

INSPECTION REPORT

PARK WAY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Maidstone

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118302

Headteacher: Rosemary Ferguson

Reporting inspector: Anne Currie
25429

Dates of inspection: 9th – 13th July 2001

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Park Way Primary School Park Way Maidstone Kent
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	John Baker
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

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13874	Jane Chesterfield	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents? How well is the school led and managed?
20991	Jane Nelson	Team inspector	English Religious education Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
30266	Hilma Rask	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art English as an additional language Special education needs	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
19410	Andrew Matthews	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Information and communication technology Physical education Equal opportunities	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Park Way Primary School has 229 pupils and it is similar in size to most other primary schools. It is over-subscribed. Pupils, both boys and girls, aged from four to eleven years attend the school and they have a wide range of ability. The school is situated on the outskirts of Maidstone, in Shepway West ward, an area of considerable deprivation. This has been recognised by the planned allocation of funds in the near future to appoint a home/school liaison officer. Currently only about 14 per cent of pupils claim free school meals, but this does not represent the level of eligibility, which is estimated to be significantly higher.

Children start at the school at the beginning of the academic year in which they are five. There are up to ten different pre-school facilities that children can attend before starting school, but as many as half do not go to a playgroup or nursery. On entry, children's attainment varies with each intake, but overall it is well below average. Pupils are predominantly of white United Kingdom heritage. There are only two children who speak English as an additional language and they receive extra support. The percentage of pupils identified by the school as having special educational needs, 57 per cent, is well above average. The number of pupils assessed by the school as having special educational needs has doubled since 1995. Five children have a statement of special educational needs, which is above average for a school of this size. Pupils who receive regular additional support have a wide range of difficulties. The majority have moderate and specific learning difficulties, but there are also some with emotional, behavioural, physical and medical problems. A high proportion of pupils, about 11 per cent, changes school during term time.

The school gained an achievement award from the Department for Education and Employment in April 2001 for improvements in the results obtained by pupils.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Park Way is a good school. The headteacher provides very good leadership. All staff work together well as a team and there is a clear focus on raising standards. Many pupils start school with low attainment. Teaching is of a high quality and, as a result, pupils make good progress in lessons and as they move through the school. The school offers a good curriculum, which is broad and balanced. Pupils learn to behave well and to have good attitudes to learning. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good and, as a result, pupils make good progress in lessons and over time.
- There is very good, effective leadership by the headteacher and staff with management responsibilities, which is clearly focused on raising the standards pupils achieve.
- Very good strategies are in place to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
- The good provision for pupils with special educational needs helps them to make significant gains in learning.
- Staff develop good relationships with pupils and they manage them very effectively. As a result, pupils learn to behave well and they develop good attitudes to work.
- The school is a very caring community. Very good provision is in place to extend pupils' moral and social development. This helps pupils gain self-esteem and confidence and they learn to respect others.

What could be improved

- Attainment in mathematics by the age of seven.
- Pupils' writing across the school.
- Attainment in geography in Years 3 to 6.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997, just after it became a primary school. Since then the school has become well established and it has successfully incorporated pupils aged from eight to eleven. It has coped with the necessary changes well and it has made good improvement in the standard of education provided to meet the needs of its pupils. The intake of the school has also changed with a large influx of pupils with special educational needs. The national test results in 1997 showed very low standards. Since then the school's results at the end of Year 2 have fluctuated considerably, but they improved from 1999 to 2000. Standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 have improved steadily, but they are still below those found nationally. This year, 2001, there has been an increase in the percentage of pupils reaching levels above those expected in national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6. The school's development plan now clearly sets out its priorities for the next three years. The strong management team is clearly committed to raising attainment further and the school is well placed to continue to improve. The curriculum has improved and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are implemented successfully. Teaching has improved. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are higher, especially in Year 2. The school has a growing register of pupils it recognises as being more able, but in lessons other than English and mathematics, different work is not always set to extend pupils capable of higher achievement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			#similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E*	E	E	D
Mathematics	E	E	E	D
Science	E*	E	E	D

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

in the lowest 5% nationally E*

Similar schools selected on the basis of schools in similar socio-economic circumstances. The school's results are compared with those of schools with between 35 and 50 per cent of its pupils eligible for free school meals as this gives a more accurate reflection of the level of need in the area.

Children start school with varied attainment, but overall it is well below that generally found. Most children reach the standards expected in personal, social and emotional development and physical development by the end of the reception year. In communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development, children make sound progress, but most do not reach the standards expected nationally. In the 2000 tests, the percentage of Year 2 pupils reaching the standard expected was above the national average for reading and close to the average for writing and mathematics. Overall however, their performance in reading and writing was below the national average and in mathematics it was well below, because few pupils exceeded the standards expected. When compared to the results of pupils in schools in similar socio-economic settings, the results were average for writing and mathematics and above average for reading. Results have fluctuated over the last few years. The table shows that in 2000, Year 6 pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science was well below that of other schools and below that of similar schools. However, standards have risen steadily over the last three years.

Inspection evidence indicates that standards are still gradually improving, especially in mathematics. This year the school exceeded its challenging targets for the percentage of pupils reaching the expected standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6. Currently, by age seven, pupils are achieving standards that are above national expectations in ICT and swimming. Standards are below average in speaking, reading and mathematics. Pupils' listening and writing skills are close to average and, in design and technology, geography, history, physical education and science, pupils are reaching the standards expected nationally. By age eleven, pupils are attaining standards in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics, ICT, design and technology, history, physical education and science that are broadly average. Attainment in swimming is high. Standards are below those normally found in writing and geography. Across the school, pupils are reaching the standards set out in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. In art, pupils attain good standards, particularly in collage and textile work. Not enough music was taught during the inspection to form a judgement on attainment, although pupils across the school sing confidently and enthusiastically.

All pupils, including those with special educational needs and the few learning English as an additional language, are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment, as they move through the school. Progress in lessons is good, especially in literacy and numeracy, and this is the result of good teaching and the good additional help they receive from learning support assistants.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attitudes to learning are good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons, at lunchtimes and in the playground. They are well aware of the school rules and try to follow them.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils gain confidence and self-esteem as they progress through the school. Relationships are good. Pupils work well together and they treat each other with respect.
Attendance	Good. Attendance has steadily improved and it is above the national average. Most pupils are punctual.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Good	Good

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

All teaching seen was at least satisfactory. Seventy-four per cent of the teaching was good or better. Seventeen per cent was very good and two per cent excellent. Examples of good teaching were observed across the whole school. The teaching in the reception class is particularly good at helping children develop their personal and social skills. The teaching of English and mathematics is good in Years 1 to 6. There are very effective strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills, with particular strengths in Year 2. The few pupils with English as an additional language are well supported. Support staff are used effectively to target good additional help for pupils with special educational needs in groups and individually. Setting in the upper part of the school in literacy and numeracy is used well to ensure that the work meets the needs of all pupils. As a result, pupils are achieving well in lessons and over time from their various starting points.

In other subjects, the learning of pupils capable of higher attainment is sometimes restricted when the same work is set for the whole class. All pupils are managed well. Staff develop good relationships with them and help them to develop good attitudes to learning and to gain confidence in their own ability. As a result, pupils work hard and they are making good gains in learning. The school is aware of the need to monitor girls' responses more in lessons to ensure that they are fully involved. There is some lack of teacher's subject knowledge in geography and music.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The range of learning opportunities provided for the youngest children is sound. In the rest of the school it is good overall, with some weaknesses in geography and music. The provision for information and communication technology and its use across the curriculum are good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are well supported and they make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The few children concerned are effectively supported and well integrated into the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Provision for pupils' personal development is good. Staff are very good at helping pupils learn right from wrong and developing their social skills. The provision for pupils' spiritual development and their awareness of their own culture and the cultural diversity of society are satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff make very good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. They monitor pupils' personal development very well. There are good procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress in English and mathematics.

The school develops effective links with parents and gives them good information about their child's progress and the work of the school. Parents make a sound contribution to their children's education and most are appropriately involved in their schoolwork.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher gives very clear leadership. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher and other members of the management team. All staff work together well as a team and they are committed to giving pupils the support they need and to raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors meet their statutory obligations well. They provide good support for the work of the school and they have a very clear understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school monitors its work well and takes effective action to bring about necessary changes. Its improvement plan shows that it has clearly identified what has to be done to improve standards further.
The strategic use of resources	The money the school receives is clearly targeted on providing a good standard of education and improving standards. Staff are well deployed to raise the attainment of pupils that have been identified as having special educational needs. The principles of best value are applied well to ensure that the school obtains good value for money.

The accommodation is good. There is a new ICT suite, and the grounds are developed well to support learning and also to provide an attractive environment for pupils. The school is very well staffed. The school is appropriately resourced, with good resources for ICT, English and mathematics.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Their children are making good progress. • Teaching is good. • They are kept well informed about how their children are getting on. • The school is approachable. • The school helps their children to develop a sense of responsibility and to work hard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents feel that the school does not work closely with parents. • They are not happy with the amount of homework their children are given. • They would like more activities outside of lessons. • The way the school supports pupils with special educational needs and works in partnership with their parents.

The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed by parents and finds that the parents' worries are unfounded. Homework is used appropriately to support pupils' learning in English and mathematics. The homework club provides a good opportunity for older pupils to complete their work in school. There is a good range of clubs and activities after school. The school is approachable and gives parents good information about their child's progress. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. The school spends a considerable amount of time talking to the parents of these children and keeping them well informed about their children's work.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the reception class with a range of abilities and experiences, but, overall, their attainment is well below that normally found, especially in communication, language and literacy and mathematics. Children make steady gains in learning during their time in the reception class as a result of the sound teaching they receive. They make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, because of the very good support and guidance they receive. This is important, as about half of the current intake has had no pre-school experience at a nursery or playgroup. By the end of the year, most are still working towards the early learning goals, the standard expected of children of their age, in communication, language and literacy, mathematical and creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Most are likely to reach the expected standard in personal, social and emotional development and physical development.
2. At the time of the last inspection, in March 1997, the school was making the transition from an infant school to a primary school and the nature of its catchment area was beginning to change. In 1997, pupils' performance in national tests at ages seven and eleven was low. Since then, the results obtained by pupils at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics have varied markedly from year to year, reflecting the variations within each cohort, but they have remained below the national average. The results obtained by pupils in English, mathematics and science, at the end of Year 6, have risen steadily since 1997, but they too have remained below the national average. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is only 14 per cent. This figure does not fully reflect the level of social deprivation in the area and the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the school. As a result, schools, with between 35 and 50 per cent of their pupils entitled to free school meals, are taken as being a more accurate reflection of the school's circumstances.
3. In 2000, the average points scores for Year 2 pupils in reading and writing were below the national average and they were well below in mathematics. When compared to the results of schools in similar socio-economic circumstances, the results were above average in reading, and average in writing and mathematics. The percentage of pupils achieving level 2, the level expected for pupils of that age, was above the national average, but in all three subjects the percentage of pupils exceeding this level was below the national average. The average points score for Year 6 pupils was well below the national average in English, mathematics and science. When the comparison with similar schools is made, the results were below average in all three subjects. In English, mathematics and science, the percentage of pupils reaching level 4, the standard expected, was close to the national average, but the percentage reaching the higher level was well below. The school was awarded an achievement award from the Department for Education and Employment in April 2001 for improvements in the results obtained by pupils.
4. There is no comparative data for this year's results. The present cohort in Year 2 had very low attainment on entry to the school, with their baseline assessment scores within the lowest five per cent in the county. Although the results for 2001 are generally lower than those in 2000, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level, level 3, has risen in both reading and writing, and it is similar to last year for mathematics.

