

INSPECTION REPORT

SOUTH BOROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Maidstone

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118305

Acting Headteacher: Mrs T German

Reporting inspector: Mr H Galley
21313

Dates of inspection: 21st – 24th May 2001

Inspection number: 197071

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Stagshaw Close Postley Road Maidstone Kent
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Sayer
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21313	H Galley	Registered inspector	English History	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and pupils' achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
19322	J Bedawi	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
21171	S Handford	Team inspector	<p>Information and communication technology</p> <p>Art and design</p> <p>Geography</p> <p>Foundation Stage</p> <p>Special educational needs</p> <p>Equal opportunities</p> <p>English as an additional language</p>	.

1696	R Sharman	Team inspector	Mathematics; Physical education; Religious education	How well is the school led and managed?
20645	R Webber	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

South Borough Primary School is situated in Maidstone, Kent and opened in 1931 and was re-organised in 1995, occupying the buildings of two previous secondary schools. There are 323 pupils on roll, an even mix of boys and girls. Ninety-four per cent of pupils are white, and there are small groups of Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi pupils. Seventeen pupils speak English as an additional language. 22.6 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, just above the national average. Forty-eight per cent of pupils are on the school's special educational needs register, over twice the national average. Five pupils have statements of special educational needs. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs is especially a factor in the present Year 6, where nearly two-thirds of pupils are on the register. Pupil mobility is also much higher than normally seen. Baseline assessment shows that attainment on entry to the school is very low, especially in the area of language and literacy. The long-serving headteacher retired at Easter, with the deputy acting as headteacher for the summer term; the governing body has already appointed a new headteacher who will take up the post in September.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education overall, although there are some considerable strengths alongside some important weaknesses. Compared with other similar schools, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are well above average in reading and above average in mathematics. Similar comparisons at the end of Key Stage 2 show standards above average in mathematics and average in English and science. Attitudes to learning are good and the behaviour in most lessons is good. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and very good in Key Stage 1. As pupils move through Key Stage 2, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to show initiative and think for themselves. The weak use of day-to-day assessment means that work is not always well matched to pupils' needs and, in particular, more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. In terms of leadership, the school is clearly in a transitional stage, and leadership and management are judged to be satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and in Key Stage 1 it is very good.
- Compared to other similar schools, standards achieved by seven-year-olds are well above average in reading and above average in mathematics.
- Personal, social and emotional development of children in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes to work are good and there is a positive work ethic.
- Relationships are good throughout the school.
- Parental confidence in the high quality of the welfare and care of pupils is justified.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The use of day-to-day assessment.
- Opportunities for pupils to use initiative and think for themselves.
- Standards in music and art.
- The challenge offered to more able pupils.
- Attendance.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection in March 1997. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have continued to rise in line with the national trend. At the end of Key Stage 1, there have been some notable improvements, with standards in reading and mathematics rising from well below average to average. Teaching in Key Stage 2 remains satisfactory but teaching in both the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 has improved greatly. Curriculum provision has improved through the more rigorous use of schemes of work. However, two weaknesses identified in the last report have not been tackled with enough determination: the use of day-to-day assessment remains unsatisfactory and there are still not enough opportunities for pupils to develop independence as they move through Key Stage 2.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	D	D	D	C	well above A average B above average C average below average D well below E average
Mathematics	E	D	C	B	
Science	E	C	D	C	

The information shows that in 2000, standards in mathematics were in line with the national average but below average in English and science. Compared to other similar schools, standards were average in English and science but above average in mathematics. Standards have risen in line with national trends and the school has been successful in meeting its stated targets. At Key Stage 1, standards are average in reading and mathematics but below average in writing; however, when compared to other similar schools, standards are well above average in reading, above average in mathematics and average in writing. Standards of work seen in Year 6 are below those achieved in 2000 in English, mathematics and science; this is largely a reflection of the very high proportion, around two-thirds, of pupils on the special educational needs register in this year group. Given the well below average standards achieved by this group in their Key Stage 1 tests four years ago, they have nevertheless, made satisfactory progress over the key stage. Standards in other subjects are at the expected level, except in art and music, where

standards are below those normally seen and in physical education where, at the end of both key stages, standards are better than those normally seen.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good; pupils take a positive interest in their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory; the majority behave well and the few disruptive pupils are handled effectively.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good, but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop initiative and take responsibility.
Attendance	Below average, with a considerable decline this year. Some unauthorised absences are not properly recorded.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	good	very good	satisfactory

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

There are significant differences in the quality of teaching in different parts of the school. In the Foundation Stage, teaching is good, with over half the lessons being good or better; in Key Stage 1, teaching is very good, with two of the three teachers in this key stage producing consistently superb lessons. In Key Stage 2, teaching is good in Year 3, but in other year groups there is no very good teaching and a significant minority, around ten per cent, of unsatisfactory teaching. The pattern in English and mathematics teaching reflects the overall school pattern. There are weaknesses in the manner in which both literacy and numeracy are taught in Key Stage 2, with too much emphasis on teacher-directed (and often worksheet based) activities. Overall, 15 per cent of teaching is very good or better, 54 per cent is good or better and five per cent is unsatisfactory. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language reflects the overall pattern across the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory; the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, well supported by a good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall; pupils make good progress towards their targets in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory; provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language follows much the same pattern as that for pupils with special educational needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Social and moral development are good, underpinned by good working relationships and a clear code of conduct. Cultural development is satisfactory, but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to reflect on their experiences and to develop spiritually.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a very caring environment. The monitoring of oppressive behaviour is effective.

The school has developed a good working relationship with parents, who much appreciate the caring atmosphere throughout the school. Curriculum provision, which has improved since the last inspection, is enhanced through a wide range of extra-curricular activities which are very well supported and much enjoyed by pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory; the school is presently in a transitional phase, which is being handled effectively by the acting headteacher. Subject co-ordinators are effective overall, but there is not enough monitoring of teaching in Key Stage 2.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	There is a reasonably effective governing body that has a clear idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall, although the monitoring of teaching in Key Stage 2 is not rigorous enough.
The strategic use of resources	Good; the budget is well managed and priorities are effectively supported through the school's financial planning.

The school has a satisfactory number of teachers who are well supported by an effective programme of professional development. The accommodation is good with many rooms used well for a range of activities. Resources are satisfactory. The school applies the principles of 'best value' effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The good teaching that underpins the good progress that their children make.• The positive links between parents and the school.• The emphasis given to reading, especially in Key Stage 1.• The way in which the school has continued to improve since the last inspection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The consistency with which homework is set.• The behaviour of a minority of disruptive pupils (mainly before school and at playtimes).• Provision for information and communication technology, which some feel has not kept pace with national changes.

Inspection evidence confirms that the positive views of most parents are wholly justified. Concerns about homework are justified because, although the school does have a clear policy, it is not implemented consistently by teachers. Concerns about behaviour before school were addressed between the parents' meeting and the inspection by the simple expedient of keeping the gate locked until 8.40 a.m. Behaviour at playtimes is generally good; there are some examples of oppressive behaviour by a small group of older pupils, but these are dealt with effectively by staff. Inspectors do not agree with concerns raised about information and communication technology; this subject is well resourced and the school has kept up with national changes.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Attainment on entry to the school is well below average, especially in the areas of language and literacy. Children make good progress in the Reception classes. By the time they reach the end of the Reception year, children's attainment matches the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development, creative development, physical development and in knowledge and understanding of the world. There is a very effective focus on the personal, social and emotional development of children and they make very good progress in this area of learning.
2. Results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests and assessments show that, by the end of Key Stage 1, standards are average in reading and mathematics, but below the national average in writing. In science, the proportion reaching the expected level (Level 2) was well below the national average, but the proportion reaching the higher Level 3 was well above the national average. A notable feature of attainment in Key Stage 1 is the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level; 27 per cent reached Level 3 in reading and mathematics and 36 per cent in science. In these three areas of learning, standards were well above those achieved by other similar schools. The standards observed during the inspection were broadly similar to these results. In other subjects, (the Foundation subjects) pupils reached the expected level by the end of Key Stage 1, apart from in physical education, where standards were above those normally seen.
3. The 2000 test results show that, at the end of Key Stage 2, standards are at the national average in mathematics, but below average in English and science. When compared to other similar schools, standards were above average in mathematics and average in English and science. In all three subjects, standards have continued to rise in line with the national trend. Standards for eleven-year-olds in art and music are below that expected for this age group. In physical education, standards are above national expectations in both key stages. In all other subjects, pupils reach the expected level by the end of Key Stage 2. Teachers' assessments for the present Year 6, and confirmed by inspection evidence, indicate that standards are lower than last year and are well below average in all three core subjects. However, this is largely explained by the very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the present Year 6. Two-thirds of this year group, around three times the national average, are on the school's register. When compared to the results achieved four years ago in their Key Stage 1 tests, the progress of this year group is satisfactory over time.
4. Children with special educational needs achieve well in the Foundation Stage, very well indeed in Key Stage 1 and satisfactorily in Key Stage 2. These differences reflect differences in the overall quality of teaching provided for pupils of different ages across the school. The achievement of the small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language also reflects the above pattern of provision in the school.
5. The structures of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented in Key Stage 1 and make a positive contribution to the very good progress pupils make in these areas of learning. In Key Stage 2, the two strategies have been less effectively introduced. For these pupils, there is an over-

reliance on filling in worksheets in literacy and numeracy lessons and the part of the hour that requires the focused teaching of small groups is not used effectively; too often, much of this part of the lesson is spent supervising rather than in focused teaching. Consequently, the achievement of pupils in Key Stage 1 is vastly better than in Key Stage 2 in literacy and numeracy.

