

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CANTERBURY ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Sittingbourne

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118354

Headteacher: Mr B Place

Reporting inspector: Julian Sorsby  
14042

Dates of inspection: 4 – 6 June 2001

Inspection number: 197455

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

School address: School Road  
Sittingbourne  
Kent

Postcode: ME10 4SE

Telephone number: 01795 423818

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Kim Gammon

Date of previous inspection: 15 September 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
14042	Julian Sorsby	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are the standards? The school's results and achievements.</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p>
11041	Marvyn Moore	Lay inspector		<p>How high are the standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
32056	Helena McVeigh	Team inspector	Mathematics Under-fives Special educational needs	
1709	Sandra Tweddell	Team inspector	Art History Music	
23413	Robert Allen	Team inspector	English Design technology Geography Modern languages English as an additional language	<p>How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?</p>

20404	John Evans	Team inspector	Information technology Physical education Religious education	
20063	Gerard Slamon	Team inspector	Science Equal opportunities	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Canterbury Road School is an average-size primary school, situated in an area of lower and middle income housing in the south of Sittingbourne. There are 222 pupils on roll, compared with the average size of primary school in England, which has 243 pupils. All but one pupil have their ethnic origin in Britain, one pupil being of Turkish descent. All pupils speak English fluently. Thirty-two per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is above the national average and 0.5 per cent have Statements of Special Educational Needs, which is average. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below expectations.

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

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. Pupils join the school with levels of ability, particularly in speaking and listening, well below those expected for their age. Teaching is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and good in both key stages, and pupils make correspondingly satisfactory and good progress. However, the standards being achieved by pupils are below or well below those being achieved by pupils of a similar age nationally, reflecting their starting point, their language difficulties and the proportion who have special educational needs. The leadership and management of the school is good and results in the creation of a positive learning environment, good achievement in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory achievement by pupils in Key Stage 2. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- The quality of teaching is good in both key stages.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral and social development.
- The school has a very caring ethos in which pupils feel valued and secure.
- Teachers know their pupils very well.
- Leadership and management by the headteacher, key staff and governors are good.

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

- Standards being achieved by pupils in English, mathematics and science at age eleven.
- The curriculum in the first two classes (Foundation Stage), particularly the emphasis given to literacy and mathematical development for children in the reception.
- The reinforcement of literacy and communications skills through the teaching of the wider curriculum.
- The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs.

*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 September 1997. The school has improved satisfactorily since then. All key issues identified by the last inspection have been dealt with. Standards in English at Key Stage 2 have risen. The school now sets targets for its own performance. Assessment procedures are better developed, although the information derived from them in subjects other than English and mathematics is not yet used to best effect. Monitoring of teaching and the curriculum has been introduced. Teachers' expectations of pupils are now higher. The annual report to parents has been improved and incorporates useful data on attainment. There is now a homework policy. Pupils' attendance rate has improved.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with all schools			<b>Key</b>
	1998	1999	2000	
English	E	D	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	E	E	E	
Science	E	E	E	

Pupils enter the school with poorly developed communications and social skills and their difficulties with verbal expression persist. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is higher than the national average. These two factors result in few pupils achieving the higher than expected Levels 3 and 5 in Key Stage 1 and 2 respectively, and, consequently, the comparisons with all schools nationally in 2000 are as displayed in the table above. At Key Stage 1, despite their very low starting point, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected Level 2 and above in reading and mathematics was close to the national average, while in writing it was below average. At Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected Level 4 or above in English and science was close to the national average, while in mathematics it was below average. At Key Stage 2, the trend in results over five years indicates that pupils are making similar progress to the national average. Their difficulties in dealing with written tests affects their national test results, reducing the proportion achieving higher than expected levels. Standards of work observed were significantly better than test results indicate, and in line with teachers' own assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding, and confirming the effect of pupils' language difficulties on their written test results. The school far exceeded its target for the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 in 2000. Targets for 2001 are even lower and should similarly be exceeded. Given their very low attainment on joining the school, pupils are achieving satisfactorily.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils display good attitudes to lessons, learning and to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good throughout the day, in lessons and across the school campus.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils develop well into responsible young adults who display concern and caring for each one another and the school community.
Attendance	Attendance rates are satisfactory.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and good in both Key Stages. The teaching of mathematics and numeracy is very good in both key stages, as is the teaching of English and literacy in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, the teaching of English and literacy is good. Teachers' management of pupils is a particular strength, and their assessment of pupils is good throughout the school. Teachers use of time and support staff, the effectiveness of their planning and their range of teaching methods, are good in both key stages and satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. Teachers have lower expectations of pupils in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. The use made of homework is satisfactory.

