

INSPECTION REPORT

DYMCHURCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dymchurch, Romney Marsh

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118565

Headteacher: Gil Sweetenham

Reporting inspector: David Tytler
8990

Dates of inspection: 21 –25 May 2001

Inspection number: 197303

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | Infant and junior school |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 to 11 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Name of headteacher | Gil Sweetenham |
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| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | David Tyler |
| Date of previous inspection: | February 1997 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|---|---|
| 8990 | David Tytler | <i>Registered inspector</i> | | What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What the school needs to do to improve? |
| 13807 | Christine Haggerty | <i>Lay inspector</i> | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Staffing, accommodation and resources. |
| 19824 | Janet Sinclair | <i>Team inspector</i> | Under-fives; Special educational needs; Science; Art; Physical education. | |
| 1723 | Michael Milton | <i>Team inspector</i> | Equal opportunities; Mathematics; Information and communication technology; Design and technology; Religious education. | How good are the learning opportunities offered to pupils? |
| 11122 | David Collard | <i>Team inspector</i> | English; English as an additional language; History; Geography; Music | |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school serves the seaside village of Dymchurch, situated in a rural regeneration area. The school is bigger than most primary schools and currently caters for 335 pupils aged from four to eleven years old, with more boys than girls, particularly in Reception and Year 2. They are taught in 12 classes, with mixed aged groups in Years 1 and 2, 3 and 4, and 4 and 5. There are 12 full-time teachers, including the headteacher, and four part-time teachers. A large number of children enter the school other than at the normal time of starting. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Three children come from minority ethnic groups, two of whom do not speak English as a first language. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above the national average, whilst the percentage with statements of special needs is below. The pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. Children enter the school with a wide range of attainment, but overall standards match those expected nationally for children of their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Dymchurch Primary School provides a satisfactory quality of education for all its pupils and has some very good features, particularly in the personal development of pupils. Standards are rising for pupils in Years 3 to 6, but pupils are not making enough progress in Years 1 and 2. The school is well led and managed and the teaching is good both for the under-fives and for Years 3 to 6. When account is taken of all these factors, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The good teaching for the under-fives and in Key Stage 2 gives children a flying start to their schooling and enables them to make good progress.
- The school is well led and managed and there is a clear focus on improving standards and teaching.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good and the high quality singing makes an important contribution to the school's ethos.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very effective and they make good progress in their learning.
- Outstanding displays create a stimulating learning environment, which celebrates pupils' successes.
- Parents are very supportive and make an important contribution to their children's learning.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Standards, particularly in Key Stage 1 and in science across the school.
- The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1, in order to improve pupils' progress.
- The roles of members of the leadership group.
- Swimming in Key Stage 2.

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 February 1997 when it was found to have serious weaknesses. The school has very successfully addressed all the key issues from the last report concerning management, and is now well led and managed. All other key issues have been dealt with successfully, except for the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1. Whilst much improved, teaching in this key stage is still a cause for concern. Teaching in the rest of the school has improved significantly and standards have risen. The school still does not teach swimming in Key Stage 2. All other statutory requirements are now being met. As a result of the significant overall improvement, the school no longer has serious weaknesses and is well placed to improve further.

STANDARDS

The table below shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2000 |
| English | D | D | D | C |
| Mathematics | D | C | C | B |
| Science | D | D | D | D |

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

In the Year 2000 English and science tests for 11-year-olds, the school's results were below that expected nationally for children of their age. Results in mathematics matched the average. In comparison with similar schools results were above the average in mathematics, at the average in English and below in science. Evidence gathered during the inspection showed that standards in the current Year 6 in English are in line with those expected nationally for children of their age. Current standards in science and mathematics are similar to those reported in last year's tests. Results in Key Stage 2 have improved each year for the last four years. The school achieved results slightly higher than its targets for the

percentage expected to reach Level 4 or above in last year's national tests for English and mathematics. Girls performed better than boys in English. The performance of boys and girls was similar in mathematics and science.

In the Year 2000 reading and writing tests for 7-year-olds, the results were broadly in line with the national average for children of their age. In the mathematics tests, results were below the national average. Over the last three years results have dipped in reading and writing from well above average to matching the national average. Standards have risen in mathematics, but remain below national expectations. In comparison with similar schools, results matched the average in reading and mathematics. Standards in science were below the expected levels nationally. Inspection evidence shows that standards in the current Year 2 are also below average. Standards in English are similar to last year's results, and in science they remain below average. Standards in information and communication technology have improved rapidly this year and are in line with national expectations in both key stages. Attainment in religious education is in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus in Key Stage 1, but below in Key Stage 2. Standards in art, geography and history at the end of Key Stage 2 are above those expected nationally for children of their age.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school | Pupils have good attitudes to their work and are enthusiastic learners, and this has a positive impact on the standards they achieve. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Behaviour in classrooms, assemblies, around the school and at breaks and lunch times is very often good. The few cases of unsatisfactory behaviour are invariably linked to inadequacies in the teaching. |
| Personal development and relationships | Good. Relationships, based on mutual respect, are uniformly good across the school and members of the school community seek to do the best for each other. |
| Attendance | At the national average, although procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are unsatisfactory. |

Attitudes and behaviour were consistently very good in the under-fives and very often good or better in Key Stage 2. All the instances of unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour were in Key Stage 1.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils: | Aged up to 5 years | Aged 5-7 years | Aged 7-11 years |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Lessons seen: 62 | Good | Unsatisfactory | 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.

Teaching in lessons seen during the inspection was very good or better in 25 per cent, good in 42 per cent, satisfactory in 29 per cent and unsatisfactory in 5 per cent (three lessons). Teaching of the under-fives was very good or better in all the lessons seen. In Key Stage 1, teaching was good in 17 per cent of lessons, satisfactory in 58 per cent and unsatisfactory in 25 per cent (three lessons). In Key Stage 2, teaching was very good or better in 29 per cent of lessons, good in 44 per cent and satisfactory in 28 per cent. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. The teaching of English and mathematics was satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. As a result, the teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy was very effective in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory in Key Stage 1.

During the inspection learning matched the teaching and pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 2. Pupils do not make enough progress in Key Stage 1, as result of unsatisfactory teaching and disruption to their learning caused by a high level of teacher absence.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | There is an appropriate focus on English and mathematics. The curriculum is broad, balanced and particularly relevant to the pupils. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Very good. Progress has been affected by staff turnover. Nevertheless, pupils make good progress in line with their individual education plans. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | Sound. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Provision for spiritual, social and moral development is very good. The school benefits from strong links with the parish church. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, although more should be done to prepare children for life in a multicultural society. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Sound arrangements are made for child protection and the general well-being of pupils. There are very good arrangements for gathering information on what pupils know and can do, and the information is used well to plan for the needs of groups and individual pupils. |

The school has a developed a good partnership with parents, who are overwhelmingly supportive and give good support to their children's learning at home. Parents also help in after-school clubs and make generous financial

donations. The experience of pupils is widened through good links with the community and a range of well-supported, extra-curricular activities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The well-established headteacher provides clear educational direction for the school and is the driving force behind school improvement. The allocation of responsibilities within the leadership group is unbalanced. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | With the exception of the provision for swimming in Key Stage 2, governors fulfil their statutory duties. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and use the information well in their strategic planning. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | There are very good arrangements for the monitoring of teaching and learning and this has had a significant impact on the quality of teaching. Other aspects of the school's work are evaluated by the leadership group and governors and priorities for improvement identified. |
| The strategic use of resources | Good use is made of resources, including the well-trained learning support assistants, and the school is beginning to apply the principles of best value. |

The school is well staffed with teachers and learning support assistants. The accommodation is good, a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Resources to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are at least satisfactory. They are good in English and PE and very good in information and communication technology (ICT). Resources for the under-fives are good, although children do not have enough regular access to outdoor physical activities.

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. • The teaching is good. • Their children are making good progress. • Behaviour is good. • Their children are expected to work hard and achieve their best. • They feel comfortable in approaching the school. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on how their children are getting on. • The amount of homework. • The partnership with parents. • The range of extra-curricular activities. |

Inspectors agree with the positive views of the majority of parents. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that the school has a productive partnership with parents; that the information on how their children are getting on is good; and that there is a wide range of high quality, well-attended extra curricular activities.

Arrangements for homework were judged to be satisfactory, although these are being reviewed in the light of parental concerns.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the Foundation Stage with a wide spread of ability but their attainment is broadly in line with that expected nationally for children of their age. As a result of the good and very good teaching in the two reception classes, almost all the children make good progress and will attain the early learning goals for all the areas of learning. A good number will be above this level.

2. Standards in the current Year 2 match those expected nationally for children of their age. Results in last year's national tests were at the national average in reading but above average in writing. These levels were maintained when compared with results in similar schools. Analysis of the results in writing show that a larger proportion of pupils than the national average only just gained the recognised average Level 2, whilst fewer gained Level 3. Results over the last four years have fallen from well above average to average, due largely to the quality of teaching, a key issue of the last report. Learning has also been disrupted because of staff absence. Girls achieved higher results than boys, and the difference was more than is usually the case.

3. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are also in line with the national expectations, although a number of pupils are doing much better in reading and writing. Standards in speaking and listening were above average. In last year's National Curriculum tests, results matched the national average. The results were also in line with the average for similar schools. Results have risen over the last four years and reflect the improved teaching. Boys have achieved better results than the national average whilst the girls have performed as expected.

4. In Key Stage 1, standards in speaking are above average. Pupils are articulate, able to express their ideas clearly and use suitable vocabulary to discuss them. Pupils are not so good at listening because of weaknesses in the teaching. Whilst listening to each other, they do not think about their own answers. In Key Stage 2, standards of speaking and listening are above average. Although they talk enthusiastically, pupils in Years 3 and 4 are encouraged to wait and think before answering. These skills develop as pupils move through the school. By the age of 11, pupils are articulate, speaking with clarity and maturing thought.

5. Standards of reading match what is expected nationally for children aged seven and eleven, but there are a number of pupils in both key stages whose ability is higher. Pupils in Key Stage 1 read with good technical ability. Pupils are able to follow texts on the board and many can read out loud as a group. They read a suitable range of material but do not have the ability to compare and contrast different types of books. Too few pupils are able to read at the higher Level 3. Standards in Key Stage 2 are higher. Pupils in Year 6 are able to talk confidently about a range of authors they have read and give good reasons why they like particular books.

6. Standards in writing match what is expected nationally for children aged seven and eleven. The most able Year 2 pupils are able to use direct and indirect speech and often write extensive stories as well as letters and poems. There are, however, not enough opportunities to write up experiments in science, or planning in design and technology. Spelling is below average although there are regular opportunities for practice. They do not always use a good cursive style of writing in their everyday work and descriptive writing is often stilted. Lower-attaining pupils have standards which are higher than might be expected. The majority write in full sentences, have some level of spelling expertise and can sequence a story. Their progress is good because of the more concentrated teaching they receive.

7. Standards in Key Stage 2 also match the national average. A good proportion have above average ability and were entered for the higher Level 6 paper in this year's National Curriculum tests. Higher ability pupils make good use of grammar to add interest to their stories. They write in paragraphs, using the main conventions of English correctly, and plan and redraft their work. Pupils of average ability have a good range of vocabulary that is usually spelt correctly. They can write in different styles but have less confidence in writing long stories. As in Key Stage 1, pupils of below average attainment make better progress than might be expected. Most are able to write coherent, interesting stories. Spelling is usually accurate, but where pupils are unsure about particular words they are able to find an alternative.

