.
152. The subject leader has audited standards and coverage of the geography curriculum across the school. Sound management of the subject has given her a clear view of what areas need to be developed, for example, the cross-curricular links with information and communication technology, and these are addressed in the school improvement plan. The range of resources is satisfactory.

## **HISTORY**

153. Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. No history lessons were seen in Year 1 or Year 2, but a judgement on standards was made based on the scrutiny of work, discussion with the subject leader and pupils, and a review of planning. Standards by the end of Year 2 are similar to the previous inspection, although those by the end Year 6 were then judged to be above average.
154. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a sound understanding of the passage of time. For example, most are secure with recognising whether events happened before or after they were born and are able to make simple timelines to show this. Higher attainers can apply this knowledge about time to correctly place historical figures such as Florence Nightingale and Guy Fawkes in the right order. Many can make simple observations and comparisons of earlier periods, for example, when studying timelines of important family events or considering the sequence of events in the Christmas story.
155. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of life in Tudor times, with particular reference to the lives of the rich and poor. They have a good awareness of the prevailing social conditions and the effect these had on lifestyles. Pupils have a sound understanding of Tudor monarchs and the intrigues of their courts, for example, through investigations such as "Who murdered Darnley?" They are competent at seeing historical events from different points of view, for example, when considering English and Spanish opinions about the Armada at the time it happened. One suggestion for an English opinion was, "Loads of ships means big trouble." Average and higher attainers are good at judging the validity of different sources of information and recognise, for example, that gossip is likely to be unreliable. All groups of pupils are keen to participate in lessons.
156. No overall judgement can be made on the quality of teaching as no lessons were seen in Year 1 or Year 2. However, the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 classes is good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, which enables lesson delivery to be animated and thought-provoking through the use of challenging questioning. Pupils are given good opportunities to empathise with different experiences and points of view, for example, the lives of rich and poor people during the Tudor period. This promotes pupils' moral and social development well and also develops their investigative skills. Pupils with special educational needs receive good quality support, particularly through focused questioning and feedback, which helps them to participate fully, for example, in work on deduction when using historical information. Literacy is well supported, particularly through the attention given to pupils' speaking and listening skills. Numeracy is helpfully supported through the reinforcement of dates and pupils' understanding of chronology. The use of information and communication technology to help pupils develop historical skills is limited, but developing.
157. The subject leader has a clear overview of developments in history and these are reflected in the school improvement plan. The need to further develop monitoring and assessment procedures is recognised and suitable action has been planned. Her subject knowledge is very good and contributes well to the sound management of history. Overall, resources are unsatisfactory. The quantity and range of books is limited and there are very few artefacts for pupils to use to support their learning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

158. During the inspection, a limited amount of direct teaching was seen. Discussions were held with teachers and pupils. Teachers' plans and pupils' past work were examined.
159. By the end of Year 2, standards are average and most pupils are achieving satisfactorily. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be below average and progress was unsatisfactory. Pupils in Year 2 use a paint program to create images of boats or different creatures. They chose a range of colours for their picture and different brush sizes or the spray facility to apply the colour. In another class, Year 2 pupils were presented with information about favourite party foods. Working in pairs, they entered this data into a



graphing program to form a pictogram. Higher attaining pupils interpreted this data to answer questions. Pupils use a mouse competently but are not yet confident in loading a program or saving their work independently.

160. Pupils in Year 4 carried out a habitat survey. They collected data about the different species of animals found under leaves. This information was entered onto a spreadsheet and converted into a bar graph. Other Year 4 pupils had carried out surveys of favourite colours or food. This data was entered into a chart and then converted into pie charts.
161. Standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory. This is similar to the judgement made at the last inspection. Year 6 pupils used graphical modelling to produce an imaginary insect or creature in the style of Matisse. Pupils can copy, resize and delete shapes and fill them with colour. Higher attaining pupils use layering and "fill in" effects to enhance their image. Year 6 pupils use spreadsheets to present a range of data and use formulae to solve problems. The school is improving its provision for monitoring and control and this is beginning to improve standards. However, to date Year 6 pupils have had limited opportunities in this area. There are examples of pupils using word processing to enhance their writing in poetry or sports reporting and information and communication technology is also used to record results in science. However, overall, it is underused to support learning in a range of subjects. The school is aware of this and has identified it as a priority on the school improvement plan.
162. During the inspection, three lessons were seen in the information and communication technology suite. The quality of teaching seen was good. Lessons are well planned and make clear what pupils are expected to learn. Teachers use the projector and screen effectively to demonstrate techniques and operations to the class. Clear demonstrations, explanations and instructions enable pupils to practice and develop their information and communication technology skills. In the best lessons, questioning is used well to challenge pupils and check their understanding. In one lesson, however, questioning was insufficiently challenging. Pupils enjoy using computers and the new information and communication technology suite. They are well motivated and handle the computers with care and respect. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the tasks set and work well in pairs. Learning support assistants and students are effectively deployed and provide good help and support for individuals, particularly those with special educational needs.
163. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator provides effective advice and support to colleagues. The school's curricular planning is based on the Qualification and Curriculum Authority guidelines. Its schemes of work help to ensure that all areas of the subject are covered. They also help to ensure pupils develop knowledge and skills in a steady and systematic way. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and gives feedback to colleagues. The school relocated and extended its computer suite a year ago using its National Grid for Learning grant. The range and quality of computer hardware and software is good. There are also computers in most classrooms. However, these are underused. The school has recently purchased six laptop computers for pupils' and teachers' use and these have further improved the school's provision. A programme of staff training using New Opportunities Funding has been completed and further training is planned. Teachers are now more knowledgeable and confident in the teaching of information and communication technology and this is another improvement since the last inspection. The school has recently introduced a system for assessing and recording pupils' attainment. Assessments are based on National Curriculum standards but this is not yet established and there are further areas to develop. Overall, the school has made good improvements since the last inspection.