6. The school has set challenging targets in order to raise attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and has succeeded in meeting these targets. Trends in attainment are monitored carefully, although a very high turnover of pupils, both in and out of the school, does make year-on-year comparisons rather speculative. Of the 37 pupils presently in Year 6, for example, only 16 actually began the key stage at South Borough. The school does track the progress of all pupils carefully as they move through the school. This data shows that pupils in Year 6 have made satisfactory progress when compared to their earlier attainment.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupils are eager to learn and have good attitudes to work. Behaviour is satisfactory overall, and in many lessons it is good. There are a significant minority of generally older, challenging pupils, who sometimes cause disruption in a minority of lessons. Pupils' personal and social development is satisfactory. The quality of relationships is good and a positive feature of the school. Attendance is unsatisfactory because it is well below that of other primary schools. There has been insufficient progress on developing pupils' independent learning, and, as at the last inspection, this remains unsatisfactory, requiring urgent attention.
8. The youngest children have settled well into school routines and are happy. They listen carefully to their teachers, doing their best to follow instructions, for example, in physical development. Most children enjoy responding in question and answer sessions but often reply with single words. They settle quickly to activities and want to learn, but the use of worksheets limits the early writing of those who are ready for more challenging work. Children are learning to work together well, seen when using an alphabet program on the class computer. Their behaviour is usually good and they are increasingly aware of rules, such as hands up to answer questions and not calling out. They understand that they may have to wait to play with a toy. The children are learning to make friends and relate well to the adults around them. They are gaining positive social experiences through involvement in whole-school situations such as assembly and lunch, where they behave sensibly.
9. Pupils in Key Stage 2 enjoy their lessons and have good attitudes. They show a keen interest, especially when work is new or challenging, for example using samples to learn about soils and rocks in science, or when participating in mental mathematics sessions. Pupils listen, persevere and concentrate carefully when interested, but are less involved when the work is insufficient to meet their needs, or lacks content, seen in worksheets that offer little stimulation because pupils simply have to copy a given word. Pupils really enjoy demonstrating their skills in class, for example showing a sequence of movements in physical education or reading out loud work done during a lesson. This positively motivates pupils to make further efforts with learning.
10. Opportunities for independent learning have not been sufficiently addressed since the last report and remain unsatisfactory. The vast majority of lessons are very tightly structured to maintain very firm behaviour control. This approach significantly inhibits activities that allow pupils to develop independent skills and ways of working, such as

organising their work and developing individual interests. In too many lessons, if offered independence, pupils are unsure, lacking confidence, for example in producing independent writing. This 'gap' in the provision of independent learning means that pupils are very teacher reliant. Many staff, especially at Key Stage 2, are reluctant to move away from known established practice and offer their pupils more responsibility and initiative. There are pockets of good practice, for example in a Key Stage 1 religious education lesson, pupils enjoyed the challenge of writing about caring based on Hindu concepts. In a personal development lesson at the lower end of Key Stage 2, pupils were able to self-select activities linked to positive relationships, including two groups working totally independently who devised, rehearsed and performed dramatic scenes very well, within a short time. The majority of pupils who chose other activities also completed their work well, with minimal teacher intervention. Pupils relish responsibility and initiative when it is offered. Year 6 organised a very enjoyable and much appreciated Greek food tasting event and Year 3 produced very effective model sundials as an Easter holiday project. Overall, however, such worthwhile opportunities are too rare.

11. Pupil behaviour is satisfactory overall and in many lessons it is good. However, a minority of often older, challenging pupils have entrenched negative attitudes and behaviour. They cause some disruption in a minority of lessons, being unwilling to participate in school routines or follow the school's behaviour code. Staff work very hard to manage difficult behaviour and are largely successful, although the firm control impacts on learning so there is little freedom to develop pupils' independence. At break times, behaviour is satisfactory with most pupils playing sensibly. There are separate play areas for the youngest children and pupils. Football is popular with boys and a few girls, but it takes over much play space, intruding on quieter activities. Apart from large softballs, the school has little small play equipment so pupils often bring their own toys; this sometimes causes minor arguments. Some pushing and pulling occurs whilst pupils wait to drink at the one working water fountain, but no aggression was noted. In discussion, pupils say that staff deal effectively with bullying and this is a view largely shared by parents. Parents were concerned at the poor behaviour of pupils arriving very early in the morning. In response, the acting headteacher took swift and effective action by ensuring that the playground gate is opened only just before lessons start and pupils now behave well. Behaviour when walking to weekly swimming lessons is good. Last year, two pupils were permanently excluded, after all attempts to re-integrate them failed. The majority of pupils are genuinely sorry when they misbehave and will often offer a verbal or written apology. In the last year, two pupils have been permanently excluded and there have been two fixed-period exclusions.
12. The good quality relationships are a positive feature of the school. Staff provide effective role models that encourage pupils to build firm relationships and behave well. Pupils want to please their teachers and usually show good respect for authority and property. Pupils are polite and helpful. Most pupils are developing an understanding of others' needs and this is very well reflected in the care, tolerance and support shown to pupils with disabilities. Ethnic minority pupils are well integrated and there is satisfactory racial harmony, with very few recorded incidents involving offensive language.
13. Attendance was satisfactory at the time of the last report and during the last school year. However, it has declined significantly in the last year and is now unsatisfactory. It is now well below that of other primary schools. There are instances of very good attendance in some classes, but there is frequently very low daily and weekly

attendance of well below 90 per cent. The main factors are the high level of both authorised and unauthorised absence and holidays that involve families of all backgrounds and nationalities. Some authorised absence is condoned by the school, when it should be an unauthorised absence, for instance if a holiday lasts longer than ten school days, or when any note is received, even if the reason given does not justify an authorised absence. There is a clear pattern of absence on Mondays and Fridays. Many parents are too ready to keep children at home and are not supporting the school in its efforts to improve attendance. Pupils' learning and progress suffer as a result. A small minority of parents are not fulfilling their duty to ensure that their children attend regularly to gain maximum benefit from their education.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. A notable feature of teaching across the school is the variation in quality, with teaching being judged to be good in the Foundation Stage (Reception classes), very good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2.
15. Teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Half the lessons observed were good or very good and the rest were satisfactory. Teachers and support assistants work effectively together to provide a broad range of experiences for the children in their care. The provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is particularly good and children make very good progress in this area of learning. Teachers provide a good start to children's development in literacy and numeracy skills, and the lively rapport and positive relationships that they have taken great care to establish underpin the good progress in these areas.
16. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is very good. Half the lessons observed were very good, with one excellent lesson in Year 2. Of the remainder, all were good apart from just one lesson that was judged to be satisfactory. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and the teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is consistently very good. Lessons are carefully planned and the careful use of a variety of methods ensures that pupils are kept busy and purposefully engaged. A characteristic of teaching in Key Stage 1 is the very lively rapport with pupils and the brisk pace to lessons. Pupils are expected to give of their best and they respond with unfailing enthusiasm. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is very good and effective use is made of the national strategies in both these areas of learning. The quality of teaching in other subjects is satisfactory, apart from in physical education and design and technology, where teaching is good.
17. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. Half the lessons observed were judged to be satisfactory, with just over a third deemed good. In addition, just one lesson was judged to be very good and three (ten per cent) was unsatisfactory. Two of the three unsatisfactory lessons were by teachers on temporary contracts. There are a number of positive features to lessons throughout the key stage. In all classes, there is a purposeful atmosphere and pupils are well managed and determined to work hard. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the National Curriculum, although knowledge of both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is sketchy. In English and mathematics lessons, an over-reliance on the use of worksheets leads to limited opportunities for pupils to discuss their work, explain their thinking and try out ideas. In literacy and numeracy hours, there is not enough focused teaching during the group work part of the hour; rather, pupils get on with their tasks, while the teacher supervises and supports individual pupils. Teaching in other subjects is satisfactory, apart from in art and design, where it is unsatisfactory, and physical education, where

it is good. The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory overall, although there are weaknesses. The school has developed a wide range of strategies for monitoring pupils' progress, but such records are not kept consistently by teachers across the school. Pupils' work is marked regularly and effective use is made of praise and encouragement. However, pupils are rarely given a clear view of their own strengths and weaknesses and what they need to do next to improve further. This impacts particularly on more able pupils who, in some lessons, are not stretched enough. The unsatisfactory lessons observed were characterised by a slow pace and weak subject knowledge, particularly in mathematics.

18. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2. Teachers work closely with the special educational needs co-ordinator and learning support assistants to promote these pupils' learning. However, on occasion, the work in Key Stage 2, particularly tasks to develop writing skills, is not satisfactorily adapted to enable pupils to make the maximum progress.
19. There are a significant number of pupils who need help to modify their behaviour so that they can benefit from lessons, and teachers manage these pupils consistently well and help them settle to their learning. They have a good awareness of the social, behavioural and emotional needs that the pupils may have and targets for behaviour modification, and manage these pupils well.
20. There is good support for pupils with English as an additional language from the teacher provided by the local authority ethnic minority achievement grant. Although her time in the school is limited, she provides good targeted support for pupils who are still developing their English skills and for those with special educational needs.

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

21. The school provides a broad and well-balanced curriculum for its pupils. All National Curriculum subjects are allocated sufficient time and are given appropriate coverage in order to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. However, insufficient subject knowledge in music by most teachers means that certain aspects of the music curriculum, such as composing and performing, are not sufficiently covered and in art some aspects of the subject are not fully promoted. The school's curricular provision, particularly for physical education, is greatly enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities and through visits and visitors to the school. The curriculum includes suitable attention to sex education and drug misuse. Health education and pupils' personal and social development are effectively covered through a programme of work for personal, social and moral education. The school also offers its older pupils the additional subject of French. The school's implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is satisfactory overall, although there are some weaknesses in Key Stage 2.
22. The strengths found at the last inspection in the learning opportunities for pupils under five have been maintained. The Foundation Stage curriculum is in place and teachers plan for children to meet the Early Learning Goals. The learning opportunities are good; they are broad and balanced, with strengths in providing for children's personal, emotional and social development. Good opportunities for practical activities prepare children well so that they learn well in all areas of the curriculum. Children build up

their skills and knowledge in communication, language and literacy satisfactorily. They develop their knowledge of letter sounds well for reading and spelling. There are insufficient opportunities for the more able children to develop their skills in writing words, and for all children to develop their story telling and writing. There are some deficiencies in opportunities provided for all children to develop their speaking skills. The activities provided enable children to build up their mathematical knowledge well, but there are not enough opportunities provided for the more able children to develop number recognition and calculation and to record what they know.

23. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good in the Foundation Stage, very good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. The school takes care to ensure that all pupils have full access to the curriculum.
24. At the time of the last inspection, curriculum provision needed to be improved by strengthening the co-ordination between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and by applying schemes of work rigorously, particularly at Key Stage 1. Since then, the curriculum co-ordination between the key stages has been effectively strengthened and curriculum planning at Key Stage 1 has improved considerably. Teachers across the school effectively use national guidelines in all subjects in order to support their medium-term curricular planning and this ensures that key concepts are taught in a progressive way. However, teachers' short-term planning does not always sufficiently outline and match work well enough for pupils with different abilities and this can lead to planned tasks that offer insufficient challenge to higher attaining pupils because all pupils are expected to do the same work regardless of their different abilities.
25. The school has established good links with the community in order to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. For example, in Year 6, pupils visit the local army barracks in order to improve their skills in personal, social and health education. The school's health, and drug misuse policies are effectively enhanced by visits from the school nurse and the local police, and in history, the curriculum is supported well through links with local museums. Good links exist with the main receiving secondary school and this enables Year 6 pupils to transfer to the next stage of their education with ease. Parental confidence in this aspect of the school's provision is justified.
26. Opportunities for spiritual development are unsatisfactory. Whilst assemblies are interesting, they do not always comprise an act of worship. The school fails to meet its statutory requirements in this aspect of its work. This was not the case in the last report. Few opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect, although this does happen occasionally in assemblies. In one taken by a local religious group, pupils were encouraged to think what it was like for Moses when God called him. In an act of collective worship for Key Stage 1, a candle was lit as part of a time set aside for pupils to have 'thinking time'. Lessons in religious education provide appropriate occasions to promote pupils' spiritual development. For example, in a lesson in a mixed Year 5 and 6 class, pupils were studying images of Christ. They readily discussed their own beliefs, especially as to what believing in God meant. However, few opportunities are provided for spiritual development in most lessons.
27. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. Pupils are made aware of what constitutes unacceptable behaviour to others. They are taught to understand right from wrong. When their behaviour has been found to be unacceptable, they meet with a teacher and discuss it fully and understand what they need to do to put matters right. This is then recorded for them on a form. The good provision for sport in extra-

curricular clubs enables pupils to understand the importance of working together and keeping to the rules.

28. The provision made for social development is good. Adults provide good role models in the way they work together. There is a useful range of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in the life of the school, for example as house and sports captains and as librarians. Older pupils have responsibilities in supporting younger pupils at lunch and playtimes. Pupils learn of their responsibility to others through their good support of charities, especially Guide Dogs for the Blind, which the pupils have supported for many years. However, opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning are much less well developed. Increasingly, through the programme of personal and social education, pupils are learning about what it means to be a citizen. Currently, younger pupils in Key Stage 2 are following the general election and older pupils are finding out about the constituent members of the European Union.
29. Opportunities for cultural development are satisfactory. The good provision of extra-curricular activities enables pupils to widen their experiences, for example by playing in a recorder group. They visit local museums and increasingly use the Internet to 'visit' art galleries. Pupils learn of other religions in assemblies and in their religious education lessons. At times, teachers make good use of pupils' own experiences. For example in a geography lesson, pupils made comparisons between a market in St Lucia and in Maidstone. A pupil from a minority ethnic background was encouraged by the teacher to share his experiences of markets. Pupils in Year 6 prepared food from the country in the European Union they were studying.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30. The quality of welfare, personal support and guidance offered to pupils is good. The monitoring and promotion of behaviour is good, as are procedures for preventing bullying. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is good. Attendance monitoring is just satisfactory, although there are some weaknesses in this area. Arrangements for child protection and health and safety are good.
31. Procedures for and the use of assessment are satisfactory overall, as is monitoring of pupils' attainment and academic progress. The school uses a wide range of suitable tests to assess pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy and detailed records are kept to map each pupil's progress as they move through the school. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. The school analyses the scores of pupils in the end-of-key-stage National Curriculum tests and uses these to help plan the next year's priorities. Where this data is used by teachers to plan what pupils should learn next, as in all Key Stage 1 classes, it is a valuable tool that makes a significant contribution to the progress pupils make. A weakness of the provision in this respect is that some teachers in Key Stage 2 do not consistently keep these records up-to-date, nor is the data collected always used to plan work for pupils of differing ability or in the setting of individual targets.
32. The staff know their pupils and families well. A high priority is given to addressing welfare needs and this objective is successfully met. The school is always prepared to utilise its strong links with many external agencies if this will enhance and support pupils' learning experiences. A considerable number of support staff are allocated to pupils throughout the school, usually when pupils have special educational needs or more often, behavioural difficulties. This arrangement enables the majority of pupils to

make satisfactory progress in learning. Pupils who are learning English language receive very good external support. However, higher attaining or gifted pupils do not routinely receive the individual attention they require.

33. The monitoring of behaviour, personal development and prevention of bullying is good. Pupils are aware of the school rules. Staff follow the behaviour policy consistently and very firmly, so that pupils know the school's expectations. Teachers remind pupils about individual personal or behavioural targets, making good use of praise to build self-esteem and confidence. There is a comprehensive incident recording system. When pupils misbehave they complete a detailed incident sheet explaining what they should have done, how to improve and offering apologies to those involved. Teachers keep records in class incident books, but some books are not well maintained with loose notes on scraps of paper. Where difficulties continue, the school attempts many individually tailored strategies, for example using lesson report books, sending pupils to another class or reporting to parents. If pupils still have difficulty, external behaviour support is used. Pupils follow their own pastoral support plan, drawn up between the child, family, school and support services, to prevent exclusion. Agreed rewards and sanctions are included with relevant targets and a 'key teacher' to approach for help. Plans are reviewed and discussed frequently and progress noted. For the vast majority of pupils, this system is very effective. The school has only used exclusion in the most severe situations and procedures are properly followed. Bullying is not tolerated and any instances are dealt with effectively and promptly. Pupils and parents are encouraged to report any concerns. Pastoral support plans are used with an agreed mentor teacher mediating between bully and victim to resolve the situation. Once resolved, bully and victim continue to be monitored informally. The majority of pupils respond well to the school systems and are increasingly aware of personal traits that need improvement, such as anger management, or the impact of actions on others. Formal lessons are becoming established and provide satisfactory additional input to help pupils improve. Parents receive a good summary of their child's personal development in the annual reports.
34. Attendance monitoring is just satisfactory. Registers comply with statutory requirements, but staff are unclear about absence classification for holidays lasting more than ten school days and for absence notes. The school is aware that attendance is declining and is working hard to improve this. Standard letters are sent for regular lateness and any frequent or unexplained absences. In the autumn term, the local authority 'Rapid Response Team' visited to monitor attendance; this was quickly followed by a number of home visits. Despite the school's efforts, many parents do not ensure that their children attend regularly, because unauthorised absence is high, there is increased absence around weekends and there are too many holidays taken in term time. Some of the reasons given in notes do not justify an absence from school. Regular absence significantly affects pupils' learning and in the most extreme cases, parents are taken to court.
35. Child protection arrangements are good. The designated person is trained; all staff receive the local authority guidance booklet and are made aware of practice in staff meetings. School policy follows local authority procedures. Records are secure and kept separately with restricted access. Currently there are two pupils on the 'at risk' register with a further two 'looked after' pupils. The designated person prepares reports and attends case conferences. The school feels that external support is excellent with clear guidance and informal advice and this has helped with the new requirements on consulting and involving parents.

36. Health and safety practices and procedures are good even though the health and safety policy dates from 1999 and now requires review. All required tests are undertaken including regular assessment of risks. Fire drills are held regularly but evacuation times are not recorded.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37. The school has very good links with its parents and carers and works hard to secure and maintain their involvement and support in educating their children. Parents also have generally good views of the school.
38. An 'open door' policy operates and parents feel that staff are approachable and willing to listen. The acting headteacher is usually available at the start and end of the day to meet parents informally. The school views its partnership with parents as a vital element in successful learning and offers considerable support to families if they have any school-related difficulties. The very new '2 o'clock Tea Club' is a good example, offering friendly support and new ideas about parenting skills. Parents attending had a very positive response.
39. There is a well-established and effective parents' association organising popular events such as the Easter Fayre, raising funds that in the last year have included the provision of an interactive whiteboard for use with computers. Many teachers give their free time to run after-school sports clubs, much appreciated by the pupils and their parents. Younger pupils are not forgotten because they have a very popular 'Fit and Fun' club. Parents are not regularly involved in helping in class, but they help out on trips, support sports fixtures and are invited to special assemblies.
40. The quality of information provided to parents is satisfactory. Regular newsletters keep parents informed of school events. However, the prospectus and annual governors' report omit some required information. For example, National Curriculum test results are not in the prospectus and several items such as information about arrangements for disabled pupils are not in the annual governors' report. Termly meetings are held to discuss pupil progress with more frequent meetings for parents of children who are experiencing difficulties with learning, behaviour or who have English as an additional language. Academic reports are received in the summer term and report on all subjects. There are plans to review Foundation reports so they are in line with Early Learning Goals. The setting of targets to help pupils improve is variable and teacher dependent. Targets are mostly provided in English and mathematics but not in science or other subjects. Some targets are the same for pupils of different abilities and comments are sometimes too general to be helpful. Teachers do not always remember to record attendance as is required. National Curriculum test results are properly reported to parents.
41. The contribution that parents make to their children's learning is satisfactory overall, although it is more effective in Key Stage 1 and declines somewhat in Key Stage 2. Procedures for reading at home are firmly established and homework is provided and is satisfactory, largely based on literacy and numeracy. There are, however, inconsistencies in the way the school's agreed homework policy is implemented by different teachers. Some holiday research work is provided with parents encouraged to help their children, for example, the sundial models produced by Year 3 in the Easter holiday. Older pupils have homework diaries, but these are inconsistently used in relation to the recording and amount of homework done. Homework to support

independent learning for older pupils is not yet securely established, and this is a concern voiced by a number of parents.

42. Parents feel that the school is improving and are pleased with the progress of their children, the approachability of staff and the quality of teaching. They have concerns about behaviour and homework. Whilst there is justification about developing consistent homework, inspectors felt that concern about behaviour was largely unfounded.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. At the time of the inspection, the school was being led by the deputy headteacher following the retirement of the previous headteacher. A new headteacher has been

appointed and will take up his post at the start of the next term. The deputy headteacher is managing the school commendably during this period of transition.

44. The leadership and management are satisfactory. The monitoring of curriculum planning is effective. The observation of teaching is good in Key Stage 1 but barely adequate in Key Stage 2. The governing body has a good knowledge of the school and properly oversees its strategic development. Staffing is satisfactory as are learning resources. The accommodation is good.
45. The school has a positive ethos. It is committed to ensuring that its pupils do well. The response to the action plan that was drawn up following the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Areas that were noted in the previous report as being developed, such as the monitoring of the curriculum, have been strengthened. Teachers' long- and medium-term planning is regularly monitored by subject co-ordinators and in some cases, such as religious education, planned for them. Pupils' work is scrutinised and the information gained used satisfactorily to make improvements.
46. Improvement in the monitoring of teaching is not as marked. The observation of teaching is the responsibility of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, there has been considerable observation of teaching. The deputy, as the co-ordinator for 'Early Years', has regularly observed teaching and has encouraged, supported by the subject co-ordinators, a climate where observation of teaching is routine. This initiative has significantly contributed to the good quality teaching and improving standards by the end of Key Stage 1. Teaching in Key Stage 2 has not been observed as regularly and has been limited mainly to the teaching of English and mathematics. Subject co-ordinators have not had the opportunity to observe the teaching of their subjects, nor have year group leaders. This partly explains why teaching in Key Stage 2 is not as effective as it is in Key Stage 1, especially in the challenge provided for the more able pupils. The acting headteacher has now addressed this and the school improvement plan has been revised to establish a rolling programme of observation by subject co-ordinators across the school as a whole.
47. Overall, the governing body is reasonably effective. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Sound analysis of the national test results is undertaken. Governors regularly visit and report to the governing body on their experiences and findings. This enables the curriculum committee to have a sound understanding of the curriculum. Governors are fully involved in the school improvement plan which usefully forms an item on the agenda of committee meetings. Priorities are set which have a focus on improving standards, for example the establishment of computer areas in the 'activity rooms'. The governing body fulfils most of its statutory duties but does not include all the information statutorily required in its annual report to parents and in the school brochure. In addition, the collective acts of worship do not meet statutory requirements.
48. The school improvement plan satisfactorily details what needs to be done to improve the school. Subject co-ordinators write a plan for the development of their subject, which is then carefully prioritised by the senior management team for inclusion in the overall plan. A weakness is that success criteria are often set in terms of planned action being completed rather than in improvement in pupils' attainment. For example, the success criteria for improvement in design and technology relate to the completion of an audit, staff development and the adoption of a new scheme of work without any reference to the impact that might be expected in terms of the attainment and progress of pupils.