8. In last year's National Curriculum mathematics tests for seven year olds, results were below those expected nationally for children of their age for all schools, but above average for similar schools. The results of 11 year olds matched the national average and were above average for similar schools. At the end of both key stages, the results of boys and girls have been similar over the past three years. The results of the national tests have risen steadily since 1997.

9. The standards of the current Year 2 pupils are below average although some higher-attaining pupils are reaching above-average standards. In another class, however, which has had several different teachers, higher-attaining pupils have not made enough progress, as their work does not enable them to reach the higher National Curriculum Level 3. Average-attaining pupils understand the value of each digit in two-digit numbers and add and subtract them accurately. They are beginning to use mental calculation strategies to solve money problems. A relatively large number of average-attaining pupils, however, did not reach the expected level in this year's tests. Lower-attaining pupils add single digit numbers accurately but are not yet secure with adding numbers to 20. They are beginning to understand the value of the digits in two-digit numbers.

10. At the end of Year 6, the standards of the current pupils match national averages. Higher-attaining pupils carry out accurate calculations with large numbers. They multiply decimal numbers confidently by 100 and 1000. They measure and draw angles accurately, and use the names of different types of angle. They use the mode and median to describe sets of data. Average-attaining pupils work accurately with large numbers for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They add and subtract decimals to two places but are not yet secure when calculating the areas of more complex shapes. Some lower-attaining

pupils are approaching average standards in aspects of their work. They accurately multiply decimal numbers in money by single digits and measure some angles accurately. They use simple fractions to describe proportions of a whole but are not yet confident in using percentages. Pupils' achievements are good.

11. Standards in the science National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds in 2000 were well below the national average levels and those for similar schools. Standards in national tests have been below or well below national averages over the past four years, but have been improving in line with the national trend since 1998. There is no significant difference between the results achieved by boys and those by girls. Standards in teacher assessments for seven year olds in 2000 were below the national average at the expected Level 2 and above the national average at the higher Level 3.

12. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that standards are similar to the results of last year's teacher assessments in Key Stage 1 and in the Key Stage 1 tests. There are, however, fewer seven year olds currently working at Level 3. Standards are unsatisfactory due to the lack of attention paid to developing scientific skills and to the unsatisfactory teaching of the subject in this year group. Standards have also been adversely affected by staff absence. Teaching and standards in Year 2 were found to be unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection.

13. Achievement at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall due to good teaching and the many opportunities for practical investigations. Attainment in the current Year 6 is adversely affected by the high number of pupils with special educational needs in the year group and the high number of pupils who join the school during Key Stage 2, many of whom have low attainment. Progress is hampered by the lack of assessment information to guide planning, and the failure to develop pupils' skills in writing up experiments, including the use of scientific vocabulary.

14. Key Stage 1, pupils use simple equipment and begin to make observations about their enquiries. Most pupils In Year 2 know that plants need water and light to grow, and that different living creatures are found in different places. Using simple terms, they can describe how materials change when heated or cooled. A few higher attaining pupils in Year 2 achieve higher than average standards in some aspects of science. They do, however, have very limited ideas on how to conduct a fair test. By the age of seven, pupils understand how things move and can describe their findings. Many, however, had difficulty in measuring the distance with any degree of accuracy.

15. Pupils in Year 6 have a wide range of ability, and this is not always fully taken into account by teachers when they plan their lessons. As a result, pupils find it difficult to complete tasks and show a limited understanding of what they have done. Higher- and average -attaining pupils carry out experiments, make predictions and relate their conclusions to scientific knowledge.

16. Standards in (ICT) are in line with national expectations at both key stages. Attainment in religious education is in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus in Key Stage 1, but below in Key Stage 2. Standards in art,

geography and history at the end of Key Stage 2 are above those expected nationally for children of their age.

17. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils have good attitudes to their learning and their targets are used well to plan their work. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is sound and pupils make progress in line with their peers at both key stages.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. The pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good and relationships throughout the school are very good. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when the picture was inconsistent between classes. During the current inspection, good attitudes and behaviour were seen in each year group and in every subject. Attitudes and behaviour in lessons seen were very good or better in 43 per cent, good in 35 per cent, satisfactory in 13 per cent and unsatisfactory in 8 per cent (five lessons). Attitudes and behaviour were consistently very good in the under-fives and very often good or better in Key Stage 2. All the instances of unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour were found in Key Stage 1 and were linked to inadequacies in the teaching, which failed to engage the pupils' interest.

19. The vast majority of pupils have good attitudes to learning, which has a positive impact on the progress they make. Some very good examples were seen and pupils respond well to the good teaching. As a result, they are interested in their work and stay on task and make good progress. During a Key Stage 2 ICT lesson, for example, pupils worked hard throughout the lesson to retrieve stored data successfully. Children under five respond well to the carefully planned activities, which stimulate their curiosity and interest. In Key Stage 1, however, some pupils shout out and disrupt the lesson for others.

20. Pupils behave well, enabling them to concentrate on learning. Ninety-six per cent of parents who replied to the inspection questionnaire said that behaviour is good. Evidence gathered during the inspection supports this view. Behaviour in lessons is generally good and pupils are well behaved during breaks and at lunchtimes, with boys and girls playing happily together in mixed-aged groups. Pupils behave very well in assemblies and in the dining hall during lunch time. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are assigned to sit with the younger pupils and they take their responsibilities very seriously. As a result, good relationships begin at an early stage, helping to ensure a smooth transition for pupils between the key stages. Pupils move about the school calmly, are polite, courteous and helpful to visitors.

21. Parents and pupils say that bullying is not an issue and that inappropriate behaviour is always dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils feel safe and are confident in discussing concerns with adults in the school. There have been no known cases of racial harassment over the last two years. There has not been a serious incident of bullying for three years. The whole staff are involved in checking for any bullying, informing the headteacher or a senior manager of any incidents.

22. Pupils' personal development is good and they take their increasing responsibilities very seriously. Children under five move quickly to their activities and put on their aprons

when going to the painting table. Pupils in both key stages are involved in the routines of the school, taking registers to the office, tidying areas and distributing books and pencils. Pupils also have a say in determining class and school rules and are aware of the outside world through fund raising for

charity. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are given additional responsibilities of providing music at assemblies, holding up hymn sheets and putting out chairs. House captains in Year Six play an important part in collecting the views of other pupils, which are discussed with the head teacher. As a result, changes to school routines are introduced.

23. Relationships between pupils and between adults and pupils throughout the school are very good. Pupils respond well to the staff, who speak to pupils with respect and, as a result, adults and pupils have a high regard for each other. Pupils work well in pairs and in small groups, collaborating and supporting each other. During a Key Stage 2 design and technology lesson, for example, a small group of pupils were working as a team to complete different parts of the vehicle.

24. Attendance continues to be in line with the national average for schools of this type but too many families take holidays in term time. The school reports that there is no unauthorised absence. Lessons generally begin on time and there is no evidence of truancy.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

25. The quality of teaching, particularly in Key Stage 1, was a serious weakness at the time of the last report. Whilst there has been improvement in Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching is still a cause for concern. Teaching in the rest of the school has improved significantly, due to a rigorous programme of monitoring and support. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that teaching is good for the under-fives and in Key Stage 2, but unsatisfactory in Key Stage 1, as it was at the time of the last inspection.

26. Overall, the teaching in lessons seen was very good or better in 25 per cent, good in 42 per cent, satisfactory in 29 per cent and unsatisfactory in five per cent (three lessons). Teaching of the under-fives was good or very good in all the lessons seen. In Key Stage 1, teaching was good in 17 per cent of lessons, satisfactory in 58 per cent and unsatisfactory in 25 per cent (three lessons). In Key Stage 2, teaching was very good or better in 29 per cent of lessons, good in 44 per cent and satisfactory in 28 per cent; no unsatisfactory lessons were seen. The teaching of English and mathematics was satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good for the under-fives and in Key Stage 2. As a result, the teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy was very effective for the under-fives and in Key Stage 2 and pupils made good gains in their learning. There are, however, some weaknesses in the teaching of basic skills in Key Stage 1.

27. During the inspection learning matched the teaching, and pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 2. Pupils do not make enough progress in Key Stage 1, due to unsatisfactory teaching and disruption to their learning in the past due to a high level of teacher absence.

28. Strengths in the teaching of the under-fives include good support for the development of personal and social skills and, in particular, the development of independence. Teachers use questioning very effectively to develop children's

knowledge and understanding across the areas of learning. High quality planning ensures that pupils enjoy their learning through a good range of practical and interesting tasks. Teachers in the two reception classes have a consistent approach to the development of literacy and as a result children become confident readers. Assessment is used very well to ensure that work is clearly targeted at pupils' needs.

29. The knowledge and understanding of teachers is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. In an otherwise satisfactory Key Stage 1 English lesson, the lesson objectives were not clearly identified and, as a result, pupils were not clear about what they were supposed to be learning and their progress was impeded. In a very good Year 5 mathematics lesson, the teacher's considerable knowledge and understanding were used to good effect to extend the higher-attaining pupils by setting them challenging but achievable tasks. Consequently, pupils made very good gains in their learning and were achieving well.

30. Planning in Key Stage 1 does not always take into account what different groups of children do, and, therefore, the work is either too easy or, as in one English lesson, too complicated. Pupils in these lessons made few gains in their learning. Very effective planning in Key Stage 2 enables pupils to make sound, and often good progress. In an outstanding Year 6 English lesson, the planning was designed to prepare pupils for the type of teaching they could expect in their next school. The planning took account of pupils' differing levels of attainment and enabled them all to make significant gains in their learning.

31. Expectations of what pupils can do are too low in Key Stage 1, but teachers in Key Stage 2 have very high expectations of what their pupils can achieve. In many Key Stage 1 lessons teachers do not allow pupils to work things out for themselves but provide the answers for them. In one English lesson, for example, the teacher asked questions which required only 'yes' or 'no' answers, rather than expect the full explanations, of which many pupils are capable. Exactly the opposite happened in most Key Stage 2 lessons, when teachers asked pupils to explain how they reached their conclusions or to expand their answers. This happened most frequently in mathematics lessons.

32. Teaching methods in Key Stage 1 are not fully effective. Teaching tends to be routine, with too little variety to capture the interest and imagination of the pupils. In a unsatisfactory science lesson, for example, in which pupils were asked to predict the speeds of model cars running down ramps at different angles, too much time was spent on one activity. Pupils became bored, their behaviour deteriorated and they made few gains in their learning.

33. Teachers use a wide range of very effective teaching methods in Key Stage 2, building on the natural enthusiasm of the pupils and channelling it into concentrated effort leading to good progress. In a very good Year 6 English lesson in which pupils considered the works of a single author, there was a good range of tasks set within the national literacy framework. With their interest engaged, pupils achieved high standards whilst working independently or in groups.

34. Whilst the management of pupils is satisfactory in Key Stage 1, there were some instances in which the behaviour and attitudes of pupils fell below the high standards expected by the school. This was largely due to tasks not being suitable for the abilities of the pupils. In other cases, the clearly established routines for managing behaviour, for example putting up your hands and not calling out, were not applied consistently. As a result, pupils ended up talking to each other rather than to the class teacher. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are very well managed. Routines are applied consistently, pupils are reminded of them and expected to follow them. The nature of the teaching, with its demanding, interesting and varied activities, ensures that pupils are too busy to waste time.