Most pupils achieved the targets set for them from their baseline scores and over 50 per cent exceeded their targets, showing good and often very good progress. Year 6 pupils exceeded the challenging targets set for them in English and mathematics by the local education authority. In English, the percentage achieving level 4 rose close to the national average for last year, although there was still under 50 per cent of pupils achieving level 4 in writing. In mathematics, the percentage achieving level 4 rose and there was a marked rise in the percentage reaching level 5. In science, the percentage reaching level 4 is above the average for last year. The proportion reaching level 5 also rose, but it remains below last year's average. In all three subjects, more boys achieved level 5 than girls, which is different from the pattern found nationally. This reflects the lower prior attainment of some girls and underachievement by others. Inspection evidence confirms the results obtained. In some lessons, boys tend to dominate question and answer sessions and girls sit back and take very little part in the activity.

5. Pupils in the current Year 2 are achieving standards that are above national expectations in information and communication technology (ICT) and swimming. This is the result of the good opportunities provided. Standards are below average in speaking, reading and mathematics with few pupils exceeding the levels expected. Pupils' listening and writing skills are close to average. In design and technology, geography, history, physical education and science, pupils are reaching the standards expected nationally. Pupils in Year 6 are attaining standards in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics, ICT, design and technology, history, physical education and science that are broadly average. Attainment in swimming is very high, the result of the good, regular provision and the good level of interest shown by pupils. Standards are below those normally found in writing and geography. In geography, pupils do not cover some aspects, such as a study of a contrasting area, in sufficient detail to enable them to reach the standards expected. Across the school, pupils are reaching the standards set out in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. In art and design, pupils attain good standards, especially in their collage and textile work. Not enough music was taught during the inspection to form a judgement on attainment in that subject, although pupils across the school sing confidently and enthusiastically.
6. Learning is good in Years 1 to 6 and it results from the good teaching and the positive attitudes to their work that staff help pupils to develop. Pupils make good and often very good progress in literacy and numeracy, as a result of the very effective strategies used and the consistently strong teaching. Information held by the school shows that 13 per cent of pupils in the current Year 6 were not in the school at the end of Year 2, so many have not enjoyed the benefit of the good provision for a significant period of time. The school keeps very detailed records and tracks pupils' progress as they move through the school.
7. Standards in writing in Year 2 have improved over the year with the clear emphasis on developing spelling and punctuation skills. In addition, opportunities are provided to write for different purposes, which often capture children's interest well. There is also very good teaching of reading, with an emphasis on letter sounds, which enhances pupils' spelling and helps them to 'read' unfamiliar words. There is a high proportion of pupils in Year 2 who started from a very low baseline, and, although they are making good progress, they still do not reach the standards expected. Setting arrangements work well in the upper part of the school. They enable teachers to focus on the learning needs of smaller groups of pupils. In Year 6, pupils write in different styles and they are beginning to respond to the clear teaching, by using punctuation accurately.

There are still weaknesses in the spelling of common words and in the presentation of some work, with poorly formed letters. Year 6 pupils read books from a range of genres. They have a sound understanding of what they read and this is shown in the way they discuss characters in books and make inferences from the text.

8. Pupils make good progress in mathematics across the school, as a result of the good teaching and the well-planned work, which is well focused on pupils' learning needs. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are developing good mental arithmetic strategies and, by Year 2, pupils are beginning to give clear explanations of how they arrived at their answers. Setting in the upper part of the school gives teachers the opportunity to focus on the learning needs of the group and, as a result, pupils make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. By age eleven, pupils have good skills in addition, subtraction and multiplication, but their knowledge of the multiplication tables is sometimes not thorough enough to support their division skills.
9. In science, pupils make steady gains in knowledge and they develop their investigative skills through the practical approach to the subject, which is seen throughout the school. In ICT, the standards achieved have improved in Year 2 and have been maintained in Year 6. This is the result of the hard work of all staff and the very clear guidance and support from the co-ordinator. Teachers use ICT well to support pupils' learning across the curriculum.
10. The support for pupils identified as having special educational needs, who represent over 50 per cent of the school roll, is very effective and, as a result, those pupils also make good progress from their varied starting points. The school has a growing number of pupils on its register of more able pupils. However, in subjects other than English and mathematics, teachers do not set different work to reflect the range of ability within each class. Most teachers vary the amount of support available to various groups of pupils and their expectations of the amount of work to be completed. The issue mentioned in the last report of improving provision for high attaining pupils has only partially been addressed, as there is scope to extend further the amount of challenge for these pupils. The very small number of pupils learning English as an additional language make the same good progress in lessons as their peers, and provision from the specialist support service and class teachers is good. Although the additional specialist support is of a peripatetic nature, staff take opportunities in their own time to discuss progress and to liaise on planning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are good. The majority of parents say that their children enjoy coming to school and the inspection team noted that most children arrived at school eager to participate in their lessons. The school places a strong emphasis on developing children's self-esteem and pupils are well aware of the school rules, which are prominently displayed throughout the school and actively referred to. A number of visits took place during the week of the inspection, and members of the public praised pupils for their good behaviour and polite manners whilst visiting Battle Abbey, for example. There is an active school council, which includes representatives from all the junior and the Year 2 classes. This indicates pupils' determination to play a full part in the school community and democratic procedures are in place to raise issues for discussion. For example, the school council took on the responsibility of deciding on designs for new playground markings and a new enclosed seating area was requested.

12. Pupils' behaviour is good. Teachers have high expectations of good behaviour in lessons and pupils show a positive attitude towards learning in their lessons. No time is wasted in school, as pupils understand class rules and try to follow them. This positive approach to learning is fostered right from the earliest days at school in the reception class, and personal development is monitored as closely as academic progress. Occasional incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with swiftly, effectively and fairly, and pupils are always told why their behaviour has been considered unacceptable. Since almost all learning support staff also work as lunchtime supervisors, the same positive atmosphere prevails at lunchtimes. Occasional incidents of minor bullying are thoroughly investigated and documented, although no bullying was seen during the week of the inspection. Relationships in the playground were found to be good. The extensive school grounds, and good use of designated areas, enable the needs of all groups of pupils to be met. For example, the use of footballs is monitored and has been discussed by the school council. There have been three fixed term exclusions in the last year.
13. Relationships between all pupils are good overall. The very few pupils with English as an additional language are well integrated into the life of the school. Pupils usually co-operate together in lessons and listen to the contributions of others. In a few lessons, however, boys are more dominant than girls, particularly in the upper part of the school. As a result, girls have fewer opportunities to express their opinions and ideas during whole-class discussions. As a consequence, they become more passive. The school is aware of this and has started to monitor this aspect. Adults in the school offer very positive role models to pupils, and learning support assistants form close, friendly relationships with pupils with special educational needs whom they support.
14. Personal development is good. Pupils have very good opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as in the school council, and they respond to them well. Older pupils care for and supervise younger pupils at the end of playtimes and lunchtimes. They also act as playground buddies for new entrants to school and all pupils take on responsibilities around the school, for example, taking the register, opening doors and taking charge of the overhead projector in assemblies. Pupils in Year 6 are involved in interviews for new teachers and, during the inspection, Year 5 and 6 pupils from the homework club prepared and presented information about the school to prospective new parents. Pupils respond enthusiastically and sensitively to the regular sessions (circle times) they have in class to discuss issues relating to their own lives and feelings. Opportunities for personal research and individual study are satisfactory. Currently pupils make only limited use of the school library, which is located in an outside hut, and of the new ICT suite, to find out information for themselves.
15. The school puts a considerable emphasis on developing pupils' self-esteem and this is of great benefit for pupils with special educational needs, as they gain from the frequent opportunities to gain rewards and recognition for efforts undertaken. The school's very positive approaches to behaviour management support pupils with special educational needs well, as behaviour in lessons is generally good. Pupils with special educational needs also receive good support from well-trained learning support assistants, which assists their personal development and fosters a positive attitude towards learning.

16. Pupils' attendance rate is good and is above the national average. There has been a steady, gradual rise each year since the time of the last inspection. Figures for this year so far show a further slight improvement. Most absence is caused by illness, and there is little unauthorised absence. The punctuality of most pupils is also good, although there are a few families who do not ensure that their children get to school on time each day. This is unsettling for the children concerned and disruptive for the teacher and the rest of the class.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. All lessons observed were at least satisfactory, with 74 per cent good or better. Nineteen per cent of lessons were very good or excellent. Significant strengths were seen in the teaching in Year 2, where all the lessons were at least good and 45 per cent of lessons were very good or excellent. There were also examples of very good teaching in Years 5 and 6. Overall, the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, with more lessons graded good and very good. Across the school, teaching makes a significant positive impact on pupils' learning; it promotes good progress, good attitudes to learning and good behaviour.
18. Teaching is satisfactory overall in the reception class, although there are examples of very good support and guidance for children in the area of personal, social and emotional development and good teaching of physical development. The class teacher receives good support from the well-trained learning support assistant, and together they create a very positive environment where children learn to relate to each other successfully. Teaching is sound in the other areas of learning. There is an appropriate emphasis on learning through practical activities, but more use could be made of the outside area. The 'plan, do and review' sessions, when children decide what they are going to do and then report what they have done, are used well to involve children in their own learning. Children who may have special educational needs are identified early and given appropriate additional support. Their progress is carefully monitored.
19. The good and very good teaching is characterised by well-planned lessons and interesting, well-focused activities, especially of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. A strong point of the teaching is the very good management of pupils, which results in them developing good behaviour and positive attitudes to work. No time is wasted. Teachers have high expectations and pupils gain much-needed confidence and self-esteem as a result of the good relationships that staff develop with them. Pupils develop a lively interest in their activities and they work hard. Time is used effectively and support staff are well deployed to support individuals and groups of pupils with special educational needs, so that they make good progress during lessons. Teachers are implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies very effectively. During an excellent literacy lesson in Year 2, games were used very successfully to extend pupils' knowledge of sounds and the teacher engaged with pupils very well to maintain their interest. The plenary session at the end was also made into a game, when the teacher read out pupils' definitions and pupils were asked to guess the words. Good opportunities are provided in other subjects, such as history and science, to extend pupils' recording skills and their ability to explain their findings to others and to widen their vocabularies. At times, and in some subjects such as geography, pupils of all levels of attainment are given the same work to do. The less able are given more support and they are often not expected to complete as much written work. This can mean that pupils capable of higher attainment are not sufficiently challenged, which was an issue raised in the last inspection.

20. Teachers are skilled in finding different ways to question pupils and to help them extend and reinforce their ideas. On occasions, especially in the upper part of the school, teachers fail to notice that a small minority of vociferous boys dominate the question-and-answer sessions. They have the confidence to put up their hands to answer questions, whilst the girls sit passively. Some teachers do not target individual girls sufficiently to counteract this. This tendency has already been identified in lesson monitoring undertaken by senior staff, but the issue has not yet been satisfactorily addressed. Generally, however, the school's awareness of equality of opportunity for all its pupils is good. Withdrawal of pupils for extra support, such as reading or teaching ICT skills, is done systematically on a rolling programme.
21. Throughout the school, teachers get to know pupils well. They make assessments during lessons through discussions with pupils and general observations. A good use of additional staff was observed in Year 3, when the learning support assistant made notes during the mental mathematics section of a numeracy lesson to highlight individual pupils' attainment and participation in activities. Teachers talk to pupils about their work and they give them good opportunities to explain to other pupils what they have done. This effectively extends their speaking skills, helps them to clarify their ideas and increases their self-confidence. A good example of this was seen in Year 2, when pupils were encouraged to explain how they had solved mental arithmetic problems. Marking is variable, but most teachers comment on pupils' work to help them improve and also to show that their efforts are valued. Targets are set for individual pupils and these help pupils focus on what they need to do to improve. The quality of the targets varies from class to class with no overall monitoring to ensure consistency. Very good examples are seen in Years 2, 5 and 6, where the targets are specific, and they are regularly reviewed. Teachers share assessment information with their pupils and involve them in the assessment process. In a Year 3 English lesson, for example, pupils undertook some extended writing which was to be assessed, and they were very interested to know what they needed to do to reach different levels of attainment.
22. Homework is used satisfactorily to consolidate and extend pupils' learning, especially in English and mathematics, but pupils do not always complete it, even though the school provides a homework club.
23. In most subjects, teachers have at least secure subject knowledge. However, observations of planning and discussions with teachers suggest that some teachers lack confidence and subject knowledge in music, especially in composing and the use of musical instruments, and in covering the study of contrasting areas in geography.
24. There is a very small number of pupils with English as an additional language. They receive appropriate additional support from a teacher provided by the local education authority. There is effective liaison with school staff, so that pupils also receive the support they need throughout the week.
25. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. There is a high proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register in most classes and the overall good provision for them is a key factor in the good progress they make in relation to their prior attainment. Support staff, and additional staff with specialist expertise, are used very effectively to give assistance in lessons, and some pupils are also withdrawn for intensive tuition individually or within a small group.