49. The special educational needs co-ordinator is experienced and knowledgeable and manages the support very well. At the moment, she is acting headteacher and a temporary teacher covers her support role. Good and relevant training is provided for the learning support assistants. Good consideration is taken of the range of different needs: physical, behavioural and intellectual, and these are all provided for well. There are good and well-established relationships with outside agencies, such as the Learning Support Service, the Tutorial Support Service and the educational psychologists. A member of the governing body takes responsibility for special educational needs and has a good understanding of the Code of Practice and is familiar with the organisation of special needs support in the school.
50. Teachers are suitably qualified and they have the appropriate knowledge and experience to meet the needs of the Foundation Stage, the National Curriculum and the Kent Agreed Syllabus for religious education. In Key Stage 1, teachers have good expertise in teaching English and mathematics from the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Teachers' expertise in using these strategies in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. Overall, there is good subject knowledge in physical education and some have coaching certificates. This results in a good range of sporting activities that lead to above average standards in physical education. Staff are not as confident in the teaching of music and standards are below average. Subject co-ordinators are appropriately qualified and are well placed to fulfil their role. Non-teaching members of staff who have received additional training in literacy make a sound contribution to pupils' progress in reading.
51. Staff development is satisfactory. Training associated with the adoption of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has had a greater effect on standards in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. The subject co-ordinators satisfactorily identify training needs that are then prioritised in the school improvement plan. The implementation of performance management has been good. Good, informal contacts ensure that members of staff new to the school are welcomed and supported. Satisfactory arrangements are in place for briefing classroom assistants working in the 'activity rooms'. Support staff feel very much part of the school.
52. The school's finances are prudently planned and are securely linked to the school improvement plan. The governors and acting headteacher have a clear view of the financial position of the school and a well-thought financial plan has been established. Current balances of monies are slightly high, but this provides a sensible contingency for the incoming headteacher. Procedures to monitor and control the budget are good. The recent auditor's report was 'excellent'. The administrative support is good. New technology is used satisfactorily to support the school's administration.
53. Satisfactory attention is paid to the principle of best value in the way the national test results are compared with other schools. When drawing up the budget, governors take account of levels of spend in other schools. Care is taken that grants for specific purposes are spent appropriately. A start has been made to consult parents, for example in the development of information and communication technology. A working party was established which usefully involved parents. Care is taken to ensure that purchases are made competitively. The governors are not as effective in monitoring the outcomes of their purchasing decisions in relation to pupils' attainment.
54. Accommodation is good. Year groups have access to 'activity rooms', which are used for a number of worthwhile purposes. This arrangement provides useful flexibility for

working with groups of pupils. The school site is large and part is about to be developed for housing. In conversation, older pupils feel that this area is ugly. They

particularly appreciate the developments in the grounds such as 'trim trail' for exercise and a well-constructed maze. The accommodation is tidy and clean. Overall, the provision of learning resources is satisfactory. Those for English, design and technology and physical education are good and enhance learning.

55. Standards of literacy and numeracy at the end of Key Stage 2 are well below average but pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (1) Improve standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 by:

- a) improving the quality of teaching through more rigorous monitoring and by the sharing of good and very good teaching already evident in the school;
- b) providing the necessary professional development to ensure that the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are followed.

(Paragraphs 3, 5, 17, 44, 46, 51, 55, 78, 81, 82, 83, 85, 86, 88, 89, 93, 98)

- (2) Improve the use of day-to-day assessment by:

- a) ensuring that all teachers keep up-to-date records of pupils' progress and then use such data to plan work that takes account of the differing abilities of pupils in the class.

(Paragraphs 17, 18, 31, 82, 96, 105)

- (3) Extend opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and to think for themselves by:

- a) reducing the heavy diet of worksheets;
- b) the greater use of projects that require pupils to investigate and find out information for themselves;
- c) extending opportunities in lessons for pupils to express their own views, test out their own ideas and think for themselves.

(Paragraphs 10, 17, 81, 91, 95, 105)

- (4) Improve standards in art and music in Key Stage 2 by:

- a) improving subject expertise in these subjects;
- b) sharing the good work that does occur in some classes.

(Paragraphs 50, 107, 110, 135)

- (5) Ensure that more able and gifted pupils are presented with tasks that are challenging by:

- a) introducing a register that identifies pupils who are gifted or talented in particular areas of the curriculum;
- b) using assessment data to ensure that work presented to such pupils is based on what they have recently achieved.

(Paragraph 96)

(6) Improve attendance by:

- a) ensuring that absences are correctly recorded and that parents have a clearer view of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences.

(Paragraphs 13, 30, 34)

Other issues that the school should consider:

- (7) Ensure that the school brochure and the governors' annual report to parents contains all the information required by law. (Paragraph 47)
- (8) Extend the range of opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual awareness, including a daily act of collective worship that meets statutory requirements. (Paragraph 26)
- (9) Ensure the school's homework policy is implemented consistently by teachers. (Paragraphs 41, 42)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	64
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	13	39	42	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	323
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	73

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	157

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	17

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	25
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	36

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	94.3
National comparative data	94.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
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	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	34	21	55

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	27	31
	Girls	19	18	20
	Total	47	45	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (77)	82 (81)	93 (92)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	29	28
	Girls	17	18	17
	Total	43	47	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (77)	85 (96)	82 (91)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	15	21	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	18	17	17
	Total	27	26	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (64)	72 (56)	72 (69)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	7	6
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	22	23	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61 (69)	64 (59)	61 (74)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	12
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	263
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	1	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	2
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.5
Average class size	26.9

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	140

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Number of pupils per FTE adult	0
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Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	683,504
Total expenditure	661,871
Expenditure per pupil	1,872
Balance brought forward from previous year	338
Balance carried forward to next year	14,699

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	326
Number of questionnaires returned	74

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	46	51	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	47	49	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	16	51	23	8	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	43	27	7	1
The teaching is good.	42	54	1	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	47	16	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	46	1	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	47	46	3	3	1
The school works closely with parents.	20	57	20	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	31	53	9	4	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	31	58	8	3	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	41	16	4	4

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The vast majority of parents have a positive view of the school. They like the calm atmosphere, with some describing it as 'a haven' for their children. Their children are happy at school and make good progress. Parents feel the school is improving over time. There are concerns about the way some teachers implement the homework policy as well as the manner in which the disruptive behaviour of a small minority affects the learning of other children.

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

56. Children in the two Reception classes make up the Foundation Stage. Currently, there are 45 children evenly divided between the two classes. All children started school part time in September 2000 becoming full time following the autumn half-term break. Many children start school with poorly developed skills in speaking and listening, mathematics and personal independence. This is partly because many children have had only part-time pre-school education, and many of the children are very young. (Forty per cent of the children are not five years old until the summer term or later). There is also a small percentage of children in the class with special educational needs. The few pupils with English as an additional language are already acquiring English effectively, and there is only one pupil in the early stages and she is provided with satisfactory support to help her develop her English language skills. Initial assessments made when the children enter the Reception indicate that their attainment is well below that which is expected of children of this age and that found in the local authority area. This is below that found in the previous inspection.
57. The provision for the Foundation Stage is at least as good as that found in the previous inspection. Teaching is mainly good and never less than satisfactory. The two teachers and support assistants work well as a team to create a secure and very effective learning environment. Planning ensures that the experiences children have are based on the recommended Early Learning Goals for children in the Foundation Stage. Children make a good start to their education and make at least good progress in all areas of the Early Learning Goals.
58. By the time they leave the Foundation Stage, because of their low starting point, many of the children are unlikely to achieve the expected level in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. However, most children are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals in creative development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical development. In personal, social and emotional development, learning is very good and most children are likely to exceed the goals.

Personal, social and emotional development

59. The quality of teaching is good. The teachers provide children with a calm, caring and orderly atmosphere so that by the time children leave the Reception class, many are likely to exceed the Early Learning Goals in their personal, social and emotional development. This shows very good achievement and reflects the care that teachers have taken to plan for this aspect of learning. The provision of practical activities in the initial stages of their education ensures that there are very good opportunities for children to learn through play, and develop their social skills. More structured activities are gradually introduced by the teachers so that children develop a sense of routine and learn to organise themselves independently. High expectations of their behaviour by all adults ensure that children know what is expected of them.
60. When working in groups, they help each other and the majority concentrate well and try hard to achieve successful results. When playing together, both in the classrooms or in the playground, they are considerate of each other. They have good

relationships with their teachers and the support assistant, who provide them with good and positive role models.

61. Very good moments are provided by the teachers for children to reflect on what makes them special. They learn about other beliefs and celebrate their festivals. One mother has come into the school to help the children celebrate Diwali, and another sent clothes and artefacts so that the children could understand how Eid is celebrated. Two monitors are chosen each day on a rota basis to take the registers to the office. All children are expected to tidy up and put away equipment.