35. Teachers in Key Stage 1 make unsatisfactory use of time as a result of the slow pace of lessons, which allows pupils to lose concentration. They make satisfactory use of learning resources and the class support assistants. Teachers in Key Stage 2 make good use of all the resources available to them. Lessons are taken at a brisk pace and many examples were seen of particularly good use being made of learning assistants in English and mathematics.

36. On-going assessment is not well used in Key Stage 1, when questions are not always used to probe pupils' understanding. The final review sessions also tend to be a review of what has been covered rather than what has been learnt. Teachers in Key Stage 2 make good use of the final review session, marking and questions throughout the lesson to check learning. As a result, teachers adjust their lesson plans, as was seen in two good mathematics lessons, one in Year 3 and the other in Year 5. Homework is used satisfactorily in both key stages to support the work done in the classroom. Good examples were seen in history and geography, when pupils were asked to carry out research to extend their knowledge.

37. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school and this has a significant impact on the good progress they make. Pupils' needs are well known to teachers and support assistants, as they are fully involved in reviews and target-setting for these pupils. As a result, they are very knowledgeable about pupils' specific needs and work is planned well to meet them. Teaching is mainly within the classroom and good support is provided in literacy and numeracy for group work. On occasion, pupils are withdrawn for specific teaching or detailed assessment. These sessions are of good quality and good learning results through effective, targeted support. The special educational needs co-ordinator meets all support assistants every week to give advice and support and discuss special educational needs issues and individual pupils.

38. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. As a result, pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2.

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

39. The school has made good progress dealing with the significant weaknesses which were identified in its curriculum at the time of the last inspection. Time allocations and schemes of

work for each subject are now based on national guidelines. As a result, pupils in the same year group are generally taught the same facts, understanding and skills for each subject. The whole-school approach to curriculum planning is linked to a programme of work to ensure that pupils in mixed-age classes cover all the necessary aspects of the National Curriculum. This programme includes teaching Year 4 pupils separately from Year 5 in science and ICT. The school now meets all statutory requirements except for providing swimming in Key Stage 2. The school says that the cost is prohibitive, but hopes to have the use of a pool now being built nearby.

40. The school has also increased the length of the teaching day by 20 minutes since the last inspection. Teaching time is now above the recommended minimum and provides time to teach all necessary aspects of the curriculum. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and the improvements to curriculum planning have increased pupils' learning. It is now clear how pupils' learning is developed in one year and extended in the next. The sex education policy is updated annually, and the school nurse meets parents and teachers before she teaches the programme to pupils in Years 5 and 6. There have been two teaching programmes during the past year for all pupils about the misuse of drugs. Almost all classes provide time for pupils to sit in a circle with the teacher and discuss issues that are important to them. There is, however, no formal policy or curriculum for personal, social and health education to ensure consistency across the school.

41. The school provides a good range of well-attended extra-curricular activities, which enrich the curriculum. They include an orchestra, choir, drama club, art club and a wide variety of sports. All pupils have an opportunity for residential courses, either on a school journey to Dorset, or a weekend camp on the school site with activities that include swimming, a rope course, fencing and sailing. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and to extra-curricular activities.

42. Links with the local community promote pupils' learning effectively. They visit the parish church as part of religious education and for Christmas services, and the vicar regularly visits the school. The local business partnership sponsors a local college to provide Year 6 pupils with a course on house building skills. Pupils visit two homes for the elderly to sing carols and distribute harvest gifts, and some of the residents visit the school as sources for oral history. The school uses the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway as part of the curriculum for history and geography.

43. There are pastoral links with the local secondary school which make the transfer of Year 6 pupils as smooth as possible, although there are no curriculum links. The school has received important support from an ICT technician from a school in a neighbouring town, which has greatly enhanced pupils' work with computers.

44. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and enables them to make good progress. Staff assess their needs well and produce high quality education plans, which show what pupils should learn next. These plans are used well in lessons. As a result, teachers and learning support assistants know what to focus on when helping pupils with special educational needs. The requirements of the code of practice for special educational needs are met and teachers receive effective advice, when required, from an appropriate range of

external specialists. Pupils with statements of special educational need have yearly reviews and their requirements are met well.

Personal development

45. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' personal development. Since the last inspection, opportunities for spiritual development have improved significantly and are now very good. The school now meets the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship and assemblies have a clear spiritual dimension. Each assembly has a thoughtful and sensitive opportunity for prayer or reflection. A Key Stage 2 hymn practice, for example, started with an act of worship which linked well with the singing that followed. The vicar of the parish church has strong links with the school and leads an assembly each

week. These assemblies are of an excellent quality. The clear teaching about important issues, such as the nature of humanity and friendship, grips pupils' attention and is linked to prayers and songs. Many pupils know the Lord's Prayer by heart. Christmas services that fully involve the pupils are held in the church.

46. Religious education is now well planned as part of the curriculum and provides good opportunities for spiritual development. Teachers value pupils' ideas. They take opportunities to discuss life's fundamental questions as they arise. During a news session in Key Stage 2, for example, the teacher sensitively handled the issues of death and vandalism which were raised by pupils.

47. There are also very good opportunities for pupils' moral and social development. As at the time of the previous inspection, circle time provides good opportunities for pupils to talk honestly about issues that are important to them. Positive attitudes to work and to each other are promoted through the curriculum and general life of the school. The school has a clear framework for behaviour and this is well known to the pupils. The school promotes effectively the principles of right and wrong, and this is evident in its daily life. Staff foster respect by respecting the pupils and, for example, deal with unsatisfactory behaviour by explanation and reason through discussion. Moral issues are discussed in religious education and through the study of literature. For example, Year 3 pupils studied a story from the Caribbean and drew a moral from it.

48. There are very good opportunities for older pupils to take responsibility. Pupils from Years 5 and 6 supervise family lunch-time tables. The ten house captains form the pupil committee which consults each class and has discussions with the headteacher. This has resulted in some improvements, such as to the organisation of tennis and football competitions. Pupils make their own presentations to the Parent teacher Association seeking its support for activities they wish to introduce. The annual residential visit to Dorset for Years 5 and 6, or activity camping weekend on the school's site provide very good opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and take responsibility.

49. Within lessons, pupils have good opportunities for initiative through design and making activities for design and technology, their imaginative use of presentation software in Year 6, their investigations in science and team-building activities in physical education. There are many opportunities for collaborative working in lessons. The weekly cookery lesson for groups of Year 6 pupils, who invite a guest to join them for lunch, provides a very good opportunity for social development as the pupils plan and work together to prepare the meal as well as acting as hosts.

50. Pupils have very good opportunities to learn about their own and western cultures. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of educational visits both in Kent and to London. A wide range of European art is studied. There are two school productions each year and there is an orchestra and choir at different times of the year. There are some informative and attractive displays about other cultures. Pupils compare a Mexican village with Dymchurch as part of geography, study Aboriginal art, enjoy some literature from the Caribbean, and study some of the world's major faiths in religious education. There are still, however, too few planned opportunities for pupils to learn about the richness and variety of non-European cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

51. All staff are committed to the welfare of all pupils in the school. They know them well and use this knowledge to provide good day-to-day support and guidance for all pupils. Procedures for child protection, welfare and health and safety are satisfactory. The named person for child protection has had the appropriate training, including the recent updates on looked-after children, and liaises regularly with teachers to monitor their progress. She and the head teacher attend all case conferences and the school follows the local authority guidelines for child protection. There are good procedures to monitor children when there are concerns. There has, however, been no recent child protection training for teachers or learning support assistants.

52. First aid arrangements are satisfactory, with two fully qualified first-aiders and appropriate training for other staff. Parents are informed if there are any head bumps or incidents that cause concern. Occasionally, the first aid bag is not taken to the field at lunchtime and staff do not always carry disposable gloves. These arrangements, however, were reviewed during the inspection. The school is reviewing procedures to ensure that medication is recorded when it is dispensed. All inhalers are kept in the medical room and pupils are not allowed to carry them with them.

53. There is regular liaison with outside agencies to ensure that pupils receive the support they need. Parents of children with special needs speak very highly of the help and the support they receive from the school. Procedures for health and safety are good. There is an annual audit of the building and a report is presented to the governing body. Legal requirements are met with all fire and electrical installations. The midday assistants are very aware of the health and safety issues when pupils are playing on the fields and they provide a high level of supervision to ensure there are no accidents. The dykes and the railway line are well supervised and one assistant patrols the crossing from the school to the field.

54. Whilst registrations are taken quickly and efficiently twice, procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are unsatisfactory. The school makes first day contact with parents if they do not know the reason for a child's non-attendance. There is, however, no record of which parents have been contacted and the reasons for absence are not always recorded. There is no late book, but the school is now reviewing all its arrangements to ensure effective monitoring and recording of absences and punctuality. The educational welfare officer visits on a regular basis and supports the school when there are concerns about attendance.

55. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good and are understood and valued by pupils. They respond well to all adults in the school, who have high expectations of good behaviour. In Key Stage 1, teachers use their own system of reward, depending on the needs of the class, such as verbal praise, smiley faces or stickers. In Key Stage 2, pupils are rewarded with house points for good work, good behaviour or for helping others. The house, which receives the most points at the end of the week, has a ribbon tied on the cup, which is highly valued by the successful team. Pupils in both key stages who produce exceptional work, who have behaved very well for a whole week, or who try really hard, have their name put into the gold book. They then receive recognition in front of the whole school at

assembly and are presented with a certificate. Sometimes the whole class is presented with a certificate, which is then proudly displayed on the classroom wall. Midday assistants present good behaviour stickers and record any inappropriate behaviour. The headteacher regularly monitors the behaviour book and speaks to the pupils involved. Parents are informed when there is persistent poor behaviour.

56. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. All teachers know the pupils well and provide them with good support on a day-to-day basis. During a maths lesson, for example, the teacher dealt very sensitively with a boy who became upset because he could not do the sum. He was encouraged to try and later became the star of the plenary at the end of the lesson. Staff monitor pupils' personal development through the rewards and sanctions policies. The progress and personal development of pupils with special needs are monitored against their targets on their individual education plans. Teachers, learning support assistants and the special educational needs co-ordinator meet regularly and share information in order to support and monitor pupils' personal development.

57. Arrangements for gathering information on what pupils know and can do are very good and much improved since the last inspection. The school has set up a range of methods to collate and analyse the information. In addition to the national tests for pupils aged seven and eleven, non-statutory assessments in English, mathematics and science are held for other year groups. There is a range of reading and spelling tests that provide more information and teachers assess the work in other subjects according to National Curriculum levels. Co-ordinators use this information to write their action plans but it is not yet used well enough to inform the overall school development plan over the longer term.

58. Subject co-ordinators collect the information, which is then analysed to measure the progress pupils have made. The performance of boys and girls who join the school after the reception year is also analysed. A report is then written to highlight where improvements need to be made. The evaluation is often very specific such as in history where the Year 4 work is being targeted to discover whether there is a gender bias in the tasks that are being covered. The use of this information is good but is still at an early stage of development. The strategy highlights strengths and weaknesses, but has not yet had sufficient impact on improving standards in Key Stage 1. Overall, however, the improvement in assessment has had a significant impact on teaching and learning.