The school allocates part of its own budget to ensure that there is an appropriate number of learning support staff available to give the help and reinforcement required. Setting arrangements in the upper part of the school provide good support for pupils with a range of different learning needs in English and mathematics, as do the in-class grouping arrangements for English and mathematics in the lower school. These different grouping arrangements enable teachers to target their teaching to the particular learning needs of pupils with special educational needs, which helps these pupils to make good progress towards their individual targets. Small group withdrawal sessions, for pupils with special educational needs with the specialist teacher, are well planned and carefully evaluated. The school needs to ensure that a range of appropriate follow-up tasks are provided during teaching of subjects other than English and mathematics in mixed ability groups, in order to provide additional support to pupils with special educational needs in these subjects.

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

26. The curriculum provides a broad range of worthwhile and interesting opportunities for learning, often through practical experiences. Provision is similar to that at the time of the last inspection. Overall, the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language. On occasions, the more able are not sufficiently challenged and insufficient attention is paid to ensuring that girls are fully involved in activities. The programmes of study for most subjects, including the locally agreed syllabus for religious education, are securely covered with appropriate time allocation. The exception is geography in Years 3 to 6. All the required elements of the curriculum are covered, but insufficient emphasis is placed on ensuring that pupils develop a clear understanding of life in areas that are different from their own and the reasons for these differences. There has been good improvement in the curriculum for ICT since the last inspection. Swimming in physical education is a strong feature, as pupils in most year groups swim at the nearby leisure centre and pupils attain high standards of proficiency. The school has very effective strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, using the National Strategies. It appropriately devotes a substantial amount of time to these as pupils have very limited skills in these areas when they start school. A successful curriculum organisation feature, that is helping to raise standards, is setting in Years 4, 5 and 6 for literacy and numeracy, so pupils can work in smaller, ability groups.
27. Overall, the quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the reception class are satisfactory. Long and medium-term planning takes account of the early learning goals set for children of this age and covers the recommended areas of learning. On occasions, greater use of the regular assessments needs to be made in order to make a closer match between tasks and the learning needs of some children in daily planning. Fuller daily use of the outdoor area could also be made, to enhance children's learning opportunities. A strength is the provision for children's personal, social and emotional development.
28. Subject co-ordinators undertake their curriculum responsibilities well. Policies are in place and are updated as required. In Years 1 to 6, national guidelines from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) are used as schemes to support teachers' medium-term plans in most subjects. There is scope to tailor the QCA schemes more precisely to reflect the school's approach.

The curriculum for personal, social and health education and for citizenship is being very effectively covered. Pupils explore their feelings and responses to social and moral issues in regular class discussions or 'circle times'. Through a planned programme of activities that sometimes involves support from external agencies they learn about healthy living styles, they gain an awareness of the dangers of drug misuse and they learn about sex education.

29. The school fully meets the curricular and other requirements of the high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs as described in statements and individual education plans. Learning support assistants are used very effectively to enable these pupils to access the curriculum fully. The school's setting and grouping arrangements benefit all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs. The school takes care to monitor any time taken away from the mainstream classroom during intensive small group withdrawal sessions for pupils with special educational needs, to ensure that these pupils are not denied access to the same learning opportunities as their peers.
30. During their years at school, pupils all have the opportunity to take part in a good variety of extra-curricular activities, including sports coaching, matches and events, choir and other musical ventures with other local schools. The school also runs a homework club. A few parents expressed a view that there ought to be extra-curricular opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2, but the provision is similar to that in most schools. Recently, for the first time, the school organised a short residential visit for the oldest pupils that proved very popular. Interesting visits are undertaken to support pupils' learning and many visitors are invited to the school to enrich the curriculum. The school is in an area that has little community focus and these links are difficult to forge. It has useful curriculum and informal links with nearby secondary schools, and students undergoing teacher training gain experience at the school.
31. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as it was at the last inspection, but, within this, there are very good features and aspects that could be developed further. Spiritual development continues to be explored soundly through collective worship and religious education. Assemblies are interesting and they develop moral and social as well as spiritual themes. The time set aside for reflection, however, tends to be rushed at the end of assembly and more could be done to focus pupils on the experience of quiet contemplation. In religious education, pupils learn about the values and beliefs of Christianity and the other main faiths, but there is scope for older pupils to explore their insights into the meaning, purpose and hopes for their lives. Instances of pupils' spiritual development occurring naturally within learning are apparent, for instance, in the heartfelt comments individuals wrote in the small special books they created to place on the model 'Qur'an stands' that they had made. However, spiritual responses to experiences are not highlighted in planning for subjects, so opportunities for these to be fostered more widely in the lives of pupils are not always exploited.
32. Provision for pupils' moral and social understanding is very good. Their appreciation of right and wrong is focused by clear rules that are few in number and easy to understand and follow by all. These are reinforced very effectively in the sharing assembly, when any wrong-doing that has occurred is discussed in general terms and pupils comment on how it is linked to particular rules.

There is a clear expectation that pupils will show respect for each other, the staff and school property. There are well-organised award systems in place to value pupils' achievements and good behaviour, including the opportunity to earn a small amount of 'Golden Time' each week for free-choice activities. Staff are very good role models and the whole-school ethos reflects the way that adults value pupils and strive to raise individual's self-esteem where this is low. There is a good range of activities in the curriculum, for instance in ICT, design and technology and physical education, where pupils are encouraged to work in partnership with each other. Pupils are expected to contribute socially to the life of the school community, through helping in class and around the school, organising charity activities and through formal experiences, such as being members of the school council. Older pupils have been involved in interviewing prospective teachers and in speaking to a group of new parents and answering questions from them.

33. Adequate provision is made for pupils' cultural development and most subjects make a worthwhile contribution to aspects of pupils' cultural education. For instance, in Year 2, pupils have been taught about the painting style of Mondrian. They then used ICT to create their own similar pictures. More consideration has been given to broadening pupils' multi-cultural experiences since the last inspection. There have been interest weeks focusing on African and Indian themes with visiting dancers and music groups. Different faith festivals are occasionally celebrated in assemblies, and the religious education curriculum explores the cultures linked to several faiths in some depth. In literacy, pupils study texts and poems from other cultures. There is still scope to focus on how the planned curriculum can raise pupils' awareness of Britain's cultural diversity further.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The quality of the pastoral care offered to pupils is a strength of the school. It has been very well maintained since the last inspection. There are several key reasons why pastoral care is so good. Firstly, there are very good policies and procedures, which cover every possible aspect of this area of the school's work. Teachers and support staff are made very well aware of these so that they all respond consistently and confidently to pupils' needs. The school's very good arrangements for child protection are a good example of this. All staff are constantly vigilant about pupils' well-being and they are ready to spot concerns. Teachers keep copies of guidance notes in their daily planning files, while support staff keep detailed records when they administer first aid. The headteacher, who is responsible for child protection in the school, is always keen to work closely with parents if their children have any problems. Very good use is made of outside agencies to provide extra support for the particular needs of individual pupils.
35. The very good pastoral care in the school is also reflected in the orderly routines, which are organised to encourage calmness and discipline. Teachers lead their pupils in from the playground in lines first thing in the morning and after break and lunch, for example, and they go to assembly and to lunch in a similar way. This helps to contribute to the high standards of behaviour in the school. Staff promote discipline very well. They all have a consistently calm and positive attitude to pupils and they manage behaviour very well. Rewards and sanctions are applied fairly and these work very well in motivating pupils. All staff are involved. The caretaker nominates a class to receive the 'Golden Broom' award for the tidiest classroom. The winners were announced in assembly, and the class that won was genuinely pleased to receive the award. The school works hard to eradicate bullying and other unacceptable behaviour. The few incidents of such behaviour are taken seriously and handled firmly.

36. The role of the school's learning support assistants, who also act as midday supervisors, means that the school gives continuity in pupils' pastoral care throughout the day. Staff know the children and the children know them, and, as a result, pupils feel settled and supported at lunchtime. Midday staff get on with pupils well and join in with their games. They notice if pupils are not enjoying their food or are not having fun in the playground, and pass their concerns on to senior staff if necessary. The arrangements for first aid are good. Procedures for treating pupils and recording details are very good, and the imminent plans for a new medical room will mean that the school has suitable facilities for administering first aid. Good attention is paid to health and safety matters and the premises are thoroughly inspected on a regular and systematic basis.
37. The school monitors absence and promotes attendance very well, and as a result, it has been able to improve attendance steadily over the last few years. The key to its success is its very rigorous approach to contacting families on the first day of absence and pursuing the reasons for this. Learning support assistants are well deployed in updating and overseeing registers, and very good use is made of the support available from the Educational Welfare Officer in pursuing the most persistent absentees and latecomers. The school analyses its attendance data carefully, to make sure that its efforts are appropriately targeted. Rewards for good attendance work well, motivating pupils to do their best to come to school regularly.
38. Academic support for pupils is good overall. The reception class teacher makes careful observations of children's activities and builds up a clear record of what they know and understand. However, insufficient use is made of the assessment information to guide planning for daily activities and to ensure that they meet individual children's learning needs. Teachers assess pupils' work well in the core areas of reading, writing and mathematics, and they use this information effectively to plan for their future progress. Teachers carry out regular day-to-day evaluation of pupils' work in class and in their books. This enables them to build up good, detailed portfolios of their pupils' progress, set them according to their ability, deploy learning support assistants well to offer support in lessons, and devise targets for future improvement. Pupils are aware of their targets, but some find them of limited use because their quality is inconsistent across the school. While some are very specific and easy for pupils to understand, others are too vague to be helpful. Those in Year 2 and Year 5 are particularly good. Targets are not currently communicated to parents.
39. The school has good assessment and monitoring systems for pupils with special educational needs and a comprehensive policy on special educational needs. Individual education plans are regularly reviewed and appropriate targets are set. Pupils are moved off the register when their progress indicates no need for further additional support. Funding for pupils with a statement of special educational need is used well to provide additional support. The school makes additional funding available as well, in order to enhance staffing ratios to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Support staff form close and positive relationships with the pupils they work with. The school has good links with a wide range of other professional agencies, which provide additional support and advice for pupils with special educational needs. These include educational psychologists, the learning support service, the behaviour unit, speech and language therapists, physiotherapists and other advisory support services. A good feature of the special needs provision is the way that the results of the baseline assessment, carried out soon after children enter the school, are used to identify children who may have special educational needs so that they may be given early additional support.