## **FRENCH**

164. A limited amount of time is given to French on the timetable. It is taught incidentally in Year 1/2 and Year 3/4 classes, but is timetabled once a week for Year 4/5 and Year 5/6 classes. These timetabled sessions are fifteen minutes long.

165. Two of these short lessons were seen in Year 5/6 classes during the inspection. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching because of the limited length of lessons. Teaching was judged to be good during the last inspection. It is also not possible to judge standards overall because evidence of how well pupils listen and respond or speak is limited. Standards were average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 during the last inspection. Less time is now spent on French due to the demands of other curriculum areas.
166. Younger pupils throughout the school answer the register enthusiastically in French and have a sound understanding of simple greetings. Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of using the directions "à gauche", "à droite" and "tout droit", with some able to use more extended phrases when giving directions. They also have a good understanding of words like plage, lapin, chateau and chien, which they can apply accurately when playing a lotto game. They can correctly count a repeated phrase in a French song and show good appreciation of the music. Their ability to use simple structured conversations appears limited.
167. In Year 5/6 classes, teachers involve pupils well in lessons, for example, through questioning about directions or the lotto game. This helps to keep most pupils interested and focused. Pupils clearly enjoy French. In one of the lessons, where the teacher's subject knowledge was very good, pupils' learning was developed very well because lesson pace was brisk and delivery was enthusiastic. Learning was sound overall in the other lesson on directions, but the pace was slowed by the time taken for pupils to programme a Roamer.
168. The co-ordinator recognises that insufficient time is allocated to French to develop it in the same way as other subjects. Although French makes a useful contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in terms of their cultural development, pressure to raise standards in other subjects has meant that there is now less of a focus on it than there was at the time of the last inspection. However, pupils' interest and enthusiasm for French has been sustained, thanks to sound management of the subject.

## MUSIC

169. From observing one lesson, sampling pupils' work and analysing teachers' planning, standards in music are average by the end of Years 2 but pupils' standards for the end of Year 6 could not be judged. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory as they move through the school as they develop their composing and playing skills with increasing confidence. Pupils' singing skills are generally good in collective worship and classroom sessions and pupils are given good experiences to work with peripatetic music teachers and join the recorder club or school choir. These are similar findings to the previous inspection.
170. The samples of work in Years 1 and 2 show that pupils are able to work together and compose simple pieces of music choosing appropriate instruments. The pieces of music provided rhythm and an appropriate overall effect to compositions related to themes such as 'snow' or 'the sea'.
171. The samples of work in Years 3 and 4 show how pupils are able to use their voices in composing a series of successful repeated phrases (ostinato). The compositions cover a range of work using simple to more complex phrases which are used to represent a football crowd theme very effectively.
172. Only one lesson of music was observed in the Year 4/5 class and therefore an overall judgement about the quality of teaching cannot be made. The lesson observed provided pupils with good levels of increasing confidence in rhythm and pitch. Pupils enjoyed their work and showed good levels of collaboration with others to ensure their joint efforts were successful. However, the actual performance aspects were less well developed because of the very short amount of lesson time. When looking at pupils' music experiences within a week not enough time is spent overall in teaching the subject although it does meet statutory requirements.

173. The knowledgeable subject leader has recently been appointed and has appropriately begun to review the school's policy, planning and resources ensuring that new resources have been purchased.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

174. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection, enabling pupils to achieve well. The curriculum has been revised and resources have been improved to meet the requirements of the new scheme of work. Links with local schools and organisations provide further opportunities for pupils to improve their skills.
175. By the end of Year 2, standards are average. This is similar to the last inspection. Pupils can throw and catch using beanbags and a range of balls, with reasonable accuracy and control. They have a good awareness of one another when moving in the hall or the large outdoor play area, so that there are no collisions and practice is uninterrupted. Year 2 pupils understand how one movement can link with another smoothly and continuously, for example, when composing a short sequence of three movements using combinations of travelling, rolling, balancing and jumping with a partner. Pupils are keen to demonstrate these sequences and receive helpful evaluations from other pupils.
176. By the end of Year 6, standards are average, which is similar to the last inspection. Pupils are developing dance, games and gymnastic skills with a good degree of control and skill. They practise and improve these skills at the after-school games and dance clubs. They enjoy the opportunity to perform for others at special occasions or to compete against other schools as members of the St. Martin's football or netball teams. Year 5/6 pupils develop satisfactory standards in dodging and marking opponents in handling/passing games and in striking/fielding games when working in groups. Boys and girls work together happily and there are no significant differences in the standards they attain. Pupils achieve well throughout the school.
177. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and are enabled to take a full part in all activities so that they also achieve well. For example, in an indoor lesson in a Year 1/2 class, good support was given by a learning support assistant which helped one pupil to participate fully in developing games' skills. At suitable points the assistant quietly and appropriately distanced herself from the pupil, encouraging him successfully to develop greater independence.
178. The quality of teaching is very good overall, which is a significant improvement on that reported at the last inspection. Teachers have high expectations and manage classes well. Planning is good and pupils enjoy the lessons and participate enthusiastically. Pupils have very positive attitudes to physical education. They dress appropriately, listen to teachers' instructions and respond well to instructions and activities. Teachers give clear directions and make good use of resources, including learning support assistants. They plan carefully and share with pupils what they are expected to learn at the beginning of each lesson. Warm up exercises are done well and pupils are able to explain their importance. Pupils are given good opportunities to practise individually and in groups, and to evaluate each other's movements and skills, which helps them to achieve well. They work hard throughout lessons. When, occasionally they become distracted, they are usually quickly redirected to their tasks through teachers' good behaviour management.
179. Physical education is well managed. The co-ordinator monitors lesson planning and has observed some teaching, after which helpful feedback has been provided to teachers. She has produced a policy and is working closely with teachers to produce effective assessment procedures as part of the scheme of work. As a result of the co-ordinator's evaluation of physical education across the school, significant improvements have been made. Resources are good and despite having no large playing field, the school makes good use of its hall and the large outside playground with an appropriate range of fixed and moveable apparatus. Links with local schools and organisations enable the school to make suitable use of other facilities. The school's programme of extra-curricular activities enhances the development of their skills in physical education.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

180. Standards are broadly average in terms of the expectations of the Kent Agreed Syllabus for religious education by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment throughout the school. This represents a similar picture to that found at the last inspection.
181. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of what is special, particularly in relation to Christianity. Lower attainers can recall key elements of the Christmas and Easter stories, whilst average and higher attainers can describe the purpose of Pancake Day and its relationship to Lent. Higher attainers are also beginning to develop a satisfactory understanding of stories from other faiths, for example, that of Rama and Sita from Hinduism. Pupils' literacy skills are helped through writing their ideas about religious stories and events, such as the Nativity. Boys and girls contribute equally to lessons. Pupils with special needs are well supported, for example, by additional adults helping them to structure their work so that they can play a full part in lessons. Most pupils listen carefully and respectfully. Overall, due to some limitations in their speaking skills, pupils' recall of key facts about religious themes or events is better than their ability to express their own thoughts and beliefs verbally.
182. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to the requirements of the syllabus. Their understanding, for example, of the story of St. Augustine and the conversion of the Angles, is good. In particular, they are skilled at examining and writing about conversion issues from different points of view and can relate these to current events involving religious conflict. They show balance when expressing views from different perspectives and empathise with them sensitively. Most pupils have a sound understanding of the function of prayer, particularly within Christianity. Average and higher attainers can relate this knowledge to the significance of prayer in other religions such as Islam, for example, by their sound understanding of the role of the imam. All pupils contribute well to lessons.
183. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers have a sound and sometimes good knowledge of the subject, which helps to make lesson delivery enthusiastic and purposeful, thus reinforcing pupils' understanding of key facts. Questioning is well focused and is tailored to pupils' different abilities. This enables them to reflect on their own experiences, for example, when considering what they want to pray for and why, and relate these to the thoughts and beliefs of others. Some useful cross-curricular links are made in Key Stage 2 with geography through the study of the Indian village of Chembakolli, and with history through the reinforcement of chronological time when considering the age of Canterbury Cathedral. Pupils are well behaved and most are eager to take an active part in lessons, particularly in Key Stage 2. Literacy is helpfully supported, for example, through opportunities to write prayers in Year 3/4 or writing from different perspectives in Year 5/6. Opportunities to support numeracy are more limited.
184. The recently appointed subject leader has carried out a useful audit of resources. A satisfactory range of resources, particularly books, helps to develop pupils' experiences. However, artefacts are more limited, especially those which would help to enhance pupils' understanding of faiths other than Christianity. This is acknowledged in the school improvement plan and appropriate action has been planned. Full use is not yet made of information and communication technology to further increase pupils' knowledge and understanding. The local Christian pastor takes assemblies occasionally, where themes are well related to the school's half-termly focus and the syllabus. There are links with the nearby Christian church, but pupils have not as yet had opportunities to benefit from visits to places of worship of other religions. Current management of the subject is satisfactory, with clear plans for further development of the role outlined in the school improvement plan.