59. Good assessments are made of pupils with special educational needs to identify and support a wide range of needs. Information from these assessments is used to prepare good quality individual education plans, which enable pupils, teachers and support staff to know what needs to be learned. The progress that each pupil makes against these is monitored well and plans are reviewed regularly. The targets set for individual plans are well designed to promote personal development and improvements in literacy and numeracy skills. Arrangements for identifying pupils' levels of need are accurate and their continuing needs are reviewed and moderated regularly.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

60. The vast majority of parents who completed the questionnaires and attended the parents meeting are very happy with what the school provides. Concerns were raised about homework, particularly in Year 6, the information on how their children are getting on, the partnership with parents and the range of extra curricular activities, particularly at Key Stage 1. The school is planning to review each of these areas in response to the parents' concerns.

61. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that the partnership with parents is good. The school regularly sends questionnaires to parents to ask for their views. The returns are carefully analysed and reported back to the governing body for action when appropriate. The head teacher responds to issues raised through the school newsletters, or privately if the issue is of a personal nature. This openness enables the school to work in partnership with parents to bring about improvements. The Parent Teacher Association donated a considerable amount of money towards the purchase of non-fiction books for the library. Two parents and two governors then catalogued the books and spent much time preparing the library.

62. Inspectors also found that the information provided by the school about pupils' progress is of high quality. The school provides mini written reports at the end of the autumn and spring terms which give predicted results in the statutory or optional tests. The information is accurate and taken from teachers' assessment records. There is now one formal consultation a year, although the head teacher and teachers are readily available to discuss concerns with parents.

63. The information provided by the school in pupils' annual reports is good, and sometimes very good, in English, mathematics and science, although the reports do not always provide the national curriculum levels. Some reports only provide information on what has been taught in the other subjects and do not tell parents what their children know and can do. There is a yearly 'family walk around', when parents can meet their child's teacher, learning support assistant or the next teacher. There is no formal consultation meeting to discuss the summer end of term reports, but parents are invited to discuss any concerns with the school. Parents are provided with very good advance notice of the topics which pupils will be studying for each year group. At the end of term, parents are given a list of suggested activities which support the curriculum and encourage parents and children to work together during the holidays. The newsletters and prospectus are very informative and well presented.

64. The information provided to parents of pupils with statements of special educational needs is good. Parents are provided with reports from all the agencies involved before the annual review takes place. This enables parents to have informed discussions at the review and to contribute to target setting. Parents are not, however, provided with information or copies of individual education plans after the termly reviews. There is no formal timetable for regular meetings with parents to discuss their child's progress, but parents report that the special educational needs co-ordinator is always available if they have any concerns.

65. Parental involvement in their children's learning is good but they do not always take advantage of the opportunities which the school provides for them to become more involved. For example, 12 governors and 15 parents attended a recent curriculum meeting

about the literacy hour. Parents help with transport for football matches, making costumes and sets for school productions, residential trips and school clubs. Apart from cookery, however, few parents help in the classroom. Parents help their children at home with reading and other homework, particularly on projects during the holidays, which has a positive effect on pupils' attainment and progress. The Parent Teacher Association is well organised and hardworking, involving the local community as well as parents. The association raised a substantial amount of money towards the computers in the classroom.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

66. The well-established headteacher is popular, personable and approachable. He provides clear educational direction for the school and is the driving force behind school improvement. There has already been measurable improvement in standards in Key Stage 2 and the school has recently received the Department for Education and Employment's Achievement Award. Much work, however, remains to be done in Key Stage 1, where pupils do not make enough progress largely due to unsatisfactory teaching.

67. The headteacher's commitment to improvement is supported by the leadership group, staff and governors. The last inspection identified aspects of management as a serious weakness. This is no longer the case, and the school is now well led and managed. The school has clear aims focusing on the personal and academic development of all its pupils. It is very largely meeting its aims for personal development but has yet to meet them fully in enabling all pupils to achieve their academic potential.

68. The leadership group consists of the headteacher, deputy and two assistant heads, one of whom is also the co-ordinator for special educational needs. The allocation of responsibilities within the group is unbalanced and does not always provide value for money as some members have too many responsibilities in comparison with others. The group holds regular, minuted meetings in which it reviews matters of immediate concern and evaluates the school's performance against the priorities of the school development plan. Subject co-ordinators manage their subjects well and all monitor teaching and learning on a regular basis. As a result, changes are made to whole school strategies and personal professional training needs.

69. With the exception of providing swimming in Key Stage 2 as part of the PE curriculum, governors are fulfilling their statutory duties. Governors are regularly informed about the work of the school including monitoring and evaluation through termly committee meetings and full governing body meetings. Governors are linked to specific curriculum areas and meet the relevant co-ordinator to discuss progress, provision and achievement in that subject. They then submit written reports to the governing body. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and use the information well in their strategic planning.

70. The quality of teaching and learning is regularly monitored and evaluated by the headteacher, key stage leaders and subject co-ordinators. The process is valued both by the monitors and the teachers concerned. The process has had a positive effect on the quality of teaching, which has improved considerably since the last inspection. In a few cases, however, staffing difficulties have meant that support has not always been immediately available for teachers where the need for further development in aspects of their teaching has been identified, particularly in Key Stage 1.

71. The school goes to great lengths to ensure that all pupils are able to benefit from the many learning opportunities it offers. Assessment information is used to monitor the results of boys and girls, and the small number of pupils from ethnic minority groups. Girls' standards in reading are higher than those of boys. The school has taken satisfactory steps to seek to raise the boys' achievement by improving the fiction and non-fiction books in the library and checking that the texts used in the literacy hour are appropriate for boys.

72. Where the school identifies aspects of pupils' behaviour and attendance which are limiting their academic progress, it takes sound steps to secure improvement. For example, in a mathematics lesson in one class, about one quarter of pupils had been identified as having emotional and behavioural needs but they all behaved well, were attentive and achieved well during the lesson. The school values all of its pupils and works hard to ensure that they all achieve well.

73. The three-year school development plan has targets which focus on raising standards. Whilst the plan contains time-scales and responsibilities, some targets are not sufficiently precise and there are no success criteria. The school monitoring plan identifies which subjects will be reviewed each year. Clear targets are set and the action needed to meet them is taken after consideration by the leadership group and governors.

74. Staffing is good, with appropriately qualified teachers to teach all subjects of the curriculum, and a special educational needs co-ordinator. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers and learning support assistants have attended a number of training courses which have successfully addressed shortcomings which have been identified in the last inspection report. The school has appointed a very knowledgeable information technology technician who provides good quality support for class teachers. There is now a co-ordinator for each subject and they have sufficient non-contact time in which to carry out their monitoring role. Learning support assistants are well trained and they provide good support for teachers and pupils. The school has one trained mentor for the induction of new staff and is in the process of training another to take on this responsibility. The schools' induction policy includes guidance supporting newly qualified teachers and students on teacher training. The new performance management system is in place and the chair of governors reviews the head teachers' targets quarterly. All staff have been appraised.

75. The school is running a deficit budget, caused largely by the need to cover for teachers on long term sickness absence together with falling roles. The school has agreed a repayment scheme with the local authority. The budget is now well run and monitored by the bursar, headteacher and governors and resources are well used to meet clearly identified educational priorities. The school makes good use of new technology in all aspects of its work.

76. The very good leadership of the special educational needs co-ordinator underpins the high standards of provision. The detailed knowledge of the needs of these pupils is used energetically to ensure that quality is maintained and improved. A strong commitment to the inclusion of these pupils is at the heart of this work and compliments the aims and values of the school.

77. The accommodation is good, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Two new classrooms have been added and there is a wide range of specialist rooms, which include a new information technology suite, a new library, and a cookery room. The music room is suitable for small-group teaching and is used by the peripatetic music teacher. The medical room is well equipped and the school has facilities for pupils with physical disabilities. All classrooms are adequate for delivering the National Curriculum. There is, however, some disruption to lessons as pupils have to walk through one room to reach another. The school has very generous outside space with two large fields and a

playground. There is a nature area, including a pond which is well used to support several subject areas in the curriculum. The school is planning to improve the outside play area for the under-fives.

78. The new library is well laid out and has a good range of fiction and non-fiction books. The school has used a simplified Dewey System, which enables pupils to develop library skills. The library has a number of dual language books and encyclopaedias. Pupils also have access to CD-ROMs for research. The library is well used and each class has a timetabled library period. Resources for ICT are very good. The ICT suite has fifteen computers and there are a further seven stand-alone in a neighbouring lobby. Resources for English, science, physical education and the foundation stage are good. All other resources are satisfactory.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

79. In order to raise standards in Key Stage 1 and in science throughout the school, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- Improve all aspects of teaching in all subjects in Key Stage 1 drawing on the good practice that exists within the school, so that pupils can build on the good start they receive in the Foundation Stage and make good gains in their learning*.
- Raise standards in science by:
 - * ensuring regular assessments of pupils' attainment are carried out and used to plan the next steps of learning for groups and individuals so that pupils tackle more demanding work each term;
 - * by ensuring lessons are given an allocation of time suitable to the age of the pupils;
 - * by improving skills in writing up experiments, including their use of scientific vocabulary.
- Review the leadership group to ensure that roles and responsibilities are balanced so that it raises standards and gives good value for money.
- Introduce swimming lessons as part of the Key Stage 2 physical education curriculum*.
- Governors should also consider:
 - * improving the arrangements for monitoring and promoting attendance;
 - * making the targets in the school development plan more precise and introduce success criteria that focus on the raising of standards;
 - * improving learning about other cultures so that children are better prepared for life in a multi-cultural society.

**These issues have already been identified by the school as priorities for action.*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 61 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 39 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactor y | Unsatisfactor y | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|------------------|--------------------|------|-----------|
| 2 | 23 | 42 | 29 | 5 | 0 | 0 |

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

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | YR – Y6 |
|---|--------------------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 335 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 79 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | YR – Y6 |
|---|--------------------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 4 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 89 |

| 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 | 35 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 18 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

Unauthorised absence

| | |
|---------------------------|----------|
| | % |
| School data | 5.2 |
| National comparative data | 5.2 |

| | |
|---------------------------|----------|
| | % |
| School data | 0.0 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

| | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year: | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 2000 | 27 | 26 | 53 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|--|----------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above | Boys | 19 | 22 | 25 |
| | Girls | 24 | 24 | 24 |
| | Total | 43 | 46 | 49 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above | School | 81 (92) | 87 (94) | 92 (96) |
| | National | 83 (82) | 84 (83) | 90 (87) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above | Boys | 21 | 24 | 21 |
| | Girls | 23 | 24 | 24 |
| | Total | 44 | 48 | 45 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above | School | 83 (87) | 91 (92) | 85 (88) |
| | 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 | 25 | 35 | 60 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|--|----------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above | Boys | 18 | 19 | 22 |
| | Girls | 24 | 24 | 25 |
| | Total | 42 | 43 | 47 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above | School | 70 (62) | 73 (72) | 78 (79) |
| | National | 75 (70) | 72 (69) | 85 (78) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above | Boys | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| | Girls | 20 | 17 | 19 |
| | Total | 31 | 29 | 32 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above | School | 58 (56) | 55 (58) | 60 (65) |
| | National | 70 (68) | 72 (69) | 79 (75) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 1 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 |
| Indian | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 |
| Chinese | 2 |
| White | 294 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 0 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 14.1 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 27.7 |
| Average class size | 27.9 |

FTE Means full time equivalent

Education support staff: Y R– Y 6

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 12 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 182 |

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|------------------|
| Financial year | 1999-2000 |
|----------------|------------------|

| | £ |
|--|-----------|
| Total income | 659621.00 |
| Total expenditure | 678684.00 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1798.00 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | -14302.00 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | -33365.00 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 335 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 118 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 54 | 45 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 43 | 51 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 38 | 58 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 24 | 59 | 14 | 2 | 2 |
| The teaching is good. | 57 | 40 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 41 | 43 | 14 | 3 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 63 | 30 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 57 | 36 | 4 | 3 | 0 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 37 | 48 | 12 | 2 | 1 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 44 | 47 | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 40 | 51 | 6 | 3 | 0 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 39 | 41 | 10 | 3 | 6 |

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

80. Children in the reception classes make a very good start to their learning. Both teachers create stimulating, well-organised learning environments and have a sensitive caring approach to the children, which promotes a very good ethos for learning. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection.