Communication, language and literacy

62. The majority of the children are keen to express their ideas and are confident speakers. At the outset of a literacy lesson, several children offered to perform to the class, a rhyming verse learnt the previous day. They spoke clearly and recited the rhyme with a good sense of rhythm. They take part in performances in assembly and participate in the Christmas nativity play.
63. While a small number of more able children are likely to meet the Early Learning Goals, the majority still need help to express themselves clearly and develop their ideas. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to use questioning which will encourage children to develop their responses from one-word answers, especially in whole-class sessions. Children listen well to each other and to the teacher and to the support assistant. They follow instructions well, for example in physical development lessons. The lack of full-time teaching assistant support in either class means that there are limited chances to develop children's speaking and listening skills through adult intervention in play, such as the role-play area.
64. Children are prepared well for reading and writing through the good teaching of letter sounds to aid spelling and reading. More able children know the alphabet by letter names and can write their names from memory. The early development of letter sounds is made fun and enjoyable and constantly reinforced in shared writing activities with children invited to contribute to spellings.
65. Teaching is good. There is a daily, modified literacy session. Those children who are more secure in their letter sounds are taught in one class, whilst those who are still developing these skills are taught in another class. This enables the teachers to provide work that meets the needs of all. Children are encouraged to 'have a go' at their own writing, but also encouraged to check spellings and letters from the resources provided. More able children can combine the skills of using letter sounds, copying and their knowledge of the spelling of common words to produce writing that meets the Early Learning Goals. These children were observed writing about snails. Their writing showed that they had absorbed the information well and could write well-constructed simple sentences independently of help. For example – 'some animals attack me. They are rats. Sometimes I get my fluff (froth) out'. However, there are more limited opportunities for children to listen to stories and begin to build up a sense of narrative through sequencing events, re-telling stories with puppets and story cut-outs or to contribute to class books.
66. The majority of children understand that print conveys meaning. They handle books carefully, turning the pages one by one. Many children can recognise whole words and identify letters and initial sounds and have embarked on reading books from the

reading scheme. The more able children use expression in their reading and read confidently.

Mathematical Development

67. This area of learning is well provided for in the choice of activities and in the daily numeracy session. The quality of teaching is good. More able children are likely to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year. However, the majority are still developing their mathematical knowledge.
68. There are many good opportunities provided for children to develop mathematical awareness. At least half the children in the Reception can already count to 20. In one lesson, these skills were well developed with the teacher using a puppet who is not so good at counting so that the children enjoyed helping by pointing out the missing numbers. Children learn to sort and order shapes and colours and make repeating patterns with beads. They match objects to the corresponding numbers. They develop an understanding of symmetry by working in pairs, one copying the other to make exact patterns on either side of a butterfly's wings.
69. However, from the scrutiny of children's work, there is evidence that the more able children are not extended sufficiently so that the tasks they are set are not always helping them develop their recording skills in line with their mathematical knowledge. The good emphasis teachers place on practical activities helps children to develop mathematical concepts, but many of them still lack the mathematical language to express these ideas. More frequent adult intervention in 'play' activities, such as water and sand play, would greatly benefit these children. Again, because the support assistant is shared between the two classes, these opportunities are limited.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70. Children enter the Reception class with a basic understanding of their world. The planned provision and good teaching broaden children's knowledge and understanding well so that the majority are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals. They build up their knowledge of themselves from their own experiences of how they have changed since they were babies. This is made especially relevant when one of the mothers brings her new baby into school. Photographic evidence shows the children carefully holding the baby. The children learn about their environment through visiting the school pond and the local park so that they can observe the changes over the seasons.
71. A particular strength is the opportunity the children are given by their teachers to study nature. They grow sunflowers, daffodil bulbs and beans. They present their knowledge of growth to the other pupils and parents in an assembly production based on 'The Enormous Turnip'. The teachers ensure that children learn to observe and care for small animals, and during the inspection they were learning about minibeasts – observing snails and tadpoles. Having a giant African land snail in the classroom stimulated their learning so that children learned very well about the habits of snails and the food they eat. For example, they know that the snail has a shell 'to protect it from birds and other animals cracking it', and that it has 'feelers to feel its way'.

72. Children are given many good opportunities to use computers. They learn to use the keyboard, shift key and space bar to produce writing. The majority can manipulate the mouse confidently to move around game programs and to produce artwork using a painting program.

Physical development

73. Teaching is good. Children have good opportunities to develop their physical skills so that they are likely to meet the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the Reception. They learn to move in different ways, maintaining a safe space and being aware of others. They improve their skills well in throwing and catching balls and beanbags. The teachers interact with the children and successfully encourage them to develop and refine their skills.
74. There is a very good, secure, outside play area, with a good climbing frame, so that children develop the skills of climbing and balancing well. There is a good supply of wheeled vehicles to develop their gross motor skills. Children use the space safely during playtime and lunch breaks.

Creative Development

75. Much of the teaching is good. Teachers give good emphasis to providing a wide range of creative experiences in the Reception planning so that it is likely that the children will meet the Early Learning Goals. Children play imaginatively in the role-play areas, where the provision is changed to match the topics being studied. During the inspection, children used these areas well to develop their imaginative play, driving the jeep through the jungle and caring for pets in the 'animal hospital'.
76. Children handle crayons and pencils well. They paint minibeasts, choosing their ready mixed colours carefully. They create effective snails from clay and play dough, remembering to give them feelers, and accurately following the teacher's instructions to give the shell a spiral. They use construction material to make things and cut shapes from play dough.
77. Teachers provide good opportunities for children to develop their musical skills in lessons. Children listen well to pieces of music to identify the parts that are loud or quiet, and the more able can identify the mood of the music and patterns. They clap and use simple percussion instruments successfully to accompany their singing, following the patterns of the rhythm. They handle the percussion instruments with care and can name them accurately.

ENGLISH

78. Results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests and assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 show that standards in reading were in line with national averages, but standards in writing were below average. When compared to other similar schools, standards were well above average in reading and average in writing. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards were below the national average, but average when compared to other similar schools. A notable feature in Key Stage 1 is that, despite the low attainment on entry, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 3) in reading was in line with the national average. This is a reflection of the high quality

of teaching of reading for younger pupils. The standards of work seen in the present Year 6 are lower than last year and are well below the national average. This difference is explained by the extremely high proportion, around two-thirds, of pupils in this year group who are on the school's special educational needs register. When compared to their performance in the Key Stage 1 tests in 1997, it is clear that this group of pupils have made satisfactory progress over the key stage. Since the last inspection in 1997, standards have risen markedly in Key Stage 1 and have risen in line with the national trend in Key Stage 2.

79. When pupils enter the school, their speaking and listening and literacy skills are well below average. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 ensures a good build-up of skills in letter sounds, reading and writing and teachers provide a positive environment for talk to develop. Pupils have frequent opportunities across the curriculum to take part in discussions and to practise skills in speaking and listening. The lively nature of the teaching captures pupils' interest and encourages them to express their ideas in front of the class. A history lesson that focused on their grandparents' experiences of holidays was especially evocative and many pupils were keen to relate anecdotes of their own. Teachers patiently insist on pupils' speaking clearly and audibly in front of the class and give consistent support and encouragement to promote confidence in taking turns and contributing relevantly. This was clearly evident in a lesson first thing on Monday morning when pupils in Year 2 were invited to talk about their weekend news. Throughout the school, teachers offer good role models of clear and expressive speech which varies vocabulary and tone to suit changing situations. The development of speaking and listening skills in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to increase their role in discussions by explaining their answers and building on others' contributions. Although the quality of these opportunities is good, their range is limited. For example, pupils have few opportunities to present their work to an audience through expressive performance or formal talk. Overall, however, pupils in Key Stage 2 develop speaking and listening skills which effectively support their learning across the curriculum.
80. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have a wide range of opportunities to learn the basic skills of reading and they achieve very well. Within the literacy framework, pupils are systematically taught the relationship between letters and sounds. Standards in reading have improved dramatically in Key Stage 1 since the last inspection and this owes much to the careful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, the lively and often inspiring approach of teachers and the effective use of a structured reading scheme that ensures a gradual build-up of skills. Another positive factor is the consistent support given by parents in encouraging their children to read at home. The very good achievements by pupils of all abilities made in Key Stage 1 is not sustained in Key Stage 2. Standards for eleven-year-olds are well below the national average, although progress across the key stage is satisfactory. The emphasis placed on reading is not so obvious as pupils move through the school. A scrutiny of pupils' reading diaries shows that the amount of time pupils spend reading declines as they get older; by Year 6, some pupils have only a few entries in their reading diaries and have limited recall of what they have read earlier in the school year. Progress is enhanced by a good range of high quality reading books, by the effective use of an inviting and well-resourced library and by the regular use of the Internet as a source of information for studies across the curriculum.
81. At both key stages, standards in writing lag well behind those in reading and are well below the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. Although standards in reading are higher nationally than they are in writing, the gap at South Borough is greater than

that seen nationally. This is largely due to the limited opportunities given to pupils to write independently and at length and results in unsatisfactory achievement in Key Stage 2. During the inspection, there were some good examples of this taking place, as in a Year 4 lesson when pupils wrote poems based on conversations at home. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work over time reveals that such opportunities are simply not regular enough. Pupils spend a great deal of time filling in worksheets; these do help pupils develop vocabulary and learn about grammatical structure, as well as developing spelling and handwriting skills, but they do not give pupils the chance to develop creativity or originality in their writing. When pupils write on their own, their work is competent but rarely lively and thoughtful, nor is there enough evidence that pupils use words imaginatively. There are opportunities for pupils to develop writing skills in other subjects such as history and religious education, but even here there is too much reliance on the filling in of worksheets. Computers are used well to develop word processing skills in both key stages.

82. The quality of teaching is very good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, half the lessons observed were good and the rest were very good. In Key Stage 2, over half the lessons seen were satisfactory, with the rest being good, apart from one very good lesson in Year 3. There was no unsatisfactory teaching at either key stage, although a scrutiny of pupils' work over the course of the school year indicates that the teaching of writing in Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory over time. There are some characteristic features to lessons in both key stages. All lessons are well prepared and presented in a confident manner. All teachers speak clearly and their speech is a good role model for pupils of all ages. Teachers have a warm rapport with their pupils and there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils respond well to their teachers, are keen to answer questions and there is a positive work ethic as pupils invariably do their best. Where teaching is best, skilled and focused questioning used during introductions and concluding sessions is used effectively to assess pupils' understanding and take their learning forward. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, there is a lack of pace in terms of teacher presentation and teachers' expectation of what pupils should achieve, and assessment lacks rigour. In the teaching of reading for example, teachers in Key Stage 2 carefully record each pupil's book-by-book progress through the reading scheme, but they do not assess or record individual strengths and weaknesses. Teachers' subject knowledge, especially with regard to the different levels of the National Curriculum, is not always good enough. One impact of this is that pupils do not have a sufficiently clear idea of what is required to move forward. Teachers do not encourage pupils enough to read 'between the lines' of a story, so that, whilst pupils' reading is often assured and fluent, their understanding of characters and their feelings is not well developed. Discussions with Year 6 pupils reveal that they have a very limited view of their own strengths and weaknesses in reading and writing.
83. In implementing the National Literacy Strategy, there are significant differences between the key stages which go some way to explain the better teaching in Key Stage 1. Whereas teachers in Key Stage 1 have followed the recommended structure of the literacy hour, teachers in Key Stage 2 have not planned the group work section of the hour with enough rigour. Too often, pupils work independently with a limited focus on literacy instruction from the teacher.
84. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language reflects the pattern for pupils across the ability range. Pupils on the special educational needs register have detailed individual education plans

(IEPs) that focus mainly on literacy targets and these are generally used effectively to provide appropriate support for pupils.