40. School staff work well with the teacher who provides additional support for the very few pupils with English as an additional language. Assessment procedures are good and they give a clear indication of pupils' progress and their learning needs.
41. Beyond the classroom, the school makes very good use of test data. Children in the reception class are given baseline tests at the beginning and end of the year to check the progress they have made in their first year at school, and pupils elsewhere in the school undertake optional or national tests every year. The school analyses test results and comparative data very closely, both to track and predict the progress of individual pupils and to evaluate the effectiveness of its curriculum coverage. Common weaknesses in the different year groups can be pinpointed and the ways of filling any gaps in their understanding can be considered and planned into future work. One of the recommendations of the last inspection was that the school should develop assessment procedures in subjects other than English and mathematics. Since then, the school has tried out various different systems for these subjects. Staff have not been afraid to reject methods which have proved to be unhelpful or unworkable. The latest system is too new for its effectiveness to be judged, but all staff are consistently applying it. It is to the credit of the school that staff have persevered with this recommendation in order to find procedures that work for them, and are prepared to carry on until they are satisfied with them.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. The school has continued to work hard at building effective working relationships with its parent community since the time of the last inspection. As a result, most parents have positive views of the school. They feel that their children are happy, that teachers have high expectations of them and that they are making good progress. These feelings are well founded. The school is a calm and supportive environment where teachers expect the best from their pupils. This ensures that pupils get on well with their learning. Some parents have concerns about a number of issues. They have expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of homework given, the limited number of extra-curricular activities available, the behaviour in the school, and the school's efforts at partnership. A few are also unhappy with the provision for children with special educational needs. Opinions on the approachability of the school are split. While most parents are very pleased with this, a small number are discontented. Inspection findings indicate that parents' concerns are not justified. Homework is similar to that set in other schools of this type, while extra-curricular activities are better than would normally be found. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are consistently good throughout the school. Special needs provision is good and is very well managed. The school works tirelessly at establishing a partnership with parents, and the headteacher and her staff are readily available to parents and always willing to listen to them. A few recent encounters with parents have meant that the headteacher has had to rethink and reorganise the access to staff, and this may have disturbed some parents.
43. The links that the school establishes with parents are good. The headteacher and staff know their pupils very well and try to liaise very closely with parents for the good of the children. Any pastoral concerns are immediately acted upon and communicated to parents, even at the level of letting them know if their child is not eating enough at lunchtime. This desire to share information fully with parents is also evident in academic matters. The headteacher takes the trouble, for example, to write personal comments on all the National Curriculum test results sheets sent out to Year 6 parents, to make them clearer and more relevant to their children.

Parents' opinions are regularly sought on pertinent issues, such as bullying or homework, by means of questionnaires, and they have the chance, through the governors' annual meeting, to make suggestions for the school improvement plan. The headteacher hopes that the appointment of a family liaison officer in the near future will enable the school to offer parents other opportunities, including courses to help them support their children's learning, as well as easing pressure on existing staff.

44. Written information for parents is good. They are kept fully up to date with what is happening at the school through a range of well-presented and interesting documents, such as the prospectus, the governors' report and regular newsletters. Some staff send out information about the curriculum to be covered each term, but this good practice is not consistent across the school. Reports to parents on their children's progress are good. This is because they give parents a clear picture of how well their children are achieving for their age in English, mathematics and science. Some also indicate what children need to do to improve and make further progress, but again this is not consistent across the school. There is a good, detailed section on the child's personal and social development, which is very well promoted and monitored by the school.
45. The school makes positive efforts to both inform and support parents and to provide opportunities to discuss progress of pupils with special educational needs with individual parents. However, not all parents choose to take up these opportunities when time is made available and this makes partnership more difficult to foster in some instances. The school meets the legal requirements for reporting on special educational needs in the governors' report. Although there is a general parent notice board, there is no parent information board in the reception class area, to explain both the foundation curriculum and assessment procedures and to inform parents about aspects of special educational needs. Such information would be helpful.
46. The involvement of parents in the work of the school and their children's education is broadly satisfactory. Most ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually, and the majority come to parent consultations to discuss how their children are doing. Some support homework and hear their children read at home, and a few help in school or on trips. There is currently no active parent-teacher association, but an ex-member of staff is happy to give up her time to organise fund-raising events for the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. Leadership and management are strengths of the school. They are very good. The drive and commitment of the headteacher and senior staff have been maintained since the last inspection and have resulted in good improvement in the school since then. The headteacher leads the school with energy and determination. The deputy headteacher and the senior management team support her loyally and capably. Together they inspire a great sense of team spirit amongst the whole of the staff. Subject co-ordinators are knowledgeable and confident about taking responsibility for their areas. Delegation from the top is very good, and staff are trusted to carry out their roles, whilst being given the support they need to do this. The headteacher is very well organised, and has established systems for communication and decision making which allow staff at all levels to have their say and make their contribution. The head or her deputy meet regularly with the learning support staff, the midday staff and the office staff, for example, to ensure that everyone is well informed about the running of the school.

At the heart of their efforts is the shared desire to do everything in their power to improve standards, and this common purpose is the focus for all the school's work. The governing body gives good support to the headteacher and staff in shaping the direction of the school. The governors have good committee structures, which operate smoothly, and they carry out their statutory duties efficiently. They have a very clear understanding of the school's needs and are fully informed by the school of everything that is going on. The headteacher's reports to governors are particularly effective here, because they are so comprehensive and frank about the school's performance.

48. Leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. The headteacher works in close partnership with the specialist teacher and they jointly undertake the role of the special educational needs co-ordinator. This is an effective arrangement, since the roles and responsibilities have been carefully divided. The headteacher has very well established relationships with a range of other agencies and is able to gain access support and advice promptly. The specialist teacher has responsibility for managing the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs and she takes an active role in assessment and monitoring, together with her colleagues. The school has a good range of resources for pupils with special educational needs. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs is well informed and takes an active role in monitoring developments within the school. The school has recently added a disabled toilet to the downstairs accommodation and the school office has been relocated on the ground floor for easier access.
49. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance are very good. Management and staff are very skilled at assessing how well the school is performing and analysing the information generated. Test results, for example, are closely studied and compared with local and national equivalents. The information gained is then used to help guide the school's plans for covering the curriculum and grouping its pupils in the most effective ways. The school has responded very well to the key issue in the last report, requiring it to produce a longer-term school development plan. The current plan provides a long-term strategic view, yet is still tightly fixed to the most urgent and immediate priorities for raising standards. The plan and the progress towards its goals are regularly reviewed in senior management, staff and governors' meetings, and any necessary adjustments and amendments are made. All co-ordinators are involved in monitoring their subjects through various means, such as observing lessons, scrutinising pupils' work and checking planning. The conclusions that they draw from this are shared with staff at meetings and used to influence future practice across the school in the subject. The headteacher, senior staff and local authority advisers monitor teaching and the outcomes of this are used to highlight staff development needs and to plan future in-service training. Procedures for performance management have been well introduced and established for all staff, and new members of staff are well supported by the school as they settle in. Weekly staff meetings concentrate on training and development, and new staff feel that they learn a lot from working on, for example, planning or assessment alongside their colleagues. Staff are happy at the school. When they leave it is usually because they have achieved promotion elsewhere.
50. Financial planning is very good. The budget is closely linked to the school improvement plan, and funds available to the school are used very wisely to target the school's most pressing priorities. The headteacher and governors have a very good grasp of the school's finances, and the headteacher is skilled in tracking down and securing extra sources of funding.

The money obtained for the recent building work is a good example of this, enabling old toilets to be converted into a new office for the headteacher and a medical room. The school's current budget underspend is fully accounted for. It covers work still to be carried out as part of the ongoing building project and this leaves the school with an acceptable level of contingency funds. Specific grants such as funding for special needs and the standards fund are very well used for their intended purposes. Financial control and administration are good. The very recent audit found few areas that required action. The principles of best value are applied well. The school rigorously compares its performance with that of other schools, and challenges itself to improve. It consults widely amongst staff, governors and parents, as part of its decision-making process, and endeavours to spend its funds wisely by seeking competitive prices for services.

51. The school is very well provided with suitably qualified teaching and support staff. They are deployed very effectively to promote pupils' learning. Additional teachers are employed so that junior pupils can be divided into smaller sets for English and mathematics, for example, while learning support assistants are appropriately trained to meet the demands of their particular roles. There is good support for the teacher entering the profession through the Graduate Trainee Programme. The school's accommodation is good. It is well cleaned and maintained, and, along with the high quality of the displays, this results in a bright and stimulating environment for pupils to learn in. The grounds are also developed well to provide a good resource, for example, for science. Recent improvements have shown an imaginative use of space and have created better administration and pastoral facilities. The new ICT suite is very helpful for the teaching of the subject and for developing the use of ICT across the curriculum. At present, opportunities for pupils to undertake independent research are limited by the fact that the library is housed in a separate mobile unit, which is also used for teaching small groups. Learning resources in the school are satisfactory overall. There are good new resources for ICT, which have helped to raise standards in this subject area since the last inspection. Provision for English, particularly books, and for mathematics is also good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

52. Continue the good practice already in the school to further raise attainment in:-

- i. mathematics by age seven;
(paragraphs 2,3,4,5,8,71,73,76,77,78)
- ii. writing across the school.
(paragraphs 2,3,4,5,62,63,66,67,68,69)

Raise attainment in geography by age eleven by:-

- i. providing staff training to increase teachers' confidence and subject knowledge;
- ii. improving the resources for studying contrasting localities;
- iii. monitoring planning and the work produced to ensure that topics, such as the study of contrasting localities, are covered in sufficient depth.
(paragraphs 5,23,26,96,97,99)

In addition to the key issues, the school should:-

- i. monitor the teaching and learning of girls and take any necessary action to ensure that their attainment more closely matches that of boys;
(paragraphs 4,13,20,63,70,79,80,83)
- ii. vary the work set in subjects, such as science, geography and history, to give more opportunities for higher attaining pupils to extend their skills and understanding;
(paragraphs 10,19,25,83,103)
- iii. improve teachers' subject knowledge in music, especially in composing and the use of musical instruments.
(paragraphs 23,112,113)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	53
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	17	55	26	0	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	229
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	32
Special educational needs	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	128
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	28
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	25

Attendance

Authorised absence 1999 - 2000

	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence 1999 – 2000

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	18	12	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	16
	Girls	12	11	11
	Total	27	26	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (62)	87 (72)	90 (66)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	16
	Girls	12	11	11
	Total	27	27	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (72)	90 (72)	90 (76)
	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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	10	19	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	5	8
	Girls	10	9	13
	Total	16	14	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	55 (41)	48 (54)	72 (56)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	6	5
	Girls	8	10	10
	Total	11	16	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	39 (39)	57 (44)	54 (49)
	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	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	226
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	3	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.4
Average class size	25.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	174

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000 - 01
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	£
Total income	498,595
Total expenditure	481,784
Expenditure per pupil	1991
Balance brought forward from previous year	49,481
Balance carried forward to next year	66,292

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	230
Number of questionnaires returned	85

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	42	45	7	6	0
My child is making good progress in school.	39	49	7	4	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	18	63	14	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	57	14	4	4
The teaching is good.	37	49	5	2	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	57	2	8	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	29	8	7	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	42	7	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	23	55	12	8	2
The school is well led and managed.	35	44	8	5	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	54	5	5	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	51	15	1	7

A few parents at the parents' meeting were dissatisfied with the provision for pupils with special educational needs, whilst others felt that their children were well supported.

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

53. Children enter the reception class at the beginning of the academic year in which they will be five. They attend on a part-time basis at first, based on their age, but by the end of the term, all children attend full time. Baseline assessment, which is undertaken within the first seven weeks of starting school, shows overall attainment on entry to be well below national expectations for children of this age, especially in the key areas of communication, language and literacy and mathematics. The school has effective links with a number of different pre-school providers in the area, although around 50 per cent of the children, who start school, have had no pre-school experience at a nursery or playgroup.
54. The reception class is located in two connected classrooms with toilet facilities within this area, as well as new cloakroom and toilet facilities nearby. The base has easy access to a pleasant outdoor area, which, at the present time, is partially enclosed and includes a large covered tented area, a wooden playhouse and a small storage unit.
55. The co-ordinator has a sound understanding of the needs of young children and works in effective partnership with a well-trained learning support assistant. Children with special educational needs are identified early and appropriate support and monitoring procedures are put in place to support these children.

Personal, social and emotional development

56. Teaching in this area is very good, as staff take great care to establish a very positive classroom atmosphere where children learn to take turns, share resources and play in co-operation with others. Good use is made of large planning boards and individual name pegs to encourage children to select independent activities at various times of the day, and their participation is carefully monitored. The children are taught the difference between right and wrong behaviour in school through the careful choice of moral stories and discussion of right actions. The school's positive reward systems are introduced right from the start, and, for example, one child was awarded a special sticker in assembly for being brave whilst out on the school trip to Seaworld in Hastings. Self-help is encouraged when children are changing their clothes and shoes for activities in the hall. Children gain from the good support provided by older pupils who befriend them as playground buddies and assist them as they learn to walk around the building sensibly after play and at lunchtime. Another very good feature is the teacher's emphasis on children talking through and reviewing activities, which have been chosen and undertaken during independent learning times.