81. At present, there are 38 children in the reception classes, spread across two classes. Most children have had pre-school experience, mainly at playgroups. They enter school after a satisfactory programme of visits in the autumn and spring terms of the academic year in which they are five years old. The oldest children attend full time from the outset and the younger children part-time until Christmas. The children's ability on entry is mainly average, although there is a spread of ability with some being above or below what is expected nationally for children of their age. By the end of the reception year, almost all reach the requirements of the goals for all the areas of learning. A good number reach beyond this level, indicating good progress overall.

82. The main reasons for this good progress are the consistently good teaching, high expectations and the excellent ethos the teachers promote. Of the lessons seen, two thirds were good and one third very good. Strengths in the teaching include good support for the development of personal and social skills and, in particular, the development of independence. Children confidently organise their belongings at the start of the day and then engage in a variety of self-chosen activities. Teachers use questioning very effectively to develop children's knowledge and understanding across the areas of learning.

83. Work is very well planned to include a range of practical and interesting tasks, resulting in children wanting to come to school and enjoying learning. There is a consistent approach to the development of language, writing and reading skills and, as a result, children make good progress to become confident readers. A good example of this was the group reading of *The Three Pigs*. The children enjoyed reading aloud and ensured that the story was delivered with a good level of expression. The basic skills of letter sounds and names and counting are particularly well taught, so that children quickly become confident in their early attempts to read, write and count.

84. Assessment is used very well to ensure that work is clearly targeted at pupils' needs in order to maximise their learning. Learning support assistants are used profitably to record children's responses. They also provide very valuable support for children and make a good contribution to the high quality of their learning. As a result of this good teaching, children put a huge amount of intellectual, physical and creative effort into their learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

85. The good teaching for this area of learning results in children who are interested, excited and motivated to learn. Children's attitudes to learning and their behaviour is always very good and sometimes excellent and this makes a positive contribution to their learning. The good provision for child-initiated activity offers a wide range of practical tasks and opportunities for children to work independently or as part of a group. For example, children enjoy role-playing as shopkeepers selling shoes, using wet sand to make roadways and farms and co-operating with each other to make a railway track. Children have considerable confidence in trying new activities and initiating ideas. All adults provide very good role models for children always treating them with warmth, care, quiet respect and courtesy. This results in very good relationships and a good level of trust and helps children to develop good social skills. By the end of the reception year, most children exceed the required goals for this area of learning and they achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry.

Communication, language and literacy

86. Almost all children are likely to attain the early learning goals in this area of learning, with a good number of them working within Level 1 of the National Curriculum, by the time they enter the classes for six-year-olds. All adults take every opportunity to develop the skills of speaking and listening in discussion and in their interactions with children in their work and play. Teachers use group reading time well to encourage children to talk about the content of their books. In their book about the new dog, for example, the teacher took the opportunity to discuss their own favourite dogs. Children enjoy listening to stories but, especially enjoy acting out well known stories such as The Three Bears and confidently use the voices and mannerisms of the characters. All children handle books carefully and show great pleasure in showing off their developing competence in reading when they confidently read a selection of simple texts from the reading area.

87. The literacy framework is used well in both classes. Teachers ensure that it is appropriate to children's needs, and group activities are always well planned to be practical and relevant to what is being learned. When learning the sound of the letter z, for example, children painted pictures of zebras and zig zags and made z shapes. Children gain a good knowledge of the letters and sounds of the alphabet because these have a high priority with teachers at all times. They encourage children to use their knowledge of sounds to identify initial and final sounds in words and to build three letter words. Children enjoy these activities and learn well. By the time the children reach the end of the reception year, almost all have a good vocabulary, have a good knowledge of letters and sounds and are using this knowledge, along with pictures, to help them read and write simple sentences.

88. In both classes, teachers encourage children to think of themselves as readers and writers, whatever their stage of development. A good range of books is available and children take these home very regularly, to read with parents. Parents give very good support to reading and enjoying books with their children. Good

supplies of paper, pens and crayons are available in play areas. Children are encouraged to write confidently and independently in the writing area, as well as being taught writing skills in a more formal, teacher directed manner.

Mathematical development

89. This area of learning is taught well and, as a result, children learn well and almost all reach the early learning goals. A good number are likely to reach Level 1 of the National Curriculum by the time they enter the classes for six year olds. Activities are carefully chosen and resources used well to ensure that children develop secure counting and number skills. Dominoes, for example, are used skilfully to help children add numbers together, develop the skill of counting on and recognise doubles. Teachers encourage children to see number all around them by helping them to produce a book showing numbers in a variety of contexts such as number plates and telephone numbers. Other enjoyable activities such as number rhymes and songs are used effectively to develop the concepts of more and less. Children use the 100 square successfully to find large and small numbers. They have a good understanding of positional language, recognise a variety of two dimensional shapes and are developing concepts such as heavy and light. The good variety of interesting and exciting practical games and activities used to reinforce mathematical work enables children to learn well and enjoy mathematics.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

90. Through a well-planned wide curriculum, children are helped to learn more about their world. By the time they enter the class for six year olds, they have attained the early learning goals for knowledge and understanding of the world and many have exceeded them. They are competent at building a wide range of vehicles using construction kits and enjoy creating models using recyclable materials. They learn to join, cut and glue materials through these activities and successfully adapt their work as they go along. They have very good opportunities to find out about the life cycle of creatures as they watch their caterpillars pupate, and eagerly anticipate their transformation to butterflies. The tadpoles in the classroom have given them the opportunity to study their life cycle at close quarters and gain a greater understanding of the process. In a lesson seen, they used their sense of touch very well when they walked around the playground touching and exploring the qualities of different materials and using vocabulary such as 'rough', 'bumpy', 'smooth', to describe them. Through their topic, 'All about me' they learn about the different parts of their bodies and the changes which have taken place since they were babies. They use their computer skills well to create drawings of their tadpoles.

Physical development

91. Through regular physical activity in the school hall and on the field, children learn to move with confidence and safety. They learn to use space well and develop the skills of hopping, skipping and jumping. Many are able to throw and catch a ball and bounce it with some control. They have good levels of co-ordination and use apparatus sensibly. The good provision of a wide range of practical activities gives children varied opportunities to handle tools, construction apparatus and malleable

materials. For example, they make railway tracks and models using a construction kit. They all use scissors with a good level of skill. The

main weakness in the provision for physical development is the lack of an outside area to provide opportunities for children to climb, build or use wheeled vehicles. Children do, however, make good progress and most exceed the required standards for physical development.

Creative development

92. By the end of the foundation stage, children have learned well and many exceed the required standards for this area of learning. Work on the walls indicates good opportunities to paint, print, observe and draw and good use is made of the computer to create patterns and pictures. During the inspection, children had the opportunity to look closely at a pineapple and then, using pastels, make detailed drawings of it showing a good attention to its colour and texture. Children regularly sing songs and make music, sometimes using instruments. They learn a good range of songs and rhymes and particularly enjoy the echo songs from the taped music. They have good opportunities for role-play and dressing up and use them well to respond imaginatively to a variety of situations. For example, they used their imaginations well to re-enact the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears and then added their own ending to the story.

ENGLISH

93. Standards in English at the end of Key Stage 1 match those expected by children of their age. In last year's National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds, pupils matched the national average in reading but were above in writing. When compared to similar schools, pupils matched the average in reading and were above in writing. In writing, there were a larger number of pupils who only just gained the recognised average Level 2 whilst fewer gained the higher Level 3. Over the last four years the results have fallen from well above average to average, largely due to inadequacies in the quality of teaching over a number of years. This was a key issue of the last report. Learning has also been disrupted because of staff absence. Girls achieved higher results than boys and the difference was greater than is usual.

94. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are also average, although there are a number of pupils who are reading and writing to a higher level. Pupils' standards in speaking and listening are above average. In last year's national tests, results were average when compared to all schools but above average when compared to similar schools. Standards have risen over the last four years, largely as a result of improved teaching. Boys have achieved better results than those recorded nationally, whilst the girls performed as expected.

95. In Key Stage 1 standards in speaking are above average. Pupils are articulate, able to express their ideas clearly and use suitable vocabulary in discussion. In an English lesson pupils could explain words that rhymed and why this was important in the rhythm of a limerick. Pupils are not so good at listening because of weaknesses in the teaching. They take note of comments made by other pupils during discussions but do not wait to think about the answer they are

going to give. In some cases pupils cut across other conversations to make their point too forcibly. Teachers do not always challenge this type of behaviour and as a result pupils are not fully aware of the expected conventions.

96. Standards of speaking and listening in Key Stage 2 are above average. Whilst talking enthusiastically, pupils in Years 3 and 4 are encouraged to wait and think. In a Year 5 lesson the teacher made a deliberate policy of asking whether the contribution was relevant to the discussion. This approach encouraged the pupils to think about what they were going to say and has helped to raise standards. Pupils in Year 6 are articulate, speaking with clarity and maturity. Discussions with each other are of a high quality.

97. Standards of reading match what is expected nationally for children aged seven and eleven, but there are a number of pupils in both key stages whose standards are higher. Key Stage 1 pupils are given regular opportunities to practise their skills. Group reading within the literacy lesson is given a high priority. Pupils are able to follow texts on the board and many of them can read out aloud as a group. They read a suitable range of material but do not have the ability to compare and contrast different types of books, and their reasons for choosing a particular book are often superficial. A small number of pupils have better skills in reading but too few are achieving the higher National Curriculum levels.

98. Standards in Key Stage 2 are higher. Pupils in Year 6 are able to talk confidently about a range of authors whom they have read and give good reasons why they like particular books. In one discussion, a pupil talked about his enjoyment of Tolkein and could explain the different characters. He was also able to explain how the characters changed in different books and why this might have happened. Pupils with average ability can predict what is going to happen in a story and refer to parts of the text to explain their reasons.

99. Standards in writing match what is expected nationally for children aged seven and eleven. The most able pupils in Year 2 are able to use direct and indirect speech and often write extensive stories. They use their writing in different situations, such as letters and poems. There are, though, too few opportunities to write up experiments in science or planning in design and technology. Pupils of average ability have spelling skills below average, although there are regular opportunities for practice. They do not always use a good cursive style of writing in their everyday work and descriptive writing is often stilted. Lower-attaining pupils have standards which are higher than might be expected. Most of them write in sentences, have some spelling expertise and can sequence a story. Their progress is good because of the more concentrated teaching they receive.

100. Standards in Key Stage 2 also match the national average. A good proportion of pupils have above average ability and have been entered for the higher Level 6 paper in this year's National Curriculum tests. The highest-attaining pupils make good use of grammar and use it to help give their stories interest. They write in paragraphs, using the main conventions of English correctly. There is evidence that they plan and draft their work, refining it as they go along. The average pupils have a good vocabulary that is usually spelt correctly. They can write in different styles but have less confidence writing long stories. Here, they often rely on a tried and

tested formula and the story line is less innovative. As in Key Stage 1, pupils of below average ability make better progress. The majority know how to structure their writing and are able to write coherent, interesting stories. Spellings are usually correct and they are able to find alternatives to words that they do not know how to spell. Computers are used well to support the work in English, especially since the introduction of the new computer suite.