85. The management of English is satisfactory. A long-established co-ordinator left last term, so the present co-ordinator has only just taken up the post. She is aware of some of the strengths and weaknesses of the present provision and has a clear view of what is required to take the subject forward, especially in Key Stage 2. A weakness in the management of the subject is the lack of monitoring of teaching, so that some of the best qualities are not shared with colleagues.

MATHEMATICS

86. Pupils' achievement is good by the end of Key Stage 1 due in no small measure to the good and very good teaching, especially in Year 2. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' progress slows and their achievement is satisfactory rather than good as the teaching is satisfactory overall but rather lacklustre. Standards attained by the seven-year-olds are average but those attained by the eleven-year-olds are well below average. Attainment of boys and girls is broadly similar.
87. Standards reached by the seven- and eleven-year-olds in the national tests in 2000 were average. In comparison with similar schools, the standards were above average. The proportion of the seven-year-olds that reached standards higher than those expected for pupils of this age was above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. By the end of Key Stage 2, fewer pupils reach these higher standards and the proportion that does is in line with the national average and the average for similar schools. Across the school, pupils are not as proficient in solving problems as they are in the other aspects of mathematics. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory in both key stages. The few pupils from minority ethnic origins achieve similarly to the majority of pupils.
88. Early indications show that the results of the tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2001 are broadly similar to those of the year before. However, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have fallen and are well below average. Just over half the pupils reached the standard expected nationally. Nevertheless, the percentage that have reached higher standards is about the same as the year before. The eleven-year-olds' achievement is satisfactory given the fact that two-thirds of the pupils in Year 6 have special educational needs. Inspection findings confirm these provisional standards. These standards show an improvement since the last inspection in the standards attained by the seven-year-olds and a drop in the standards at the end of Key Stage 2. However, the standards these pupils attained are slightly better than those they attained when they took the tests when they were seven. Overall, the trend in standards has been one of steady improvement broadly in line with the national picture. The school met the targets it set last year and appears to have met those set for this year.
89. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has increased pupils' ability to calculate mentally across the school. The strategy has been more successful in improving teaching in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. This has contributed significantly to the good achievement in Key Stage 1.
90. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have learnt their two and ten times tables. They have developed ways of adding numbers quickly in their heads, for example when they add 19 to a number by adding 20 then subtracting one. They have

successfully learnt by heart the addition and subtraction facts to ten and a minority have gone beyond this to 20. Pupils are confident in counting forwards and backwards in tens. They are not as successful in using these skills to solve problems, especially those arising in everyday life. Most use a range of measures, including centimetres, grams and time, reasonably successfully. They use money to shop and give the right change and identify correctly the properties of common two- and three-dimensional shapes.

91. In Year 5 and Year 6, pupils are placed into classes according to their levels of attainment (setting). The more able pupils manipulate numbers in their heads at speed and are usually correct. They calculate reasonably accurately using written calculations. Most confidently use measures such as kilograms, metres and litres. The average pupils have covered the same ground but have a less secure understanding or in-depth knowledge. Pupils with considerable special educational needs calculate at a lower level. They understand that multiplication is repeated addition and use this to learn and apply their times tables. The eleven-year-olds are not very good at solving problems. A significant cause of this is teachers' over-reliance in Key Stage 2 on worksheets that hinder the development of pupils' ability to think for themselves.
92. The quality of teaching in the school as a whole is satisfactory. Most pupils are keen to learn and work hard. In Key Stage 1, teaching is good and at times is very good or excellent. This is an improvement since the last inspection and has raised standards. In contrast, teaching in Key Stage 2 is not as good as it was, and has slowed the pupils' progress. Overall, teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory but there are a few instances of unsatisfactory teaching.
93. The structure provided by the National Numeracy Strategy has been used effectively in Key Stage 1 to give pupils challenging teaching which has raised their achievement. Pupils are encouraged by their teachers to do well, for example when they tell them, 'this is tricky but you are very clever today so you will be able to do it', or, 'I can't catch you out today!' Lessons have a sense of urgency and pupils are keen to learn. For example, in an excellent lesson in Year 2, pupils were encouraged to calculate in their heads 'as quick as a flash'. The teacher very effectively helped pupils to relate their working out in their heads to written calculations. In a very good lesson in Year 1 where pupils were learning about coins of different value, the teacher effectively used magnetic cans on a board to capture pupils' interest and to provide challenging teaching.
94. In lessons such as these, teachers use questions well to consolidate pupils' learning and to probe their understanding. Good use of 'how' and 'why' ensures that pupils explain their thinking. Above all, the questioning helps pupils to think for themselves and learn well.
95. Overall, the teaching in Key Stage 2 provides too few opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking and to try out their developing ideas. Teachers have to work hard to manage the challenging behaviour of a significant minority of pupils. The structure provided by the National Numeracy Strategy is not used as successfully as it is in Key Stage 1. There is an over-reliance on the use of worksheets that provide few opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical thinking. In the lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers are not confident in their subject knowledge. The work is not well matched to levels of pupils' attainment and teaching is more concerned with supervising the activities pupils are undertaking.

96. Planning is satisfactory overall. Although teachers now regularly assess pupils' attainment, the information is not used systematically to plan work. In Key Stage 2, this results in the average and above average pupils often being given the same work to start with, and then extension work prepared for the higher attainers. The more able pupils usually have to complete the work that is not challenging enough before going on to the harder work. These pupils do not always have time to get onto this. They invariably complete the work they have been given accurately. Pupils' work is marked regularly and praise and encouragement given. Rarely are targets for improvement and written advice about how to improve their work given. Homework is set regularly. When it is usually completed, it helps pupils to improve their work. Good use is made of information and communication technology in providing a program where pupils complete units of work independently and at their own speed. Pupils satisfactorily develop their mathematical skills in other subjects; for example in science and design and technology.
97. The co-ordination of the subject is good. Advice on planning is readily available and teachers' planning is monitored. This, together with demonstration lessons, is giving teachers more confidence and improving teaching, especially in Key Stage 1. At the moment the observation of teaching is the responsibility of the headteacher and deputy. Plans are in hand to extend this to the co-ordinator. Resources are satisfactory.

SCIENCE

98. Standards are in line with national expectations by the age of seven and well below the national average by the age of eleven. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds, the pupils' performance was below the national average but in comparison with similar schools, their performance was close to the average. The lower attainment achieved by the current Year 6 pupils can be attributed to the high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs. The performance of pupils in the national tests since the last report have fluctuated but show standards have risen gradually since 1997 and are improving at a rate broadly in line with the national trend.
99. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in Key Stage 1 and in Year 3 in relation to their prior attainment, and all other year groups make satisfactory progress.
100. Across the school, teachers plan for and maintain a good balance between all aspects of the science curriculum and this ensures that pupils overall gain a sound knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. Teachers develop pupils' scientific enquiry skills very effectively through well-planned tasks and investigations and by the age of eleven, most pupils understand the principles of fair testing. For example, in their experiment to find out which material is the best insulator, Year 6 pupils were able to use thermometers to measure the temperature of water effectively and realise that the container they will be comparing must have equal amounts of water. In the same lesson, pupils showed a good understanding of scientific knowledge and were able to use appropriate scientific language and could successfully predict, measure, record results and draw conclusions while carrying out the investigation.
101. From an early age, pupils gain a sound knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things. For example, Year 1 pupils successfully find out that all

plants need light and water in order to grow well as they grow seeds and plants under different conditions and by the age of seven, pupils know that all animals need food, water and air to survive and know that different animals eat different things. In Year 4, pupils study the habitats of different creatures and can recognise the conditions that different creatures like to live in and by the age of eleven, pupils can categorise foods, know what constitutes a balanced diet and can identify, name and state the functions of some major organs of the body.

102. Throughout the school, pupils of all abilities make particularly good progress in understanding materials and their properties. In Year 1, pupils successfully sort paper into rough and smooth properties and by Year 2, pupils accurately classify natural and man-made materials. In their investigations about soil, Year 3 pupils realise that soil particles can be separated by sieving and that different sized particles will need to be separated using different grade sieves. By the age of eleven, pupils classify correctly substances into solids, liquids and gases and understand well the scientific terms of evaporation and condensation in order to describe changes.
103. Although satisfactory, pupils of all abilities in Key Stage 1 make slower progress in understanding physical processes than they do in all other aspects of the subject. Year 1 pupils can identify several sources of light and by the age of seven, pupils do begin to understand forces and begin to recognise that a push or a pull makes an object move. In Key Stage 2, Year 3 pupils successfully investigate which materials are attracted to a magnet and in their study of sound, most Year 6 pupils know that a sound is made when air is vibrating against an object.
104. Pupils have good attitudes to their learning and usually their written work is well organised and presented. For example, often their investigations are effectively recorded through appropriate diagrams, graphs and charts.
105. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and with a significant minority of good teaching. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and plan successfully within year groups to ensure all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. In the best lessons, teachers use skilful questioning to direct and extend pupils' thinking, knowledge and understanding. They use and promote proper scientific vocabulary effectively in lessons and this enables pupils to acquire a good understanding of scientific terms. Clear instructions and explanations by teachers also support pupils' learning well. Teachers manage pupils effectively and practical activities and investigations are well organised and structured and resources are used well to support learning. When there are shortcomings in teaching, work is not sufficiently well planned to meet the needs of different ability groups within lessons. Teachers sometimes encourage pupils to copy from the board and miss opportunities to develop pupils' independent writing. The pace of lessons is sometimes too slow and questioning is not used sufficiently well to extend pupils' thinking.
106. The co-ordinator for the subject is very new to the responsibility and is still in the process of auditing the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Although some monitoring of the subject has been carried out by some members of the senior management team there are insufficient opportunities for the subject co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and standards across the school.