Communication, language and literacy

57. Teaching in communication, language and literacy is sound and the teacher takes opportunities to develop children's speaking and listening skills through, for example, role-play in the hospital and shopping tasks linked to their recent seaside trip to Seaworld. The teacher models the processes of reading and writing in appropriate ways and helps children to understand the connection between spoken language and written words. She takes due account of the need for early work in phonics, where children learn the names and the sounds of initial letters and of the need to build up children's sight recognition of simple familiar words that they frequently meet in books.

An appropriate range of large texts is used for whole-class sessions. For example, children enjoyed locating the words 'go' and 'going', using a large hand pointer stick, after reading the story of the 'Bear Hunt' together. At times, the pace of storytelling and group reading is a little too slow, but children are taught the skills for early reading in a systematic way and higher attaining children are confident in tackling simple familiar introductory reading books. Books are taken home on a regular basis and parents are invited to comment on reading in home-school reading records. The book area in the classroom needs to be made more inviting and stimulating, although satisfactory use is made of puppets linked to familiar stories. Writing skills are taught systematically. Higher attaining children enjoy their early attempts at independent writing when they write about the story of 'Little Red Riding Hood' and the 'Bear Hunt', and less experienced writers enjoy the tactile experience of forming letters in finger paint and plasticine. Many children are still gaining confidence in writing their names independently by the end of the Foundation Stage, and most children are still working towards the early learning goals in this area of learning by the end of the reception year.

Mathematical development

58. Teaching in this area is satisfactory as children have opportunities to undertake a range of first-hand practical mathematical activities in small groups, such as sand and water play, sorting and counting objects through turn-taking games and exploring the exchange of money in a real-life shopping setting. Children learn how to form their numerals through guided practice, and they enjoy sorting objects into different sets in whole-class mathematical games. Although the teacher and the learning support assistant maintain careful records of what individual children are able to do during activities, insufficient use is made of this to inform future planning and to set tasks which closely match children's identified learning needs. For example, higher attaining children were asked to undertake a counting task which involved counting and recording in units of two pence. Without adult support this proved too challenging. By the end of the reception year, most children are still likely to be working towards the early learning goals set for this age.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

59. Teaching in this area is sound. The teacher makes appropriate provision for role-play, and photographic evidence shows the children dressed up as nurses, doctors and patients in the role-play hospital area. Children enjoy exploring a variety of different items, such as scented candles, a noisy pump, carved items and fragrant rose petals, using their senses, as they discuss a range of objects with their teacher in small groups. They learn about the different sea creatures, which they are likely to encounter at Seaworld, and they think about the seaside habitat. In a well-taught lesson they made up simple dance movements to represent these different creatures, twisting and stretching their bodies into shapes to represent sea horses, crabs, sharks and mermaids. Two classroom shops provide the chance to buy spades, buckets, sunhats, sunglasses and various other beach items using plastic coins, and this work links to mathematical development. By the end of the reception year, most children are still working towards the early learning goals for this area, but they have made satisfactory gains in knowledge and understanding from the wide range of first-hand learning experiences provided. A few children are still rather passive, however, and need more encouragement to investigate and ask questions.

Physical development

60. Teaching in this area of learning is good and children make good progress in developing their gross motor skills. Fine motor skills are appropriately supported through handling small construction materials and through learning to use pencils and different mark-making tools and scissors. When the outdoor area is used, children have appropriate opportunities to use a range of cars, carts and tricycles. Children particularly enjoyed simple throwing and catching activities, using beanbags, and hoops and large skittles, when they played outside with the enthusiastic learning support assistant. She supported their social skills well through this and participated in their play, which was beneficial to the children. The teacher made good use of individual demonstration to show imaginative ways of travelling across the hall space as children pretended to be different sea creatures. Children showed a satisfactory awareness of space as they moved around the hall to music. By the end of the reception year, most children are likely to reach the expected goals for this age.

Creative development

61. Teaching in this area is satisfactory and the teacher provides an appropriate range of activities. Children take a real interest in handling different textured materials, cutting and making simple collage pictures and patterns with cut paper. Finger paints are a great excitement. One child said, "Oh my hands have gone all strawberry," as she handled the pink paint. Children enjoy experimenting with musical instruments and learning to sing new songs and action rhymes. More daily emphasis on this aspect would enhance the curriculum provided and would increase opportunities for extending children's speaking and listening skills. Role-play is offered within the curriculum, but fuller opportunities to extend and develop this area could be made to create a richer and more stimulating atmosphere for learning and investigating. By the end of the reception year, most children reach some of the expected targets for this age, but they are still developing their imaginative play and the range of expressive language they use to communicate ideas and responses.

ENGLISH

62. Overall, English standards are below average for pupils at both seven and eleven years old. In the year 2000 national tests, nine out of ten seven year olds achieved the level 2 standard or better in reading, more than the proportion nationally. However, as considerably fewer pupils than nationally gained the higher level 3 standard, pupils' performance overall was below the national average. Writing standards were similarly below average as very few pupils achieved the highest grading within the level 2 range or level 3. This year, 2001, the unverified results of national tests for Year 2 pupils show a dip in the proportion of pupils gaining level 2 or better in reading and writing, but within this, more pupils have achieved the higher grades of levels 2A and 3. This cohort of pupils started school with very low literacy skills. Data analysis shows that most have exceeded the reading and writing standards predicted by their baseline test scores when they entered school, and this demonstrates very good progress in literacy during their time in school.
63. The national test results that eleven year old pupils achieved in English just after the last inspection were very low. Since then an improving trend has been underway. In the year 2000, 55 per cent of pupils gained the expected level 4 and 10 per cent of these reached the higher level 5; this was well below the national average. Unconfirmed results for this academic year, 2001, show a marked 17 per cent improvement in overall English results, drawing close to last year's national average score. However, there has been no rise in the proportion gaining the higher level 5. In both years, boys have outperformed girls at the higher level.

This year's results show that reading standards have improved strongly. Writing standards, though, lag behind. The school is able to show through its good tracking system that, based on Year 2 test results, almost all pupils have progressed by the expected two National Curriculum levels during their time in Years 3 to 6, with a quarter exceeding this in reading and a third doing so in writing.

64. The speaking skills of pupils in Years 1 and 2 are below average, because of the high proportion of lower attaining pupils who have limited vocabularies and immature use of tenses. Nevertheless, the encouragement that pupils receive from teachers helps them become confident about speaking out in class. By age seven, the average and more able pupils converse and put forward their ideas quite readily and are keen to demonstrate they know words connected with the topics they are learning about. This was seen in the introductory section of an extended writing lesson, where Year 2 pupils were keen to contribute their observations about a recent castle visit and readily recalled new vocabulary. This sound progress is built on effectively in Years 3 to 6. By age eleven, most pupils converse sensibly and explain their ideas soundly, at a broadly average standard. The higher ability group of Year 4 pupils demonstrated confidence in expressing their views when talking about different advertisements, and a small group read with great confidence and expression in assembly. Pupils across the school have average listening skills. They are usually very attentive when teachers are speaking and they listen carefully to each other. This enables them to follow teachers' instructions accurately and to join in sensibly with discussions and group conversations. Lesson observations show that, across the curriculum, pupils are taught new vocabulary and teachers generally make time for pupils to talk about what they are learning. Moreover, teachers use probing questions so that pupils have to explain their ideas. Although the school has a scheme for speaking and listening, it is not noticeable in literacy or other subject plans how this is being used to enhance speaking skills through role-play, drama and debate, so opportunities to improve pupils' spoken language are not always exploited.
65. Standards in reading are below average for pupils at age seven, because few pupils exceed the standard expected, but for pupils aged eleven they are average. The results are similar to those attained by seven year olds in national tests soon after the last inspection and they have improved for eleven year olds. Average Year 2 pupils read their books with interest and accuracy, and they make good use of their knowledge of sound and letter relationships, and text clues, to help them read unfamiliar words. More able pupils read books with a larger amount of text accurately and fluently. The reason for below average reading standards is that a high proportion of pupils have special educational needs in literacy. The regular, small group teaching they receive is enabling them to make good progress with reading. These lower attaining pupils know some words by sight and can, with support, read familiar books. Year 2 pupils are benefiting from high quality teaching about phonemes and how to blend these to read words. This is reflected in their word building skills, and also in spelling when writing, as evidenced by the national test results where over a quarter of pupils gained the more advanced level 3 standard. By age eleven, average and able pupils are reading junior novels with reasonable confidence, and, in discussion, they expressed preferences for those by Jacqueline Wilson, J.K.Rowling and J.R.Tolkien. They understand differences in genre of books and authors' styles, they are able to establish significant ideas from texts and they make inferences about the nature of individual characters. Less able pupils' reading of simple texts is largely accurate but not yet fluent. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are often keeping very detailed reading records, reviewing the books they have read thoughtfully and offering opinions for their likes and dislikes.

66. Standards in writing are close to average for seven year olds. The strong emphasis in Year 2 on developing spelling and basic punctuation skills, and opportunities to write in different styles, and at length, has enabled pupils to make good progress in writing this year. Average and able pupils write about their favourite holiday places, giving reasons for their choices. They comment on similarities and differences, such as the features at Hindu and Christian weddings, and they write imaginatively, linking ideas together, to create new adventures for story characters. In handwriting, letter formation is usually correct and reasonably neat. A few pupils are moving on to cursive script. Pupils writing non-fiction accounts about Dover Castle were keen to do this well and took care over positioning their writing and pictures. Pupils also regularly use word-processing skills to present their work attractively. Those that have special educational needs are supported well with their writing, as seen in a small group session where they were helped to write simple sentences about their visit.
67. Writing standards are below average for the present cohort of eleven year olds. These pupils organise their writing soundly for different purposes, such as interviews, letters, factual accounts, poems and stories. A good feature is the accurate use of punctuation demonstrated by average and above average pupils, clearly a product of effective teaching. However, errors are made too often in spelling common words. Even pupils that have gained the more advanced standard in national tests do not produce consistently high quality work; it is marred by errors in spelling, and handwriting is sometimes not well formed. Scrutiny of current work indicates no marked difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Elsewhere, notably in Years 4 and 5, standards are similar to, and for a few able pupils better than, those usually seen for these age groups. Good progress, and in some instances very good progress, has been made this year. For instance, Year 5 pupils have written at length and realistically on the future of television, and Year 4 pupils' persuasive writing, for and against keeping battery hens, is lively, personal and well argued for their age. In these year groups, spelling, punctuation and handwriting skills are all good for the average and able pupils.
68. The quality of teaching is very good overall in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6 with good quality learning overall. No teaching seen in literacy lessons was less than good and over half was very good or excellent. This is an improvement on the teaching seen at the last inspection. Teaching of the literacy strategy is skilful, planning is thorough and teachers use a variety of methods and resources to make lessons effective. For instance, in an excellent Year 2 lesson the teacher had adapted a phonics activity into a game in which all the class were eager to be involved. Account had been taken of their varying abilities so the task was harder for able pupils than lower attainers and all could participate and succeed. This lesson progressed seamlessly into work on a glossary. Skilful questioning probed pupils' recall of the features of non-fiction books, and pupils confidently contributed to a discussion about the purpose of glossaries, how these should be constructed and how to write a definition. In a very well taught lesson in Year 5, pupils were expertly guided with pertinent questions to explore a difficult text from another culture; they read the text aloud with confidence, expressed views on the characters' personalities and found words to change the dialogue into standard English. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and they manage them well. Consequently, pupils are attentive and, in most observations, they settled to tasks quickly, maintained concentration well and worked productively. Learning support assistants are used effectively to ensure that less able pupils, and those with special educational needs, participate in lessons. This has a positive effect on the progress they make.

There is a small amount of good external support for the very few pupils learning English as an additional language. Teachers' marking of pupils' work in English is usually affirming and often comments on what pupils need to do to improve. There are some very good examples of the use of individual target setting for pupils. Even young pupils know what they are meant to focus on. However, in some classes target setting is being used less productively.