101. Pupils with special educational needs progress well in line with their individual education plans. They receive a range of extra support, including some direct teaching through the additional literacy support programme. This has helped ensure that these pupils follow the literacy targets set for them on their individual education plans.

102. In both key stages, work is presented well. Handwriting is good by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils make progress in their spelling. English is used well across the curriculum in both key stages. The introduction of the literacy hour has been successful and has helped teachers understand the need to structure work more closely to teach the use of language and grammar.

103. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Of the three lessons seen in Key Stage 1, two were satisfactory and one was unsatisfactory. Of the eight lessons seen in Key Stage 2, one was excellent, two were very good, three were good and two were satisfactory. As a result, pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning during Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2.

104. All teachers have good subject knowledge, although in Key Stage 1 they do not always understand the level at which the subject should be taught to children of different ages and abilities. In the best cases the teacher is always challenging the level of knowledge. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, the pupils were asked to help rewrite a descriptive piece into a set of instructions. The teacher used very clever techniques to draw out the specifics of this type of writing, including the use of active and passive sentences. The pupils were enthusiastic and motivated to help. In Key Stage 1, teachers do not ask questions that are open to interpretation and the pupils only give single word answers. In contrast, teachers' own understanding of language is good and so the teaching of basic skills such as spelling, handwriting and grammar are effective.

105. Planning is much improved since the last inspection, partly due to the structure of the literacy hour but also because teachers try to ensure that tasks are at an appropriate level. In Key Stage 1 this planning is not so effective, as teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to achieve are too low.

106. Pupils are managed well. They are treated with respect and where the work is challenging there are very few problems of classroom management. Where teaching is not so strong, as in Year 2 and part of Year 1, there are minor disruptions to the flow of the lesson. There are no behavioural issues in Key Stage 2. In all classes, learning assistants are used well. They provide valuable support to teachers and pupils. This helps to ensure that all pupils progress satisfactorily. Lower-attaining pupils make especially good progress. Time is used well. Resources are always to hand and there is very little disturbance when pupils move around the room. Pupils do not leave their places unnecessarily and this ensures that the pace of learning is at least satisfactory.

107. Marking is regularly undertaken. In the best cases, as in Year 4, the teacher has a two-way interaction and ensures that individual pupils respond to any

complaints or issues. Good use is made of the information gathered on what pupils know and can do. In all classes, the

pupils have individual targets and there were numerous examples during the inspection when teachers referred to these or asked whether they had been achieved. As a result, all pupils work hard and try to do their best. In the best lessons, such as those seen in Year 5 and 6, the pupils are energetic learners and put in a great deal of effort to ensure that they make progress.

108. The co-ordination of the subject has been a major factor in improving teaching and learning since the last inspection. The co-ordinator is highly conscientious, a good classroom practitioner and has worked hard to improve English provision throughout the school. This has generally been successful, although progress is still uneven. There has been rigorous monitoring of teaching and the strengths and weaknesses of the subject have been clearly identified. The subsequent development plan is enabling the targets for improvement to be achieved. Assessment of standards has been a particular priority. Results have been closely analysed and collated and a development plan has been put into place. Despite this, the overall good improvement made since the last inspection has not yet been reflected in rising standards in Key Stage 1. Resources are at least adequate and good use of the newly refurbished library is also helping to raise standards.

MATHEMATICS

109. In last year's National Curriculum tests for seven year olds, results were below what is expected for children of their age for all schools, but above average for similar schools. The results at the end of Key Stage 2 matched the national average for all schools and were above average for similar schools. At the end of both key stages, the average results of boys and girls have been similar over the past three years. The results of the national tests have improved steadily since 1997.

110. Inspection evidence shows that the standards of the current Year 2 pupils are below average. Some higher-attaining pupil are reaching above-average standards. For example, they calculate accurately with numbers up to 1000 and use simple fractions. These pupils achieve well. However, in another class which has had several different teachers, higher-attaining pupils have completed accurately much work in adding and subtracting two digit numbers but have not moved on to work with three digit numbers. Their work does not enable them to reach a higher National Curriculum level.

111. A minority of higher-attaining pupils in this class are secure in their quick recall of number facts to 20. Most higher-attaining pupils in this class have not, however, achieved enough. Average-attaining pupils understand the value of each digit in two-digit numbers and add and subtract them accurately. They are beginning to use mental calculation strategies to solve money problems. A relatively large number of average-attaining pupils, however, did not reach the expected level in this year's tests. Lower-attaining pupils add single digits numbers accurately but are not yet secure in adding numbers to 20. They are beginning to understand the value of the digits in two-digit numbers. A significant number of pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Teachers work hard to help pupils with special educational needs to

achieve. Pupils achieve particularly well when receiving well-targeted help from learning support assistants.

112. In the current Year 6, standards match national averages. Higher-attaining pupils carry out accurate calculations with large numbers. They multiply decimal numbers confidently by 100 and 1000. They measure and draw angles accurately and correctly use the names of different types of angle. They use the mode and median to describe sets of data. Average-attaining pupils work accurately with large numbers for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They add and subtract decimals to two places but are not yet secure when calculating the areas of more complex shapes. Some lower-attaining pupils are approaching average standards in aspects of their work. They accurately multiply decimal numbers in money by single digits and measure some angles accurately. They use simple fractions to describe proportions of a whole but are not yet confident in using percentages. Overall, the achievements of all pupils are good during Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs are helped to achieve well by effective learning support assistants.

113. In the lessons observed in Key Stage 1, the teaching and learning was satisfactory in two and good in one. The scrutiny of pupils' previously completed work, however, shows some unsatisfactory learning during Year 2 as, for example, some higher-attaining pupils repeat work that they have already securely grasped. The National Numeracy Strategy is well established although its impact has been reduced by staff changes in Year 2. The good teaching and learning during Key Stage 2 results in good progress and pupils' standards improve from below average to average during the key stage.

114. A common strength of the teaching is the matching of tasks to pupils' differing levels of attainment so that all are appropriately challenged. The scrutiny of pupils' work, however, shows that this has been unsatisfactory in one Year 2 class during the year. Very clear sequences of activities in whole-class teaching built on and extended pupils' existing knowledge and resulted in rapid learning in a Year 3 lesson on right angles and in a Year 6 class on interpreting pie charts. The best plenary sessions reinforced what pupils had learnt during the lesson. This was then extended or a new activity introduced in order to challenge all pupils to apply their understanding in a new context. Teachers often used on-going assessment effectively during lessons and interjected teaching for a group of pupils who had a common misunderstanding. In the best lessons, pupils had opportunities to use and apply their mathematics, and higher-attaining Year 4 pupils learnt a great deal as they had to investigate how to draw squares of a given area that did not match the squares on their paper.

115. Classroom management is usually effective and secures good behaviour and an interested, committed response from the pupils. For example, during the mental starter session in a Key Stage 2 class, pupils of all levels of attainment were fully involved and all concentrated well as they gave their answers and were asked to explain their calculation methods. However, a significant minority of pupils in a Key Stage 1 class, that has had several different teachers during the year, lacked self-

discipline, did not follow the expected class rules and had difficulty in sustaining their concentration.

116. Weaknesses in Key Stage 1 teaching which reduced pupils' learning included not using coins as part of whole-class teaching on money and not asking pupils to explain their calculation methods. In both key stages, during plenary sessions, lower-attaining pupils were not able to use practical demonstrations to help them understand demanding work that was of particular relevance to higher-attaining pupils. Pupils' work is marked regularly. In some cases, teachers' comments make clear how pupils can improve their work but pupils do not always act on what the teacher has written.

117. The use of pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects is satisfactory. In investigative work in science, pupils are beginning to use a variety of measures and record their results in tables, bar charts and line graphs. In ICT, pupils use their skills in a wide range of work with different data bases, the use of spreadsheets and the creation of geometrical patterns.

118. Important improvements have been made since the previous inspection. Provision for higher-attaining pupils has improved, as work is usually well matched to pupils' differing levels of attainment at Key Stage 2 although this remains a weakness at Key Stage 1. The school has started to teach mathematics to some groups of pupils with similar levels of attainment. Higher-attaining Year 5 pupils drawn from two classes have one lesson together each week, and this enables them to make good progress. Assessment has also improved and the progress of individual pupils is carefully tracked. The management of mathematics is good and includes scheduled time to monitor teaching, planning and pupils' work. The targets for improvement in the subject's development plan show that the school's self-evaluation is very effective.

119. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught and make good progress in line with their individual educational plans. Pupils having English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

SCIENCE

120. Standards in the National Curriculum science tests for 11 year olds in 2000 were below the national average and that of similar schools. Standards in national tests have been below or well below national averages over the past four years, but have been improving in line with the national trend since 1998. There is no significant difference between the results achieved by boys and girls. Standards in teacher assessments for seven year olds in 2000 were below the national average at the expected Level 2 and above the national average at the higher Level 3.

121. Inspection findings show attainment to be similar to last year's results at both key stages, although there are fewer seven year olds currently working at Level 3. Pupils' achievement at seven is unsatisfactory due to the very limited focus on the development of scientific skills in Year 2 and the overall unsatisfactory teaching of

the subject in this year group. This is a similar finding to the previous inspection, when teaching and standards in Year 2 were found to be unsatisfactory. Additionally, there has been a high level of turbulence due to staff absence in this year group, which has also affected standards.

122. Achievement at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall as teaching is mainly good and there is a close focus on practical investigations. Attainment in the current Year 6 is adversely affected by the high number of pupils with special educational needs in the year group and the high number of pupils who join the school during Key Stage 2, many of whom have low attainment. The main weaknesses in teaching, which are hampering progress, are insufficient assessment information to guide planning and a lack of direct teaching to develop pupils' skills in writing up experiments, including the use of scientific vocabulary.

123. In Key Stage 1, pupils use simple equipment and begin to make observations about their enquiries. In Year 1, they learn about their own senses, which they use to explore sounds and to differentiate between loud and quiet sound. They describe living creatures in terms of what they eat and how they move. In Year 2, most know that plants need water and light to grow and know that different living creatures are found in different places. They describe in simple terms how materials change when they are cooled or heated such as, 'chocolate melts'.

124. A few pupils in Year 2 attain higher than average standards in some aspects of science. They know how to make an electrical circuit and have some idea of how to complete a broken one. However, they have very limited ideas on how to conduct a fair test. Lower-attaining pupils explain observations in simple terms – 'The leaf is big.' Pupils in Year 2 also understand how things move and they describe their findings by showing how some are pulled and others pushed. In the lessons seen pupils tested cars on different slopes after predicting how far they would travel. Most were accurate in their predictions. However, many had difficulty in measuring the distance with any degree of accuracy and generally recorded their results in simple terms.

125. By Year 6, pupils have a wide range of attainment and this is not always fully taken into account when teaching the subject. Lower-attaining pupils do not always complete their work and results are not always recorded. They show a limited understanding of what has been undertaken. Higher and average-attaining pupils carry out experiments, make predictions and relate their conclusions to scientific knowledge. They have a good understanding of what makes a saturated solution, reversible and irreversible change and know how to use a fair test consistently in their approach. In the lessons seen, these pupils were able to make series and parallel electrical circuits and were beginning to work out how and why these circuits affected the brightness of the lights.

126. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory, often good, in Key Stage 2. No teaching was seen in Year 1. The one lesson seen in Key Stage 1 was unsatisfactory. Of the five lessons seen in Key Stage 2, three were good and two were satisfactory. In addition to the lessons seen, the work in pupils' books shows that pupils in Key Stage 1 make unsatisfactory progress, whilst those in Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress.

127. Across the school lessons are well planned, preparation is detailed and teachers use a wide range of resources to help pupils with their experimentation. In Year 5, for example, teachers used a good variety of musical instruments and objects from which musical sounds could be created to help pupils understand that there were many ways that pitch could be changed. Another good example was in Year 3 where the teacher had a wide variety of plants grown in different conditions in order to help pupils understand the effects of light deprivation on plants. In almost all lessons, pupils are managed well and this creates a good learning environment in which pupils listen and are keen to carry out their tasks. In many lessons in Key Stage 2, questioning is used well to help pupils develop their understanding. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, the teacher who was keen to

assess all pupils' understanding asked questions such as 'why are these bulbs really bright?' 'Who would agree with that?'

128. In some lessons good use is made of scientific vocabulary and this in turn encourages a good number of pupils to use terms such as 'circuits' and 'components'. Teachers provide good opportunities for practical work and, as a result, pupils enjoy science, work well together and are happy to discuss their findings and share resources. Marking of work is variable and even where it is good pupils do not respond in a manner which will help them to improve, and no targets are set in order to encourage them to do so.

129. The main weakness in teaching is that not enough attention is given to the wide range of abilities within each class, to ensure that all pupils are suitably catered for and challenged. In addition, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to write up experiments clearly and to an agreed format, which emphasises the use of scientific vocabulary. The unsatisfactory teaching in Year 2 is linked to poor management of pupils and a lack of appropriate focus on the development of scientific skills both within the lessons seen and over time. Lessons in Key Stage 1 last up to two hours, making it difficult for some pupils to stay focused on their work. Pupils with special educational needs generally make satisfactory progress due to the support they are given during lessons by learning support assistants.

130. The co-ordinator for science is fairly new and since his appointment science has not been a priority of the school. He has, however, ensured consistency in planning through a scheme of work based on national guidelines, and good teamwork among the teachers. He is aware of the weaknesses in writing up experiments and is working with the literacy co-ordinator to ensure improvement. Individual assessments of pupils are now carried out annually but there is a lack of assessment to help with planning for the wide variety of needs within each class. This was identified as a weakness in the last report. Resources are carefully chosen to enable teachers to teach the units of study within the scheme of work. The co-ordinator has carried out an analysis of science work within the school in order to improve standards.

131. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support and as a result make good progress in line with their individual educational plans. Pupils having English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

132. For just over a year, the school has had a very good computer suite and has taught a clearly structured course of work based on national guidance to each class. Teachers now have a good level of specialist knowledge. A very knowledgeable, specialist, learning support assistant ensures that the equipment and software work effectively, and provides invaluable, expert support to teachers and pupils. As a result, pupils from all classes have made very good progress from a relatively low level and their attainment now matches national expectations at the ends of both key stages. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving very well. There is no difference in the performance of boys and girls.

133. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils use ICT to organise and classify information. Pupils know how to enter, save and retrieve their work. They use ICT very effectively to create pictures in the style of Mondrian and Lowry, and to control the cursor on the screen to create

geometrical patterns. Year 6 pupils have created multi-media presentations that combine sound, text and graphics with animation. These are of a high standard. They have used the Internet to research the Tudors as part of history. Pupils know how to enter formulae into spreadsheets to, for example, calculate areas.

134. The quality of teaching and learning are very good. The one lesson seen in Key Stage 1 was good. Of the five lessons seen in Key stage 2, two were very good, two were good and one was satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Explanations given by teachers and the learning support assistant are clear, and tasks are set in small steps so that pupils can make fast progress. The learning of Year 3 pupils, for example, was very good as they all learnt how to send an e-mail with an attachment.

135. Teachers use the data projector linked to a laptop computer to give practical demonstrations of programs that involve all pupils and show clearly how to operate the software. This enables pupils to quickly understand, for example, how to carry out more complex searches with a database. Introductions to lessons are clear and brisk and as a result that pupils know what they are expected to learn and have the maximum time to work at the computers. Consequently, Year 2 pupils understood how branching databases work and were able to use one effectively to identify mini-beasts with questions that can be answered only by 'yes' or 'no'. Teachers' classroom management is very effective and secures very good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. In one lesson, for example, the teacher channelled pupils' natural enthusiasm into focused learning. All were keen to take part and share their ideas.

136. There are occasional, isolated weaknesses in teaching. In one lesson, for example, a teacher did not follow the school's guidance fully for a particular activity, so pupils did not achieve as much as possible. Pupils' previously completed work shows that there were some instances in Key Stage 1 when higher-attaining pupils repeated the same sort of exercises several times when they had already clearly mastered a particular skill.

137. There is some effective use of ICT to enhance pupils' learning in other subjects. In both key stages, for example, data handling helps pupils' mathematical learning, as does their control of the cursor to draw geometrical shapes. Word processing is used effectively to improve pupils' literacy skills.

138. The curriculum is very well planned and an excellent portfolio of pupils' work is being built up. These are very helpful to teachers as they plan their lessons, and contribute to the (very) good teaching. The subject is effectively managed and the co-ordinator has time to monitor teaching, planning and pupils' attainment. The school is aware of those aspects of the curriculum that needs further improvement, such as using spreadsheets to answer 'What if...?' questions. The specialist learning support assistant is present for almost all lessons in the ICT suite and is able to use assessment information to improve the curriculum planning which results in improved learning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

139. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment matches the requirements of the agreed syllabus. Pupils recognise the distinctive features of some religions, such as the Torah and the use of a church, and describe religious practices such as prayer and baptism. They respond to the feelings and concerns of others as they think about how they should behave on a visit to the church. A strength of Year 2 is that pupils have opportunities for personal writing about, for example, their own accounts of John the Baptist, and visiting the parish church to role play an infant baptism with the vicar. Pupils achieve well.

140. At the end of Key Stage 2, however, attainment is below the expectations of the agreed syllabus. In a Year 6 lesson on the Bar Mitzvah, pupils used Jewish symbols as they made Bar Mitzvah cards. Only higher-attaining pupils, however, were able to suggest meanings for the symbols. Pupils have the expected knowledge and understanding of Christianity but, as reported in the previous inspection, there are weaknesses in their understanding of other religions. The school has been following the current work programme for just over a year and, as a result, older pupils have not built up the expected levels of knowledge as they moved through the school. The subject does, however, give good support to pupils' personal development as, for example, they explain their views on issues such as stealing.

141. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good and their achievement satisfactory. Much of pupils' learning from religion is through discussion, although there are also some good examples of written work. In Year 6, pupils explore the feelings they have in different situations and explain whether they would like to be Jewish. In Year 5, pupils have explored the idea of not judging others by their appearance. This work included an awareness of racism.

142. In the three lessons seen teaching was good in one and satisfactory in two. In a Year 4 lesson on Hindu shrines, pupils' previous work had resulted in a good level of knowledge about Hindu gods. This work included individual research, painting some of the gods and visiting a Year 2 class to speak to pupils about their work as they too were studying Hinduism. The lesson was well prepared and resulted in good learning for pupils in both classes, building on what they already knew. The teacher had a good level of knowledge about Hinduism and used it successfully to relate aspects of shrines to the pupils' own experiences.

143. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils were involved in a variety of activities linking the Bar Mitzvah as an initiation ceremony to the pupils' own experiences of initiation into clubs and communities. In a lesson for older Key Stage 1 pupils, they developed their understanding of the concept of respect by discussion about the school's rules, the assembly earlier that day and the way that Jews treat the Torah. This resulted in sound learning as pupils considered how they could show respect on their visit to the parish church after half term.

144. There have been significant improvements in curriculum planning since the previous inspection. The changes help to ensure that pupils' learning covers all the required aspects of the agreed syllabus and is extended and improved each year. Effective use is made of a good

range of artefacts in teaching and in the high quality displays. The subject is well managed and the co-ordinators monitor planning, teaching and learning in line with the school's schedule. As part of the school's planning, the subject will be a focus for improvement in the autumn term.

ART AND DESIGN

145. Time-tabling arrangements meant that there was limited opportunity to observe the teaching of art and design during the inspection. Evidence gained from the scrutiny of work, teachers' planning and displays around the school, however, shows standards to be at the expected level for seven year olds and above for 11 year olds. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment at age seven and achieve well by the age of eleven. The pupils' skills are used to very good effect to provide some outstanding displays throughout the school.

146. Younger pupils are taught a range of techniques and use a variety of media. They draw portraits of themselves and make good use of colour mixing in order to create skin tones. Their drawings of stained glass windows demonstrate good observational skills and effective use of line drawing. Good use is made of the computer in art and there are good examples displayed in the classrooms. Year 1 pupils use colour magic to create landscape scenes based on Turner's '*Fighting Temeraire*'. Year 2 pupils use computer graphics well to create drawings based on the '*Grey Tree*' by Mondrian and '*Concentric Rings*' by Kandinsky. There is little evidence, however, that they comment on similarities and differences in the work of others, or that they suggest ideas for improving their own.

147. As they grow older pupils continue to enjoy using a range of media and improve their skills and techniques. They use pastels well to record their interpretation of the '*Aboriginal Dream Time*'. Good examples of sculptures are well displayed around the school; for example, Aztec papier-mâché masks, Greek pots and wire figures. Work is often linked to other areas of the curriculum. A particularly good example is the work on the '*Iron Man*', with a huge model on display on one of the stairways, accompanied by chalk drawings.

148. Good links are made with ICT using the work of famous artists. Pupils produced computer-generated figures based on Paul Klee's painting '*Dancing from Fear*' and the work of LS Lowry. There is a very good display of LS Lowry, undertaken by Key Stage 2 pupils, in the entrance hall.

149. By the end of Year 6, as a result of a wide variety of stimulating experiences, pupils know the importance of choosing the correct medium for their work, and have a good knowledge of artists. They are able to explain their likes and dislikes and are familiar with the particular styles of certain artists. They know, for example, that Picasso is famous for the way he created faces. They use well what they have learned in order to communicate ideas and make images and artefacts using a wide range of materials.

150. Evidence from the scrutiny of display and discussions with pupils in Year 6, indicates that teaching is at least good in Key Stage 2. No lessons were seen in Key Stage 1. The one lesson seen in Key Stage 2 was satisfactory. The teacher linked history and art by ensuring pupils had a good range of resources to draw on in order to create hieroglyphics and Egyptian masks. The plenary session was not well used to focus on the skills required in art or to compare aspects of their work.

151. The subject is well led and good use is made of national guidelines to ensure that pupils develop skills year by year. Teachers' and pupils' work is regularly monitored. Assessment is not formally recorded but work is matched against national expectations. A clear plan for the development of art is written annually and there is a satisfactory level of resources to meet the requirements of the school's scheme of work. A weekly art club for pupils in Key Stage 2 results in some good work being achieved particularly by pupils with special educational needs.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

152. During the inspection, there was one class lesson and one food technology session for a small group of pupils. Judgements are based on the curriculum planning, some displays, and photographs of products made in each class during the year. The evidence shows that standards match national expectations at the end of each key stage. Standards in food technology are above national expectations, as a result of the good use made of the high quality specialist facilities, effective curriculum planning together with important regular support from parents, who work with small groups of pupils.