ART AND DESIGN

107. It was only possible to observe three lessons in art and design during the inspection. One lesson was seen in Key Stage 1 and two in Key Stage 2. Other evidence is taken from a scrutiny of work and displays of art and design and an analysis of planning. From this evidence, standards in art and design at Key Stage 1 are judged to be as expected nationally. At Key Stage 2, standards are below those expected nationally. Standards at Key Stage 2 are below those found at the previous inspection. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. This is mainly because pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their creative and imaginative skills, and there is unsatisfactory teaching for skills development. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve standards in line with their classmates.
108. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are competent in using a variety of mediums, such as pencil, charcoal, wax crayons, powder paint and collage. They use paint techniques to make displays illustrating stories they have enjoyed. They make good copies of the colours and designs using a viewfinder to highlight part of a whole picture. They

develop their skills of observation well through drawing portraits of themselves and each other, although they are less successful in mixing colours to find the best shades for skin and hair. These observational skills are built up well. In Year 2, they look at the school buildings, and reproduce the shapes of walls, roofs and windows. They use wax crayons and pencil to make rubbings of outdoor, man-made materials, such as walls and the playground surface. The patterns and textures provide the stimulus for building up a collage to show the school and playground. Most pupils successfully reproduce the patterns seen in brickwork, windows and tiles, using a variety of printing blocks.

109. The skills acquired in Key Stage 1 are built on well in Year 3, where pupils learn to mix colours and reproduce patterns. They observe carefully in order to reproduce the designs on Greek urns and interpret Greek masks. The town centre sculpture of 'Shorn the Sheep' stimulates them to make models of different animals from papier-mâché. Some pupils demonstrate a good ability to mould the shapes into accurate interpretations. However, there are few examples of art and design to be seen in Key Stage 2 to provide evidence that the subject is fully meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum. Standards that pupils achieve are unsatisfactory. There is little evidence that they learn to study and appreciate the work of artists and craftspeople, or to use their imagination to interpret the work. They are not developing their skills sufficiently in using different media. In Years 5 and 6, pupils were observed studying different containers in order to reproduce the shape and design. Their sketching skills were mainly unsatisfactory and many had difficulty achieving the correct basic shape. In Year 6, many pupils were frustrated by their lack of ability and found it difficult to improve their work, despite good support from the teacher.
110. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is mainly satisfactory and in the lesson seen, it was good. The lesson was planned well and there was a careful build up of knowledge and skills. Demonstration was very effective in helping pupils to achieve good results. Pupils were encouraged to experiment, and given good praise and feed back so that they maintained their confidence and enthusiasm. Teaching overall in Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory. In one lesson seen, teaching was unsatisfactory, but teaching in the Year 6 lesson was good because the teacher intervened well to help pupils improve their skills. However, what made this lesson particularly successful was the strong management that ensured that pupils settled to the task and teaching which gave good support to pupils to improve their designs. Overall, however, much of the art seen throughout the school and in photographic evidence lacks imagination. Outcomes show little evidence of pupils being given the chance to experiment and explore ideas and media. There are limited examples of three-dimensional work. There are few displays that catch the eye or brighten up the school environment.
111. The co-ordinator was not available during the inspection to discuss achievement in the subject and, as a result, no judgement can be made about the management of the subject. She has recently introduced a new scheme of work based on national guidance, which has been adapted for the resources available. Teachers are able to use the Internet to research images, but these are more useful as a resource for teachers, and the school has not done enough in terms of purchasing artefacts, posters and photographs that would stimulate pupils' imagination and creativity. There is a significant gap in the provision for art and craft that reflects a wide range of styles and traditions. The procedures for assessment of the subject are based on pupils' completion of units of work; however, this information is not being used well enough to guide planning. The school holds an art competition three times a year. Pupils can enter work done at home or at school in any media. Some examples of the entries were seen in the portfolio, which included 'Animals in Art' and work in the style of Kandinsky.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

112. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and remain in line with age-related expectations at the end of both key stages.
113. Pupils make particularly good progress and achieve well in both Key Stage 1 and in Year 3. This is because teachers have very secure subject knowledge and plan challenging work which enables pupils to develop skills effectively. The designing aspect of the subject is also developed well in these year groups. However, in Years 4, 5 and 6, the quality of pupils' planning for a design before making a product is often unsatisfactory, and their attainment in this aspect of the subject is weaker overall by the age of eleven. For example, plans are sometimes little more than just drawings and are not always sufficiently drawn to scale or measured. Pupils make satisfactory progress in all other year groups.
114. From an early age, pupils learn design skills well. For example, in Year 1, pupils successfully design and make a fruit salad and show they are able to make choices and select appropriate materials. In the same lesson, the teacher effectively developed pupils' making and evaluative skills as she encouraged pupils to refer to and use their designs to evaluate how well they had made their fruit salads and decide whether or not they would have changed anything in order to improve their finished product. Pupils follow their design plan effectively to make good quality weaving patterns out of straws. In Year 3, pupils make accurately measured plans and demonstrate good levels of making skills for their age as they use rules, saws and glue guns to measure, cut and join mitre joints in order to make good quality picture frames out of wood.
115. Pupils have sufficient opportunities to work with a range of materials, including food, and pupils show they are able to think about design specification and purpose and can generate ideas for products that they make after considering who will use them and what they will be used for. For example, Year 2 pupils design and make model vehicles and effectively use dowling rods as axles in order to ensure that they make moving models, Year 4 pupils investigate different types of fastenings as they make money containers and Year 5 and 6 pupils successfully design and make musical instruments that they can play, and they successfully find ways of making the strongest and tallest structure out of paper clips and five pieces of paper.
116. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is often good at Key Stage 1. When teaching is at its best, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use this knowledge effectively to develop key designing and making skills during lessons and are careful to promote health requirements when handling food and safe methods of working when handling tools. Resources are well organised and used effectively to support learning and questioning is used skilfully to develop pupils' thinking and generate ideas. When there are shortcomings in teaching, usually at Key Stage 2, the pace of learning for pupils is slow and teachers do not teach skills effectively. Pupils are not encouraged to evaluate their work and teachers do not draw pupils' attention to the importance of shape, measure and design specifications when making plans, and they sometimes miss opportunities to demonstrate and improve skills.
117. The leadership and management of the subject are good. An effective scheme of work supports teachers in the planning of their lessons and resources are well deployed. Work in this subject is monitored effectively to ensure that good practice is shared between staff.

GEOGRAPHY

118. Standards of pupils' work in geography by the end of both key stages are in line with those expected nationally. The satisfactory standards in geography seen in the previous inspection have been maintained. Teachers plan for a broad and balanced curriculum that covers the required elements of the National Curriculum for the subject. Pupils make satisfactory progress in both key stages. During the inspection, it was only possible to see one lesson at Key Stage 1 and evidence is taken from a scrutiny of work, discussion with teachers and an analysis of planning.
119. Pupils of all abilities in Key Stage 1 learn about their immediate environment through discussing and recording what they do at the weekend and where they go, for example, to the park and the swimming pool. They use successfully a plan of the school to locate the classrooms and other rooms, and make appropriate maps of their area so that they can mark in the features. Their understanding of maps is developed so that in Year 2 they learn about the island where Katie Morag lives. They record accurately the housing, transport and the occupations of the islanders. They understand the special life of people of the island, for example, one pupil records that 'Every person has a horse because there are lots of farms on Struay'. They effectively compare the features of towns, countryside and seaside. In the one lesson seen in Year 1, pupils demonstrate well what they know about different climates when they choose the clothes and other items that Barnaby Bear will take on a holiday to France.
120. Pupils of all abilities in Key Stage 2 develop a good understanding of maps. They plan the route they have taken to their summer holiday destinations. They develop their knowledge of climate and how this impacts on the way people live through studying the island of St Lucia and comparing the way of life there with their own knowledge of Maidstone. News items, especially those about the autumn floods, are effective in helping pupils in Year 4 to understand the effects of weather on the environment. They begin to consider the environment of the school and litter pollution. They use the computer to help them design posters. Older pupils learn about the water cycle and rivers. They relate this well to their local knowledge of the changes in the River Medway from Allington Lock to its mouth at Sheerness.
121. Overall, teaching is satisfactory and in the one lesson seen, it was good. There is evidence of good joint planning across the year groups so that pupils have the same experiences. In the one lesson seen in Year 1, the lesson objectives were made very clear. Pupils knew what was expected of them and worked confidently and concentrated well. They produced thoughtful work, and were helped by the good support from the teacher. Work was adapted to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and there was good support from the teaching assistant for pupils of lower ability. Throughout the school, the subject is used well to develop pupils' literacy skills. Maps and diagrams are neat and well presented. Labelling is neat and accurately spelled. There are good opportunities for pupils to write about the weather in their holiday locations or to write about the features of rivers. Teachers make good links between subjects, so that, for example, they study Europe and this is connected to their personal and social education programme in which they consider citizenship.
122. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator has produced a useful scheme of work based on national guidelines. Resources are adequate and will be upgraded to meet the demands of the new curriculum. There is an emphasis

on first-hand experiences, so that pupils make studies of their local area. Pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity for field trips to the Darent Valley and Horton Kirby.

HISTORY

123. Standards in history are broadly similar to those outlined in the last inspection report. At the end of both key stages, pupils reach standards that are in line with those expected nationally.
124. By the age of seven, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the lives of people in the past. For example, they have learnt about the holidays enjoyed by their grandparents around the time of the Second World War and can identify many similarities and differences with their own experiences. They enjoy studying old photographs and can describe changes in fashion and transport during the last 50 years. Their knowledge and understanding are enhanced by the lively presentation of the teacher and the effective use of artefacts.
125. By the age of eleven, pupils have a good knowledge of the key dates, periods and events in British history. Pupils' thorough knowledge is underpinned by an effective scheme of work that ensures that, as they move through Key Stage 2, they study a wide range of historical topics in reasonable depth. The regular use of visits helps bring the subject to life, so that pupils in Year 3, for example, talk with some animation after the visit to a recently opened amphitheatre in Maidstone, and compare it to their studies of Greek and Roman theatres. In Years 5 and 6, pupils recall their enjoyment of dressing up as rich and poor people in Tudor times and are especially keen to relate their experiences of using an actual Anderson shelter that was used in the Second World War. They can describe how small these shelters were and how dark and claustrophobic it felt whilst inside. By contrast, pupils' ability to discuss the reasons behind different events is weak. In their study of the Second World War, for example, pupils learn the key dates of when Maidstone was bombed and can show on a map where the first bombs landed. However, they do not learn why aerial bombing was an important part of enemy strategy, nor can they explain why it eventually failed. They are not aware that Kent was a focal point of enemy action, nor why Maidstone itself was a special target of enemy bombing.
126. Teaching, at times, is too focused on key dates and events and not enough on some of the underlying reasons as to why these key events took place. This apart, teaching is generally effective. Pupils certainly enjoy their lessons and talked with some confidence to inspectors about what they had learnt. They particularly enjoy the chance to dress up, as they did during their topic on the Tudors, and felt this gave them a much better understanding of what life must have like for ordinary people during this period of history.
127. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has introduced a useful scheme of work, based on a nationally recommended model scheme. This scheme is used well to ensure pupils cover all aspects of the Programmes of Study as they move through the school. Displays in classrooms indicate that history is given a high priority throughout the school, with especially good use of artefacts and visits.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

128. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. The school has maintained the standards

identified in the last inspection. The recent purchase of additional computers and computer software, as well as the provision of an interactive screen for whole-class teaching has been a contributory factor in maintaining standards. Teachers make mainly good use of computers in the classroom, so that they are seen in use in most lessons. Only one lesson was seen of direct teaching, and evidence is taken from classroom observations in other lessons, discussion with pupils and teachers and the evidence in displays and workbooks.