69. There has been good improvement in the subject since the last inspection. Important features are the careful grouping of pupils in Years 1 and 2, so those with special educational needs have focused sessions with the special educational needs teacher, and the setting of pupils from Year 4 onward. The additional funding that is put into this, to enable pupils to be taught in smaller groups based on ability, is having a considerable impact on raising standards. Weaknesses have been worked upon, so spelling has improved, as have handwriting skills. There is a language policy but, as expected, the National Literacy Strategy forms the basis of planning in English. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator and support colleague. They are clear about future priorities to raise standards further. They monitor pupils' work and advise other staff. However, they do not regularly scrutinise teachers' short-term plans against the medium-term ones, to evaluate the quality and progression of the curriculum. There are high quality assessment procedures in place for reading and writing but not for speaking and listening. More analysis of pupils' speaking skills would help to clarify the response and attainment of girls in this aspect and would assist in informing future work. Funds have been wisely spent on good quality reading resources. The library is well appointed with plenty of books, and those pupils who were asked, knew how to find non-fiction texts. However, because it is situated outside the main building it is difficult for pupils to access the library easily and it cannot be used to maximum advantage; the senior managers are exploring ways to remedy this.

MATHEMATICS

70. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests for eleven year old pupils, attainment was well below the national average and below average when compared to similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 5 was well below average. These results continue a run of four years when results have been consistently below average. However, the 2000 group of eleven year old pupils had a very high proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register and a significant number of these pupils achieved below average scores in the tests. The school also had a higher than average proportion of pupils leaving and joining the school in Years 3 to 6. Results for 2000, however, are higher than those attained just after the last inspection. Inspection evidence, and provisional information from this year's National Curriculum tests, show there has been a marked improvement in the attainment of the present eleven year old pupils. This shows a good improvement compared to pupils' attainment in their National Curriculum tests in the year of the school's last inspection. The proportion of pupils gaining the expected level 4 or above has risen significantly, with a large improvement in the proportion of pupils gaining the higher level 5. The great majority of pupils gaining these higher levels are boys as there is a much higher number of boys in the top ability set. In other years, there is a much more even spread of boys and girls in the different sets and very little difference in their attainment. Much of the improvement is due to the school's arrangements for grouping pupils by ability, the reduced numbers in each group due to the employment of an extra member of staff, and the well-focused in-service support teachers have received during the present year.

71. The 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven year old pupils showed a big improvement on the previous year, with 90 per cent of pupils gaining the expected level 2. However, because of the much lower than average proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels, pupils' performance overall was well below average compared to all schools, but average when compared to similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that the present group of pupils aged seven is below average. However, many of the pupils have made good and often very good progress since they joined the school in the reception class, as they had extremely low scores in the baseline tests they took on entry to the school.
72. By age eleven, pupils have good skills in addition, subtraction and multiplication, although their division skills are less well developed because of their insecure knowledge of multiplication tables. Higher achieving pupils work accurately to three decimal places and have a good knowledge of place value. Whilst they have a satisfactory knowledge of inverse operations, their understanding of probability is below average. Pupils have satisfactory knowledge of shape, space and measure and use their understanding of angles and 24-hour time well in associated activities. Pupils have sound understanding of using data in graph work and for other calculations, such as when the higher attaining set calculates the cost of a family holiday on different summer dates using information from travel brochures. Pupils make good progress because teachers plan and mark their work carefully and target cards identify pupils' individual weaknesses, which are successfully addressed through extra support and selected homework.
73. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school, because the curriculum is appropriate to the needs of all pupils and teachers plan pupils' work carefully. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are developing good mental strategies, because of the emphasis that teachers place on this aspect of work. Year 1 pupils have a satisfactory understanding of number and a good knowledge of three-dimensional shapes and their properties. Most tell the time accurately using o'clock and half-past. Higher attaining pupils have above average skills in their number work. In Year 2, pupils are making particularly good progress in number work; clearly seen when they find the product of numbers on two dice. Pupils have very good strategies for working out their answers. For example, one higher achieving pupil was able to mentally calculate 9×12 by holding 90 in her head and adding on 18. Pupils are developing a satisfactory understanding of halves and quarters, with higher achieving pupils recognising that two quarters make a half and knowing that some shapes cannot easily be halved or quartered. The great majority of pupils' have a satisfactory understanding of graph work with higher achieving pupils having sound data interpretation skills.
74. Good progress continues through Years 3 to 6, where the impact of the National Numeracy Strategy and the use of setting in Years 4, 5 and 6 are leading to an increasing number of higher achieving pupils. This is because the school has a deliberate policy of reducing group size for the subject and for grouping pupils by ability. In Year 3, progress is less marked than in other years because the teacher has the full range of ability in the class and sometimes higher achieving pupils are not being sufficiently challenged. Pupils' mental mathematics ability is below average because their number skills are still weak, despite the clear emphasis on them. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of place value and understand how to calculate a third of a number. However, very few can use this information to calculate two-thirds of the same number. Higher achieving pupils have a good understanding of symmetry and use co-ordinates accurately for shapes in the first quadrant.

All pupils construct block graphs about favourite football teams but only the higher achievers can use the data to answer questions. Year 4 pupils have made good improvements in their mental mathematics and some higher achieving pupils have made very good progress during the year. There is a wide ability gap in this class but the needs of all are being met by good quality teaching which is enabling pupils to make good progress in all aspects of the subject, apart from handling data where pupils' skills are not as well developed. Pupils in Year 5 have made particularly good progress in all aspects, and this year's assessments have shown that pupils' attainment is now average, with a significant minority of pupils attaining above average standards. Pupils are very confident in their number work, with all in the top ability set having very good tables recall, which has led to noticeable improvements in their mental arithmetic work. Pupils interpret data well in their graph work and higher achieving pupils have a good knowledge of the properties of quadrilaterals and use this knowledge well in their translation work.

75. Pupils throughout the school have particularly positive attitudes to the subject and work hard during lessons. Much of this is due to the teachers' good understanding of pupils' abilities and their ensuring that the work they set is interesting and challenging. As a result, pupils produce a good volume of work. Pupils' presentation of their work is of a good standard because teachers have high expectations and clearly point out to them when their work is not as good as it should be. Occasionally, such as in a Year 6 lesson, the work set is not appropriate for pupils' abilities. When this happens, pupils lose interest and do not make as much progress as they could. Pupils concentrate very well in the initial mental mathematics part of their lesson as teachers use their good knowledge of individual pupils to ensure that questioning is both appropriate and challenging. Pupils with special educational needs are sensitively supported by their learning support assistants and, like their peers, are very keen to learn. The few pupils with English as an additional language receive good reinforcement to ensure that they fully understand the concepts involved and the vocabulary used.
76. The quality of teaching seen was good overall and particularly good in Year 2. All teachers have very good subject knowledge, which is shown clearly in their planning and in the good quality questioning that builds on what pupils already know. This was particularly evident when Year 5 pupils used their knowledge of co-ordinates to make translations of capital letters. The teaching of basic skills is very good. Teachers constantly reinforce pupils' mathematical strategies so that even those who have real difficulty with their number work are still making appropriate progress. The teaching of the Year 4 lower ability group is particularly effective in this area and enables pupils to achieve well. All teachers share the lesson objectives with their pupils at the start of the session. As a result, pupils have a clear understanding of what they are going to learn and the teachers' expectations of them. The lesson objectives are also used very effectively in the end-of-lesson plenaries where, in the best lessons, such as in Years 4 and 5, pupils have opportunities to highlight areas that they have not fully understood so that these can be addressed in subsequent lessons. Teachers' marking is of good quality and, in the best cases, clearly identifies what pupils have to do to improve. However, a present weakness is that the marking rarely relates to pupils' individual targets. Teachers make good use of ICT to consolidate pupils' learning in lessons, but the school does not at present have the full range of programs for this support.

77. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced and the school has ensured that it has enough good quality resources to support the teaching. The termly planning is clear, and weekly and daily planning gives a clear indication of what pupils are to learn in lessons. These plans are carefully checked by the headteacher to ensure consistency of practice and are also used when pupils' work is monitored on a very regular basis. The subject co-ordinator has had opportunities to observe teaching and learning in the classroom and has worked closely with the ICT co-ordinator to develop the range of computer programs to support pupils' mathematical learning. All staff predict the attainment of pupils in their class by the end of the year. This informs the very thorough target-setting process. The school has made good use of the booster class for the present Year 6 pupils to raise attainment of the lower achieving pupils. The school uses homework satisfactorily to support pupils' learning.
78. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The school makes good use of National Curriculum tests and a range of other assessments, to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses. These are then addressed in termly and yearly planning for individual year groups. The planned development of pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects has not yet been fully addressed. There is, however, evidence of the use of pupils' numeracy skills in ICT, science, history and design and technology. When this happens it creates good opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge.

SCIENCE

79. Teacher assessments for seven year olds in 2000 showed that the percentages of pupils reaching level 2, the level expected for their age, and the higher level, level 3, were close to the national average. This year's provisional results, for a weaker cohort, show a similar pattern with a high percentage of pupils reaching level 2, but a decrease in the numbers reaching the higher level. Last year, at the end of Year 6 the percentage of pupils reaching level 4, the expected level for their age, was above the national average. However, the percentage reaching the higher level, level 5 was well below the national average. This year the results have improved with a higher percentage of pupils reaching the level expected and more exceeding it. The significant factor in this is that all the pupils reaching level 5 were boys. Since the last inspection four years ago, pupils' performance in the tests has risen steadily each year.
80. Work seen during the inspection confirms that a high percentage of pupils in both Years 2 and 6 are reaching the standards expected, but that few reach the higher levels. There is no marked difference between the attainment of boys and girls in Years 1 and 2, but boys are performing better by the end of Year 6, with some girls underachieving. Almost all pupils are making good gains in learning, in the knowledge they have of living things, of physical science and of scientific investigations. They have a variety of starting points, which are generally below, and often well below, those expected. All pupils are making good progress as a result of the good teaching, the support they receive and the interesting activities, which capture their interest.
81. By age seven, pupils have developed a sound base of scientific knowledge. They show a good understanding of life processes and they recognise the differences between living and non-living things. Through experiments they learn what plants need to grow. They investigate a variety of habitats by making good use of the school's well-developed grounds. They learn which conditions a variety of creatures like to live in.

Good links are made with literacy, when teachers encourage pupils' use of descriptive language to say what each habitat is like. Pupils usually record their findings on worksheets, which support pupils with limited writing skills and allow them to focus on the scientific learning. There is little evidence that pupils capable of higher attainment are required to record their work independently and this is a missed opportunity to extend their skills further. A variety of recording techniques are introduced, such as charts to show the results of an investigation into hearing, and Carroll diagrams sorting materials to show which were rough and smooth and which were dull and shiny. Links are made with numeracy, for example, when pupils record the distance vehicles travel down a ramp of varied height. Pupils record the results in centimetres and they also show an awareness of how to make the test fair, when they make comments like "We put the car at the top all the time" and "If you push it, it isn't fair".

82. By age eleven, pupils have a secure knowledge of scientific facts. They have a clear understanding of how to carry out a fair test and how to record results accurately. Most have gained the confidence to draw conclusions. There is good emphasis on practical activities, which capture pupils' interest and extend their understanding well. Pupils record their findings in a variety of ways, but there is no consistent whole-school approach to writing up experiments and much of the work is recorded on worksheets. In Year 5, however, pupils set up an investigation into the best conditions for a broad bean to grow in and they carefully set out their predictions, their results and their conclusions. Good links are made to mathematical techniques, such as a bar chart to show how pulse rates vary with exercise, and line graphs to show the pulse rate after different types of exercise. Teachers place good emphasis on developing pupils' vocabularies with a firm focus on extending the language they use, for example, when they classify materials according to whether they are translucent, opaque or transparent, and when they look at the pollination and germination of seeds.
83. Pupils' achievements and their good rate of progress in lessons are closely linked to the good teaching. Pupils, including the high numbers with special educational needs and the very small number for whom English is an additional language, make good progress. The standard of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection. Staff have secure subject knowledge and they devise good practical activities which capture pupils' interest well. Pupils have an enthusiastic approach to science and they work together well with others in a group. For example, Year 6 pupils used their knowledge of how to make an electrical circuit to devise various mechanisms, such as a buzzer, which sounds when a cupboard door is opened, and a pressure pad to warn if someone is coming. They worked on their designs as a group and most listened to each other's ideas well. Some pupils worked together in mixed gender groups and others in single sex groups. The girls contributed more effectively when they were in all-girl groups. The activity also gave pupils a good opportunity to develop their speaking skills when they explained to others what they had done. Staff manage pupils well, pupils' behaviour in lessons is good and they settle quickly to their activities, with no time wasted. Nearly all work is well presented and clearly marked, with teachers adding remarks to question pupils' ideas or to encourage them and recognise the efforts they have made. Teachers use this ongoing assessment to plan future activities. Most of the work is varied to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities by the amount of support available and the amount of recording they are expected to do. There is insufficient variation in the activities set, for example to challenge the more able pupils or groups of girls.