153. In their designs, pupils take into account the views of those who will use their products. Year 4 pupils, for example, carried out surveys into people's preferred types of biscuits as part of their project to design and make biscuits and a container. Pupils work with a variety of materials and components including food, construction kits, textiles, resistant materials, electrical circuits, pneumatics and camshafts. They pay attention to the quality of finish of their products. Older pupils create annotated designs and make lists of the materials required and describe the steps in the making process. Pupils use their initiative well and produce a wide variety of designs for each project, such as for money containers. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils visit a local playground to evaluate the equipment, They then design their own playground equipment and make it with a variety of construction kits and recycled materials.

154. Time-tabling arrangements meant that no lessons were seen in Key Stage 1. Of the two lessons seen in Key Stage 2, one was good and one was very good. In the good Year 6 lesson, pupils used a range of skills as they followed a given design to make a battery-powered vehicle. They worked effectively in groups as they made the chassis, assembled the axles and wheels, and installed the electric motor and battery. Almost all pupils were highly motivated and achieved a great deal in one afternoon. The task extended skills that pupils had learnt previously. The teaching included instruction on the safe use of the tools, and the quantity and organisation of resources enabled pupils to learn rapidly.

155. As part of their work in food technology, every Year 6 pupil works in a group of four to plan, prepare and serve a lunchtime meal to which a guest is invited. They are assisted by parents who are very experienced in this activity and insist on high standards in all aspects of the work. The standards pupils achieve are above expectations and the activity makes a strong contribution to their personal development. The session seen during the inspection was of very high quality.

156. The curriculum is enhanced by some extra-curricular activities. There is, for example, a competition to design a container to protect an egg when it is dropped from a specified height. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and their lessons are based on well-structured curriculum planning. The subject is effectively managed, and the co-ordinator has scheduled time for a range of monitoring activities, which has had a positive impact on the standards pupils achieve.

GEOGRAPHY

157. Time-tabling arrangements meant that it was only possible to see one lesson. A scrutiny of pupil's work, a review of teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils show that standards are in line with the national expectation at the end of Year 2 and above at the end of Year 6. Younger pupils are able to talk about their local area with some confidence. They can use simple maps to find their way and make up routes. They have made a study of the land use along the local main road, which has been linked well to the development of Dymchurch over time. Pupils can make inferences about why land has been used and the growth of the village. When studying areas further away they show good understanding of the differences between two villages and can make detailed observations.

158. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have an extended knowledge of their locality linked to work on 'old and new' in which they use more complicated maps and diagrams. During the two-year cycle of themes, pupils have also studied places further away and been able to compare them with their own area. Physical features of the world have also been studied, including climate and mountainous regions, alongside towns in underdeveloped countries. Pupils show good levels of knowledge and understanding and are aware of the differences between different cultures and why areas develop as they do.

159. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 because the range of activities is particularly challenging. Pupils show high levels of interest in geography, have enquiring minds and are willing to question and discuss what the teacher is telling them. Teaching in the Key Stage 1 lesson seen was sound. Pupils were using secondary sources of information and this was helping them to look in detail. Most pupils were willing to be involved in the discussion but, because there was some restlessness, the written work was more limited. In general, work is presented well and shows good levels of enthusiasm. From the range of work seen the teachers do not have high enough expectation of what pupils can achieve in Key Stage 1. Some of the written tasks are superficial and do not challenge pupils to think. Lessons are, however, well planned and the work is linked to a constructive two-year plan which helps to ensure that pupils in mixed-age

classes do not repeat the same topic. Good attention has been paid to ensuring that skills such as mapping are developed progressively each year. The plan is based on national guidelines but is not completely embedded within the whole school curriculum. Homework is used to develop work in the classroom, although it is not set regularly in Year 6.

160. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. Some monitoring has taken place and there are regular opportunities to review planning. The management of the subject has improved since the last inspection. Attainment is now more regularly analysed through a review of National Curriculum levels and the difference in performance between boys and girls. The information provided has helped to inform the subject and school development plans. The range of adequate resources, including visits and visitors, enable pupils to study geography on a first hand basis.

161. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and they make good progress in line with their individual educational plans. Pupils having English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

HISTORY

162. Time-tabling arrangements during the inspection, meant that only two lessons were seen. It is clear from the scrutiny of work, a review of planning and discussions with pupils and teachers, however, that by the end of Key Stage 1 standards are in line with national expectations and above average by the end of Key Stage 2. Progress in learning is sound at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2.

163. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have a good background general knowledge. They are able to talk about experiences from the recent past and understand that their parents and grandparents had different lifestyles. The school places a high priority on local history and pupils have a good understanding of their own locality. A range of themes has been studied about ancient times and pupils are able to recall simple facts. The work on Egypt has been linked well to art and English. The pupils have studied why it might have been hard to live then, but also what might have made life easy, enabling pupils to avoid the stereotyping of different societies.

164. Pupils in Year 6 have a good level of historical understanding and their progress is good. They have a good knowledge of the reasons why we live differently now from people in the past. In their study of Dymchurch pupils looked at various photographs and compared the types of land use and reasons why the war memorial was not present before 1918. They have undertaken some first hand analysis of historical information, such as the use of instructional leaflets during the second world war. The work was also linked well to English and ICT. The history work was used as part of writing in the literacy hour and the finished article word-processed. Pupils also use CD ROMs for research. Pupils with special educational needs make progress in line with their peers in both key stages because the work is well matched to their abilities.

165. Teaching in the two lessons seen in Key Stage 2 was good. The teachers have good subject knowledge and know how to pitch questioning at the correct level. The activities they gave to the pupils were highly relevant and designed to develop knowledge and understanding. As a consequence, the pupils showed good levels of interest and enthusiasm and were keen to get on with their work. In lessons, they complete what is asked of them but are also interested enough to ask supplementary questions. The work on diet since the 1950's in Year 5 showed how the teacher was trying to develop the specific skills of the subject by asking for comparisons and reasons why particular things happened. The learning here was good. Homework is used to further the work in class but is set too informally in Key Stage 2.

166. At present, the headteacher is co-ordinating the subject, which will be reviewed in a year. In the meantime teachers have been asked to analyse the levels at which the pupils have been working and this has identified the weaknesses in teaching and learning. Resources are adequate and are enhanced by the use of the local library service, visits and visitors. The management of the subject has improved since the time of the last inspection.

MUSIC

167. Standards at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are in line with national expectations. Good opportunities are provided for a wide range of performance, singing and musical tuition for a large number of pupils. Singing is particularly good throughout the school, although there are not enough opportunities for written composition in music lessons. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are able to tap out rhythms and know about long and short notes. They sing tunefully and with gusto in school assemblies. They are taught basic notation but this has not been built upon systematically and, as a result, they do not understand the reasons for writing musical language. One teacher provides recorder lessons and her pupils practise conscientiously.

168. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 enjoy their music. They talk enthusiastically about the range of work they have done and are particularly pleased with the two school performances that take place each year. These provide the opportunity for pupils to work together, write their own pieces and perform to a wider audience. They are less confident, however, about the work they do in their music lessons. Over the past year pupils have had experience of most areas of the curriculum.

169. Of the two lessons seen during the inspection, one was very good, the other satisfactory. In the very good lesson the teacher had good subject knowledge and took the lesson at a brisk pace. Pupils were given a chance to show their expertise by singing unaccompanied. They were very enthusiastic, highly motivated and enjoyed the lesson. Learning was very good. In the satisfactory lesson, the teacher was less confident and pupils were not enthused about the tasks they were given. The teacher introduced notation, but at too high a level, and the pupils did not understand its relevance.

170. The range of musical tuition on offer, paid for by parents, is good. Pupils learn to play a wide range of instruments using an outside teacher. Singing, particularly in assemblies, makes a very important contribution to the ethos of the school and its tangible sense of community. Pupils are taught specific singing skills during hymn practice such as sounding first words and how to use expression in the voice. This drive for high standards is not at the expense of enjoyment. Pupils join in enthusiastically because the teacher is able to motivate them, is enthused about what he is doing and has a high degree of musical ability.

171. At present, the music co-ordinator is on extended leave but the planning is secure. The school is using national guidelines to ensure that pupils build on their learning as they move through the school, and that all areas of the subject are covered in each key stage. Resources are good and enhanced by the instrumental teachers, a range of recordings and the use of drama. The management of the subject, teaching and learning have improved significantly since the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

172. Time-tabling arrangements meant that only one lesson in physical education was seen at Key Stage 1, so that it was not possible to make a judgement on standards or teaching. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards are similar to national expectations, an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were below expectations. There is no difference in standards between boys and girls and all pupils make satisfactory progress.

173. The one lesson seen at Key Stage 1 was unsatisfactory and pupils made too little progress in developing their skills of throwing and catching. Many were throwing balls aimlessly into the air with little attempt to catch them and only a few followed instructions well and improved their performance. They did however manage to get themselves into small groups to discuss the rules for their game and explain these to the rest of the class. The teacher did not encourage them to improve their performance through looking at what was effective.

174. Pupils in Year 5 were able to develop their tennis skills well as a result of the teacher's careful demonstrations and precise explanations. They developed their skill in using the forehand shot through good practice and high levels of concentration. They learned to hold and swing the racquet well. By Year 6, pupils have developed their cricket skills through very good teaching by their class teacher. They develop their techniques well and, through good questioning by the class teacher, learn to think how they could improve their work. Most are competent at under-arm bowling whilst a few have developed a good over-arm style. Pupils achieved well in the games lessons seen because skills and techniques were taught systematically. In another lesson in Year 6, to develop athletic skills, pupils improved their technique in javelin throwing, running against the clock and long jumping.

175. The school does not meet statutory requirements to provide swimming so that all pupils can swim 25 metres by the end of Year 6 and this is a similar finding to that of the previous inspection. The school has explored ways of organising and funding swimming lessons with limited success. It is currently awaiting the opening of a new pool in the neighbourhood. The school takes part in country swimming galas and water activities are provided in the residential visit and school camp.

176. Of the four Key Stage 2 lessons seen, teaching was very good in one and satisfactory in all of the others. In the very good lesson, the teacher used his own skills to very good effect in order to teach bowling skills. In addition to his own demonstrations, the teacher used pupils to demonstrate to others, helping to motivate pupils to practise and improve. As a result, they made good gains in developing their skills. In this lesson, pupil's very good attitudes and behaviour contributed well to their learning.

177. In the other three lessons, where teaching was satisfactory, lessons were well planned and organised but teachers did not always use demonstration well to help pupils improve their work. The development of skills did not always receive sufficient attention in order to help pupils make significant improvement. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated. In terms of developing skills, they make similar progress to that of other pupils.

178. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and experienced. He monitors teaching in all classes and gives written feedback. He has ensured that the physical education policy and scheme of work is in line with curriculum 2000. The school makes satisfactory use of national guidelines, which the co-ordinator has effectively supplemented with more detailed lesson plans. Unfortunately not all teachers make good use of these in order to provide the effective teaching of skills. Assessment is not formally recorded but work is matched against the expectations contained in national guidelines. A clear plan for the development of physical education is written annually and there are appropriate resources for the topic.

179. Extra-curricular activities are used well to enrich the curricular provision. The co-ordinator leads some after school clubs and the mixed cricket club was practising well during the inspection and showed a good level of enthusiasm. There have been good improvements in physical education since the last inspection and these include an appropriate scheme of work and an annual residential course for Year 6 pupils.