129. All pupils are keen, confident and enthusiastic to use the machines. Whole-class lessons in which they learn the skills needed to access and use new programs prepare pupils well for individual skills development. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language have good opportunities to develop their learning through using the interactive screen and the lap-top computer. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have good control of the cursor and can use the mouse accurately to click onto areas of the screen. They use a word processing program to write simple texts and have satisfactory keyboard skills which they use, for example, to review books they have read. They have good control skills and use a painting program successfully to design and label playground equipment. They were observed entering data to create bar graphs and pictograms on a variety of subjects; their favourite colours; their physical characteristics; their favourite pets. Pupils know how to print their work.
130. By the end of Key Stage 2, all pupils show confidence in the use of the computer. They log on, log off, load programs and save their work. Pupils work independently on a mathematics program and use this well to develop their knowledge and accuracy. They use word processing to format their work in a variety of ways using different fonts, colours and sizes of text. They import clipart graphics to enhance their work. They understand the need to establish fields when classifying information. This was particularly successful in a Year 4 lesson where pupils were learning how to classify the information they had acquired on the habitats of minibeasts. In this lesson, pupils were made aware that decisions about the different fields are an important prior requirement before entering the data. Pupils' research skills are good and they use CD-Roms and the Internet to add to the information on different topics, for example to find out more information about World War II or to research information for their Europe project on citizenship. Older pupils have some opportunities to send E-mails, but this is restricted to communication within the school. Pupils use heat sensors successfully for monitoring the rate at which soup cools in a science experiment. Older pupils understand how to enter a formula in a cell to facilitate calculations in spreadsheets, and to enter data and present it through graphs and charts. There are satisfactory opportunities for them to learn control skills through entering commands for the programmable robot.
131. Pupils enjoy the subject and they are enthusiastic and keen to practise the skills they have been taught. They co-operate well when sharing the computer, and display good relationships when offering suggestions and taking turns. There are some variations in competence, depending on whether pupils have computers at home. However, those who are less confident listen carefully to the help given them by adults, and know when to seek help. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language benefit well from using the computers and gain confidence. Pupils treat the computers with care, using them sensibly. Those who have computers at home practise their skills, and research information as part of homework tasks.

132. Teaching in the one lesson seen was good. The teacher was well prepared for the lesson, so that the time was used well. Pupils contributed actively, using the laptop to input information on the screen, and pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, had the opportunity to participate. Good questioning ensured that pupils thought carefully about what they were doing; entering fields for the processing of data on habitats related to a science/geography topic. Good attention was paid to getting pupils to think about why and how computers are useful for this activity. Overall, in all the lessons seen where pupils were using computers, there is sound evidence that they are confident and teachers have prepared them well. Learning support assistants and voluntary helpers are confident and give good help to pupils.
133. Co-ordination of the subject is good. The provision has been thoughtfully planned and a new scheme of work has been developed based on national recommendations. Planning is monitored and teachers keep a record of the skills pupils acquire. While the majority of the staff have received training, there are some new teachers who are not yet confident in programs and equipment they are not familiar with. The co-ordinator is making time to provide training, but this is at the expense of providing for an after-school computer club. This would greatly benefit pupils, especially those who do not have access to computers at home. More money is available to develop information and communication technology and the co-ordinator is seeking advice as to the best way to proceed in order to strengthen provision and further improve standards.

MUSIC

134. It was only possible to observe one music lesson during the inspection so it was not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching. However, further evidence was obtained from the observation of other musical activities such as choir practice, singing in assemblies and recorder club and through discussions with both staff and pupils and through the scrutiny of teachers' planning.
135. Standards have fallen significantly since the last inspection and are now below age-related expectations by the age of eleven. At the time of the last inspection, standards were reported to be above national expectations at the end of both key stages. The reason for this fall in standards can be attributed to the fact that until very recently, the school for a considerable amount of time has had no music specialist co-ordinator to support the teaching of the subject across the school. The lack of teachers' subject knowledge and expertise in some aspects of the subject such as appraising, composing and performing, has restricted the rate of progress pupils make in the subject overall and this has had a detrimental effect on standards over time across the school since the last inspection.
136. The school has recently appointed a music specialist who has taken on the responsibility for the subject this term. The new co-ordinator has already identified the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and has an appropriate plan for development. Already she has effectively begun to support teachers' planning in the subject to ensure that all aspects of the subject are effectively covered and taught.
137. By the age of seven, pupils' attainment in singing is average. Pupils show they enjoy singing and can follow a tune and rhythm well. Most pupils by the age of eleven show little enthusiasm for singing in assemblies and their attainment is below average for their age. However, those pupils who attend choir perform well and their attainment is in line with age-related expectations and they show good levels of enthusiasm and

confidence to perform. For example, many pupils showed eagerness to perform a solo and in so doing, could carry a tune sweetly and demonstrated a good sense of tempo, pitch, phrasing and texture.

138. When pupils have specialist tuition, as observed in extra-curricular activities such as recorders groups, pupils demonstrate good attainment and are able to read notation successfully to play a variety of songs. They show good levels of concentration and are able to play notes clearly and can play well in harmony with others.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

139. Physical education and sport are given an emphasis. Pupils' achievement is good, including those pupils with special educational needs. The standards attained by the seven- and eleven-year-olds are above those seen in most schools. This is an improvement since the last inspection and is largely due to the good teaching, good opportunities for sport in the extra-curricular activities and the good co-ordination of the subject.
140. Pupils in Key Stage 1 work enthusiastically. When warming up, they carefully stretch, learning from the good example set by their teachers. They move confidently around the hall under the careful direction of their teachers showing appropriate awareness of space and other pupils. They successfully throw and catch a ball and they bounce or hit a ball to a partner with reasonable accuracy. Pupils develop good control, co-ordination and balance into their movements.
141. The comprehensive policy for the subject ensures a broad coverage and a good progression of activities. There is a high commitment to the development of skills across a range of games activities. Pupils enjoy their lessons and work hard. In Key Stage 2, pupils develop their skills in throwing, hitting and catching a ball. Teachers show them how to improve their accuracy. For example, in Year 4, most pupils throw a ball underarm with good accuracy so that their partners catch it in front of their chest. Several pupils throw equally well overarm. Their skills in hitting a ball are good and most have a good grip on their racquets and know how to face an oncoming ball. In athletics in Year 6, pupils show reasonably good balance and control when performing a standing jump. They effectively link their skills in skipping and jumping as they learn to perform a hop, skip and a jump. This year, 87 per cent of the pupils in Year 6 have achieved a satisfactory standard in swimming.
142. The teaching is good and on occasion it is very good. The quality of teaching has improved. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. The school has been awarded a charter mark by the Football Association. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in learning new skills and consolidating those already learnt. In the best lessons, firm class control and good demonstration lead to high levels of pupil response. Teachers carefully observe their pupils and show them how to improve their skills. Due attention is paid to safety in lessons.
143. The school's strong sporting tradition motivates pupils who talk animatedly about their achievements. The staff, with support from parents, provide a wide range of sporting opportunities after school and at weekends. Teams successfully represent South Borough against other schools. Individuals perform to high standards in sports such as cross-country running and swimming.

144. The newly appointed co-ordinator has extended the range of activities by providing a 'Fitness and Fun' club for pupils in Key Stage 1. She provides good co-ordination through the development of a new policy and useful curriculum guidance that ensures good progress. Plans are in hand to observe teaching to provide further support for her colleagues. The resources are good and enhance pupils' learning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

145. Although a limited number of lessons were seen during the course of the inspection, a scrutiny of previously completed work, teachers' planning and conversations with pupils provided a sound basis on which to make a secure judgement. Religious education is planned effectively. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject, which is taught regularly. Pupils' achievement, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, is satisfactory at the end of both key stages. The standards attained by the seven- and eleven-year olds are in line with those required by the Kent Agreed Syllabus for religious education. These standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection. The eleven-year-olds have a better knowledge and understanding of Christianity than they have of other world faiths as the teaching in Year 6 does not have a specific emphasis on a world faith as happens in other year groups. This is about to be remedied by the introduction of a study of Islam in Year 6.
146. By the end of Key Stage 1, effective planning by the teachers has enabled pupils to begin to understand the significance of Christian festivals and celebrations such as Shrove Tuesday and baptism. Pupils have some understanding of important events in other religions such as Diwali and Holi in Hinduism. In Year 2, pupils learn about places of worship being special to the people who worship there. Teachers have taken pupils to visit a local church.
147. During Key Stage 2, pupils learn more about other religions as well as Christianity. By the age of eleven, most have a sound understanding of important events in the life of Christ. Pupils understand that religions have different religious symbols and practices. They know that the Bible is sacred to Christians and Jews. Pupils who come from families who worship as members of faith communities are more secure in this knowledge. For example, they retell the events of the Last Supper and explain how these are celebrated in the Holy Communion service.
148. The teaching of religious education in the limited number of lessons seen was satisfactory, and on occasion very good. Teachers plan their lessons well, often in collaboration with the knowledgeable co-ordinator. This makes sure that the purposes for lessons are clear and this captures their interest and helps them to learn satisfactorily. Religious artefacts are used well by teachers. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 2, very effective use of a Hindu shrine caught pupils' interest and they eagerly plied their teacher with questions to find out more. Increasingly teachers are using information and communication technology to enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils in a mixed Year 5 and Year 6 class were keen to use the Internet to find images of Christ as part of an imaginative lesson exploring what he might have looked like. This approach enhanced learning and stimulated interesting discussion amongst the pupils about the many ways He is pictured and which were the most realistic. Good use is made of visits of The Family Trust in assemblies to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of important stories from the Bible.
149. The co-ordination of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has ensured that the planning takes full account of the Kent Agreed Syllabus. Teachers' planning is monitored and support and advice are readily given where necessary. This has increased teachers' understanding of religious education and given them confidence that is reflected in pupils' steady progress. However, little observation of teaching takes place. A useful supply of religious artefacts has been acquired which are used well in lessons and for display around the school.