84. The subject is well led. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching in Years 2 and 6 and the results of national tests are carefully analysed. The information gained is shared with all staff and used well to improve the way topics are covered and the emphasis they receive. The school is trialling a new assessment recording sheet and it is too soon to judge its effectiveness.

ART AND DESIGN

85. Pupils produce work of a good standard. Overall, standards at ages seven and eleven are above average in collage and textile work. There has been an improvement since the time of the last inspection, as the school now has a scheme of work.
86. Pupils in Year 2 concentrate very well when making collage trees. They select different types of textured papers and materials with care, to represent the bark and the leaves. Some pupils also decide to create three-dimensional representations, using their knowledge and understanding of paper sculpture to good effect. Year 2 pupils also use their skills in ICT to create attractive pictures in the style of Mondrian. They show careful attention to detail when creating small houses made of clay. Pupils in Year 1 enjoy undertaking close observational drawings, handling different types of paint and making simple weaving. Year 3 pupils make string prints and explore colour wheels, whilst Year 4 pupils make attractive three-dimensional tiles from layered collage materials.
87. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 undertake a well planned unit of work on printing and textiles, in which they explore different fabric printing techniques, such as tie dying, batik, wax resist and silk and fabric painting. They make colourful weavings, using a range of materials, and they show good attention to both technique and design elements in this. Sketchbooks reflect work undertaken on critical appreciation, through, for example, the study of the work of the French artist, Cézanne, although this aspect of art is not given as high a profile as practical work.
88. Teaching in art is good overall. In a good lesson in Year 2, the teacher demonstrated techniques well to encourage the imaginative use of collage. In a good lesson in Year 4, the teacher encouraged pupils to think carefully about line and tone, when they used cotton buds to smudge pencil lines and create shadows. Pupils enjoy art lessons and they really concentrate on the work in hand, showing persistence and a positive value for their own work and that of others. Teachers have high expectations for good behaviour and provide good resources for pupils' use. Good use is made of praise and encouragement and pupils' work is displayed with pride throughout the school.
89. Co-ordination of the subject is good. The new co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and is enthusiastic about promoting art. The range and quantity of resources are good and a generous budget is allocated. The school is building up further resources for critical appreciation, to include a wider representation of art from many cultural traditions, in order to extend pupils' cultural experiences. More consistent use of sketchbooks would enhance the curriculum. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. The school has good links with the local secondary school. An example of this is the project whereby secondary pupils came into school to work with primary pupils to create a large group painting of the tree of knowledge.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

90. During the inspection only two lessons were seen. Judgements are based on these observations, the scrutiny of pupils' past work and discussions with teachers and pupils. Based on available evidence, pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. As at the last inspection, they attain standards that are in line with national expectations.
91. A strength of the subject is pupils' understanding of the importance of design and also the way they use evaluations at the end to strengthen their knowledge of the making process and their understanding of the characteristics of materials they have used. Pupils in Year 1 use their knowledge of materials and different joining techniques when making their individual houses. Pupils in Year 2 show good attention to detail in all their work. Their winding mechanisms, which included frightening spiders and a girl on a trampoline, were finished to a high standard. Pupils also show an appropriate knowledge of different materials in their construction of glove puppets.
92. Whilst pupils in Year 3 still make satisfactory progress when making moving books, their designing and cutting skills are not enhanced when they use printed sheets as the foundation for their work. There are good cross-curricular links in Year 4 when pupils make their pop-up books about Viking long boats. These showed a clear understanding of the lever principles involved with children being justifiably proud of the finished product. Pupils' evaluations of their completed work were good in this year, particularly in their work on torches where pupils realised that their finished products were too large. The development of pupils' skills slows in Year 5, as the projects pupils undertake, such as making musical instruments, do not build on and develop their previous learning of various techniques. By age eleven, pupils produce good quality plans, which also identify materials to be used. They understand the importance of choosing the correct materials for the product, such as when selecting a hardwearing material for slippers that was also comfortable. They have a good knowledge of joining materials that they use appropriately in the making process. Throughout the school, pupils experience food technology but very little of this work has involved cooking, although there are facilities for this.
93. Pupils enjoy the subject and the range of projects that teachers plan. Teachers make good use of pupils' good collaborative skills when planning their activities. This was clearly seen when Year 1 pupils helped each other to join the larger parts of the houses they were making. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good because they are interested in their work and they share equipment sensitively and safely.
94. The quality of teaching in the two lessons observed was satisfactory, with teachers planning carefully from national guidelines. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and make good use of focused tasks to improve pupils' skills. Links are also made across different subjects when these are relevant. Whilst there are at present no links with ICT, the school has just purchased some commercial construction sets, which have a control capability.
95. The subject co-ordinator is well qualified and has provided good leadership since she took over the post. Sound assessment procedures are in place to judge pupils' progress through each year. The co-ordinator has not had time to observe teaching and learning in the classes, but she carries out an informal analysis of standards when class projects have been completed.

A more detailed audit of the quality of teaching, and a review of the present curriculum, are planned for the next academic year. The school has a satisfactory range of resources and the older classes have generous amount of space for practical work.

GEOGRAPHY

96. The school's curriculum plan means that geography is not taught every term in every year group. During the inspection only Year 4 were studying a geographical topic. As a result, no judgement is made of the quality of teaching. Judgements of the standard of attainment are based on discussions with pupils and examination of a sample of pupils' past work. Standards are close to those expected nationally at the end of Year 2, but they are below those expected at the end of Year 6. All pupils make good gains in knowledge during Years 1 and 2, often from a low starting point. From Years 3 to 6, pupils make steady gains in skills and understanding, but the topics are not covered in sufficient depth for them to reach the standards expected across the whole curriculum. One reason for this is the increased focus on literacy and numeracy within the school. During the last inspection, standards were in line with expectations throughout the school.
97. There has been a lack of continuity in the co-ordination of the subject due to staff turnover. The present co-ordinator has monitored the work produced and has already reported that the curriculum is not covered in sufficient depth to ensure that pupils extend their geographical skills and knowledge appropriately in the upper part of the school. A new assessment format has recently been introduced, but it is too soon to assess its impact.
98. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are introduced to maps and they use secondary sources, such as souvenirs and postcards well, to find out information about other places. Pupils are introduced to plans and early mapping when they organise the layout of a bedroom and they follow the travels of Barnaby Bear, using a variety of forms of transport and looking at what the places he visits are like. Good links are made to literacy, for example when pupils compare life on Struay, as depicted in a story book they are reading, and compare it to life in Maidstone. They begin to look at their local area and say what they like about it and how it could be improved, so that they are learning to form and express opinions.
99. In Years 3 to 6, pupils steadily extend their knowledge of maps and various methods of showing different features, such as symbols and shading, with a key to explain what they mean. They use the scale shown on a map and a plan to work out the distance between places and objects. They undertake environmental studies in their local area and this is an improvement since the last inspection, when it was reported that insufficient links were made with environmental issues. Pupils conduct a traffic survey around school and link this with work on noise pollution. They initially use a tally chart to collect their data and then enter the information on a graph. Their work on litter is linked to data-handling topics in both ICT and mathematics. Pupils look at changes in the environment and, through discussion, they gain a clear understanding of whether they are man-made or natural. Good links are made with recent severe flooding in the area to explore the impact of natural disasters. In the lesson seen, pupils were locating features, such as a house, a farming area and a signal beacon, on a relief map of an imaginary island. Good links were made between this and their work in history about early settlements, giving pupils a clear understanding of the reasons why settlements were located in various places.

Pupils look at several contrasting localities in the United Kingdom, such as Guernsey, Godstone and Folkestone, but they are not covered in any depth. Pupils do not have a clear idea of what the places are like, especially their size and characters, and the processes that have contributed to their development. They do not clearly draw out the similarities and differences between settlements and ways of life in their own and other areas, especially those in developing countries. There is insufficient emphasis on using appropriate geographical terminology to describe the physical and man-made characteristics of the different areas. The school does not have sufficient secondary resources, such as maps and photographs, to give pupils a clear picture of what the unfamiliar localities are like. Staff recognise that they do not have the subject knowledge to enable them to cover this aspect satisfactorily.

HISTORY

100. Standards at ages seven and eleven are in line with those expected nationally of pupils of the same age. Pupils' attainment is similar to that reported at the time of the last inspection. In Year 2, pupils understand that everyday life has changed for ordinary people, for example where they go for their holidays, how they get there, where they stay and what they do. They know that Florence Nightingale made an important contribution to improving the nursing care for soldiers. In Years 3 to 6 pupils learn about life in more distant times, for example in Ancient Rome and Greece and of the lives of Aztecs and Vikings.
101. The process of understanding change over time begins in Years 1 and 2 with a focus on significant people and events. Pupils' work shows that they can compare aspects of life today with life in the past. They use pictures to give them information. Good links are made with other subjects, such as religious education. Pupils compare modern houses to those in the time of Jesus and how light and water were provided in both. They are given good opportunities to extend their literacy skills when they write diary entries and send postcards related to imaginary holidays taken by their parents, grandparents or great-grandparents. Pupils also extend their vocabularies by developing an understanding of words such as charabanc and boarding house.
102. In Years 3 to 6, pupils extend their enquiry skills and the subject also makes a good contribution to developing their literacy skills. Pupils learn to present their ideas neatly and to add their own illustrations. They record their work in books and add a contents page to show what they have done. In Years 3 and 4, good links are made with geography when pupils study why Vikings made their settlements in the places they did. They learn to look at objects and question what they were used for and to use posters to give them further information. Pupils are helped to develop their thinking skills when they are asked why the Vikings attacked the monks in the monasteries. They develop their imaginative writing when they answer questions such as, "How do you think the monks felt?" In Years 5 and 6, pupils develop a good understanding of life in Ancient Greece. They understand what it was like for women in that society and the differences between the education of rich and poor children. Pupils use the Internet to research topics such as the Olympic Games. Well-planned work helps to develop pupils' comprehension skills, for example, when they match short extracts with a series of questions about the Olympic Games.

103. Teaching is good and it helps pupils to gain a sound knowledge of life at certain times in the past and how to find out information for themselves by research, using pictures, books, the Internet or CD-ROMs. Pupils develop a lively interest in the subject as a result of the enthusiastic teaching and interesting activities they are given. They work together well in groups, discuss their ideas with each other and listen to what others have to say. They learn that time lines are used to show the passage of time and to locate various events in the past. Often the whole class is set the same work, but pupils are well supported. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Visits are arranged which enhance learning, making good use of local resources. For example, pupils visit Battle Abbey, Dover Castle and the local museum, and these also extend pupils' knowledge of their own culture. In Years 5 and 6, they visit Horton Kirby and learn what it was like in a Victorian classroom. Moral issues are also raised appropriately, for example, when studying life in Victorian times and the types of jobs children were expected to do.
104. The subject is well co-ordinated and there have been improvements since the last inspection, with the provision of more artefacts and greater use made of the local area. New assessment sheets are being introduced for use at the end of each unit of work to indicate pupils' level of understanding, but it is too soon to assess their impact.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

105. Pupils' attainment at the age of seven has improved since the last inspection and is now above national expectations. The attainment of pupils at the age of eleven is satisfactory and has been maintained since the last inspection. However, since the last inspection, teachers use ICT far more effectively across the curriculum to support pupils' learning.
106. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 in all aspects of their work, with computers being an integral part of much of their learning. Pupils in Year 1 have sound word-processing skills and make good use of different fonts and colours. They collect information, which they turn into pictograms, for example, to show their eye colours and favourite pets. Pupils make particularly good progress in Year 2. Pupils have good word-processing skills and these are used well in the writing and redrafting of stories such as 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. There are good links with art when pupils use a paint program to create pictures in the style of Mondrian and then turn these into jigsaws. Pupils show good modelling skills when they use their geography knowledge to identify human and physical features on their maps. Pupils have above average control skills, with higher achieving pupils programming a floor robot to move in a square.
107. Year 3 pupils show a good awareness of audience when combining pictures with a text, and use a music program appropriately in their composing work. Pupils have a sound understanding of how to use e-mail when writing letters to their new teacher. The development of pupils' communication skills is well developed in Year 4; pupils use word processing for writing for different purposes, such as in the creation of recipes. They make good use of a paint program and show good understanding of how to use the zoom function. Pupils continue to make good progress in their communication skills in Year 5 and have good skills when correcting work. They use CD-ROMs confidently to research stringed instruments as part of their music work, and they are also beginning to use the Internet more extensively.

By Year 6 pupils have gained satisfactory skills in all areas of the subject, with higher achieving pupils attaining particularly good communication and control skills. Good use of the Internet has enabled pupils to research famous historical figures who were cat lovers, and this has resulted in some particularly good quality writing. Pupils have made effective use of CD-ROMs to broaden their knowledge of the Ancient Greeks and the Romans. They have a good understanding of the uses of control techniques and they use their knowledge appropriately when designing an alarm using a pressure pad. Pupils have designed their own multi-media page and use an increasing range of technical vocabulary accurately. For example, when using a control program to create the correct traffic light sequence pupils used 'commands', 'sequence', 'mimics', 'minimise' and 'control panel' as part of their working vocabulary.

108. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about the subject, and a new computer suite, which had been open less than two weeks before the inspection, has enhanced this even further. Pupils benefit greatly from the good subject knowledge of their teachers but also from the skill and enthusiasm of a computer technician who regularly works with them in the computer suite. Pupils have good collaborative skills and they benefit from each other's knowledge and ideas. This was most apparent in a Year 6 lesson on control where higher achieving pupils sensitively supported their peers who were experiencing difficulties. The behaviour in all computer lessons is good, and often very good, because pupils greatly enjoy using computers and can see the relevance of their work.
109. The teaching of ICT is good overall and often very good. All teachers and learning support assistants have benefited from the government training grant and this has greatly enhanced teachers' subject knowledge and confidence. Pupils with special educational needs and the few learning English as an additional language are well supported to give them full access to all activities. Specific programs are used effectively to reinforce pupils' learning in other subjects, for example, mathematics in Year 2. The subject is well led. The co-ordinator has worked particularly hard to broaden the range of programs, to support individual teachers and to establish the new suite. Despite the good improvements since the last inspection, the school is aware that to integrate computers fully into pupils' learning, a wider range of programs is needed. This is particularly the case in aspects of number work in mathematics.
110. A further developing strength of the teaching of ICT is how the skills learnt in the computer suite are enhanced through further work in the classroom. The school has an adequate number of computers, but it is hoping to increase the number in the computer suite to ensure there is one for each pupil when half-class groups have their lessons. The school is establishing an assessment and recording system that will be refined at the end of a trial period. Good use is made of national guidelines; however, the school is constantly looking for ways to amend these to complement class projects and to meet the needs of the wide range of ability in each year group.

MUSIC

111. It was not possible to see any music teaching in Years 2 and 6 so no judgements on overall standards at age seven and eleven have been made. Evidence for pupils' achievements in music is from two lessons, singing in assemblies and a performance of the children's musical 'Rats'. Pupils across the school sing confidently, with accurate rhythm and pitch, clear diction, and good volume and enthusiasm.

Pupils in Years 1 and 2 sang a variety of songs with a seaside theme with liveliness and a sense of fun. This included a challenging performance of 'If you're happy and you know it', that was unaccompanied in two parts, with individual pupils leading each group. Older pupils knew the words and tunes for the musical songs well and came in swiftly at the conductor's signal. Three boys who were soloists sang sweetly and quite confidently in front of an audience of parents. Pupils progress satisfactorily in the singing element of music as they move through the school, and reach a similar standard to pupils in most schools by age eleven.

112. The school uses two schemes for class music lessons, the QCA scheme in Years 1 and 2 and, since September, a wide-ranging commercial one in Years 3 to 6. The teaching and learning observed were satisfactory but several points for improvement were noted. For instance, young pupils gradually improved the control of the pitch of their voices by following written symbols, but their concentration and interest were low at the end of the day; there is scope to investigate if pupils' response to music is more positive if it is taught earlier in the day. Pupils in Year 5 thoroughly enjoyed their task of composing a simple melody for a chant and collaborated sensibly and productively to achieve these short tunes. However, it was apparent from observing the way they set about the activity that they did not have the experience of using tuned and un-tuned percussion that might be expected for pupils of this age. Their understanding of the difference between beat and rhythm was not secure, they did not know all of the instruments' names and sometimes they did not play them correctly. Although class teachers are supported by the schemes, they are not fully confident on the best ways to teach the performing and composing skills of music. Useful links are made between other subjects and music. For instance, younger pupils have been using a music computer program and one pupil returned from his session in the ICT suite happily humming his tune. Year 5 and 6 pupils have linked their work on sound in science to music and design and technology and made instruments that are plucked or shaken.
113. The school has a new and enthusiastic co-ordinator and she is supported by the headteacher who has an interest in music. Both are aware of the need to review the use of the scheme in Years 1 and 2 and to find out where teachers need additional training and guidance. The school has satisfactory resources for music. There is a large choir that has recently performed with other schools in the local area. Professional musicians of classical, modern and non-Western music, and music students from local secondary schools, frequently come to the school to perform for the pupils and develop their appreciation of music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

114. During the inspection, only three lessons were observed and evidence from these confirms that standards have been maintained since the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Inspection evidence is supplemented by discussion with staff and pupils, the scrutiny of teachers' planning and a review of the school's resources. At the end of Years 2 and 6, attainment is in line with national expectations, although pupils' attainment in swimming is very high. Most of the activities seen during the inspection were in readiness for the end-of-term sports day, which was due to take place the following week.

115. Planning for pupils in Years 1 and 2 shows that they cover all elements of the curriculum, which is supplemented by swimming for those in Year 2. By age seven, pupils have a good understanding of a warm-up and show good stamina in jogging activities. Their good collaboration skills help to ensure that they make the most of practices set by the teacher. Pupils showed good balance in a sack race and satisfactory aiming skills when throwing beanbags into hoops, which were at various distances from the thrower. Pupils make good progress in lessons, because the teacher moves round groups giving effective coaching and ensuring that the practices successfully develop pupils' skills. Pupils develop a satisfactory hurdling style in Year 5, with some higher achieving pupils having a good leading leg style. Pupils use a hockey stick appropriately for dribbling between markers, but most pupils change the direction of their body to change the direction of a ball rather than altering the angle of the stick. Pupils have satisfactory running skills and understand the principles of a shuttle relay baton pass. Pupils change their speed appropriately when dribbling a football, with higher achieving pupils using both sides of the foot to aid control and direction.
116. In the lessons seen, pupils worked hard and were keen to improve their performances. Teachers give good individual support to pupils, who raise their performance as a result. In the best lessons, teachers use exemplars to illustrate good quality attainment and this encourages pupils to try even harder. Pupils are particularly good at supporting each other and this was very evident in the Year 2 class when pupils cheered on their peers, who were completing a course whilst bouncing a ball on a racquet. Pupils' behaviour at all times was good as all their concentration centred on the activities they were undertaking.
117. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge that they use well in planning and organising activities, and in supporting pupils. The co-ordinator has not had opportunities to monitor lessons, but there are plans next term to observe teaching and learning across all classes. The school is using national guidelines that will be evaluated next year, when the co-ordinator has visited classes and talked to teachers. The organisation of swimming is very good and is resulting in very high standards by the end of Year 6. Non-swimmers in Years 5 and 6 have extra lessons so that, by the time they leave the school, all pupils are able to swim the expected standard of 25 metres with a quarter of the present eleven year olds able to swim over half a mile. The majority of the stronger swimmers are boys, some of whom regularly attend local swimming clubs. The school has had a particularly successful season with football and the pupils are the local area champions. Pupils also benefit from a good range of clubs including netball, football, jazz dance and cross-country running. These provide valuable opportunities for pupils of different ages to work together and improve their individual skills. The co-ordinator has a budget for the subject; however, this is not sufficient for renewal of larger items, such as gymnastics mats, some of which will soon need replacing.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

118. At age seven and eleven, pupils' knowledge of religious education meets the expectation of the locally agreed syllabus. However, there are some variations in attainment between classes of Year 6 pupils. This overall judgement is similar to the one made at the last inspection. Then there were criticisms of the quantity and quality of pupils' written work, which largely consisted of completing worksheets.

In Years 1 and 2, pupils record suitably for their ages; there are a few examples of their writing on religious themes, although, more usually, they use commercial activity sheets, and photographs show they have the opportunity to make copies of artefacts, such as clay models of Jewish Menorah. In most classes in the upper part of the school there has been good improvement in the quality and amount of pupils' own work. Year 4 pupils have studied the Sikh religion and written their own accounts of the life of Guru Nanak, and Year 5 and 6 pupils have undertaken some detailed work on Christian symbols and the church. In Years 4 and 5, the work is particularly well presented and gives a detailed record of their learning this year. It demonstrates good progress over the academic year and contrasts with the limited, unchallenging opportunities for recording in a Year 6 class.

119. The teaching and learning seen across the school were satisfactory overall, and one well-taught lesson and a very well taught one were observed. This is similar to the teaching quality seen at the last inspection. In Years 1 and 2, teachers provide a wide range of experiences and opportunities to discuss and ask questions, as seen in a lesson on Hindu weddings. Pupils had been involved in role-play in the previous week. When questioned, pupils showed they had learned many important wedding features very well from this, and they were able too to make some comparisons with Christian weddings. They were given practical activities that were appropriate to their age, and worked with care and interest making wedding artefacts such as invitations and garlands. In a lesson for Year 3 pupils, the teacher made useful links with a visit to Battle Abbey to explore the theme of what was meant by 'belief'. Where teaching was most effective, the lesson was very well planned as one of a series, and built on pupils' previous learning about the Muslim faith. All pupils in the class, many of whom have special educational needs, had very positive attitudes to this work, and were quick and eager to explain what they already knew about the religion. Good previous teaching enabled them to recall well the important facts and use this knowledge effectively to understand how the design of a mosque reflects what Muslims believe. In contrast, in a lesson where strengths and weaknesses in teaching were finely balanced, opportunities were missed to check on the pupils' knowledge of important Jewish symbols. Consequently, although the pupils gained knowledge from the lesson's focus, they were not building sufficiently on prior learning. Year 6 pupils, spoken with about religious education, held contrasting views, between interest in learning about other faiths and seeing no relevance in these studies.
120. The subject is well led and new resources have been purchased to support the revised agreed syllabus. The syllabus has been planned out for different year groups to ensure coverage. The co-ordinators have rightly identified that this planning will need to be reviewed and refined in the coming year, to check that, where topics are covered more than once, there is appropriate progression in learning. There have been opportunities for the main co-ordinator to monitor the curriculum by observing lessons, but more emphasis is needed on sampling pupils' work to ensure that topics are covered in sufficient depth and to check pupils' understanding. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development with its opportunities for them to reflect on religious beliefs and values. It also makes a good contribution to their moral, social and cultural development as they learn about rules for living by, and the moral principles of different religions and their associated cultures. The school's approach to teaching religious education promotes tolerance and respect for diversity.