A total of 44 lessons or parts of lessons was observed. In the Foundation Stage, 38 per cent of teaching was good and 62 per cent was satisfactory. In Key Stage 1, 50 per cent of teaching was good and 30 per cent was very good or better. Twenty per cent of observed teaching was satisfactory. One excellent lesson was observed. In Key Stage 2, 48 per cent of teaching was good and 19 per cent was very good. Twenty-eight per cent of teaching was satisfactory, and five per cent (representing one lesson) was unsatisfactory.

Children's learning in the Foundation Stage is hindered by their poor language skills, but is nevertheless satisfactory, overall. Pupils learning in both key stages is good and is greatly helped by teachers' skill at using questions and answers to extend and reinforce pupils' knowledge and understanding. Overall, learning could be more effective if there was more appropriate preparation of children in the Foundation Stage for their studies in Year 1 and beyond, and through greater emphasis of literacy and to a lesser extent numeracy during the teaching of the broader school curriculum.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. For children under five the curriculum places too little emphasis on the development of number and communications skills. For both key stages, the curriculum covers all aspects of the National Curriculum and religious education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory, overall. Good provision is compromised by the inadequate number of learning support assistants, and the amount of time available to the special educational needs co-ordinator, for the number of pupils concerned.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good, and is well founded in a code of conduct that is understood and accepted by pupils. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. There is inadequate provision for pupils to develop multicultural awareness.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. This is a caring school in which the well-being of pupils is regarded as of equal priority to their academic development.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Satisfactory. The school has developed appropriate opportunities for parents to participate in their children's learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff ensure that a strong ethos of learning exists in the school and that pupils achieve at least satisfactorily and often well. Management set the framework effectively for the ongoing development of the school and pupils' progress.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Aply supported by the headteacher, the governors fulfil their responsibilities with commitment and dedication. Governors are well-informed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance efficiently, but is sometimes less effective at taking remedial action to deal with identified weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of most resources available to it. Support staff for pupils with special needs are not always deployed efficiently, given their limited number.
Adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	There are sufficient appropriately qualified teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum and the pupils. However, there are insufficient support staff to fully meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That their children like coming to school</li> <li>• That the school has high expectations of pupils</li> <li>• That behaviour is good</li> <li>• That teaching is good</li> <li>• That the school is well led and managed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of outside activities provided</li> <li>• The school working more closely with parents</li> <li>• The information parents receive as to how their children are getting on</li> <li>• The amount of homework set</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by parents. However, inspectors found all the areas parents would like to see improved, to be satisfactory.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. In reading and mathematics at Key Stage 1, and English at Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils who achieve the expected Level 2 at Key Stage 1 and Level 4 at Key Stage 2 is at above the national average. In science, at Key Stage 2, the proportion achieving the expected grades is in line with the national average. In writing, at Key Stage 1, the proportion achieving the expected grades is just below the national average; while in mathematics, at Key Stage 2, the proportion achieving the expected Level 4 is below the national average. Having consideration for the very limited skills children have when they join the Foundation Stage, these results represent good achievement by pupils.
2. Most pupils start school with levels of attainment that are well below average in almost all areas of learning. Some children enter nursery unhappy to speak and join in, but by the time they leave reception they are much more confident. Children acquire a range of skills because of the way that the large number of activities offered to them are structured and the way that staff draw children into activities that are both fun and challenging for them. Because of their low starting point, by the time they begin the National Curriculum, their communications, language, literacy and mathematical skills, their knowledge and understanding of the world and their physical development are still below average. Children's creative development, and their personal, social and emotional development, all meet expected standards by the time they start the National Curriculum.
3. In English, in the 2000 national tests taken by Year 2 pupils, the proportion of pupils awarded the expected Level 2 or above was just below the national averages in writing and above average in reading. In the national tests sat by Year 6 pupils in 2000, the percentage of pupils who gained the expected Level 4 or better was above the national average.
4. In mathematics, in the 2000 national tests taken by Year 2 pupils, the proportion of pupils awarded the expected Level 2 or better was above the national average. In the national tests sat by Year 6 pupils in 2000, the percentage of pupils who gained the expected Level 4 or above was below the national average.
5. In science, in the year 2000, the teacher assessment demonstrated that the proportion of Year 2 pupils achieving the expected Level 2 or above was just below the national average. In the national tests sat by Year 6 pupils in 2000, the percentage of pupils who gained the expected Level 4 or above was above the national average.
6. It should be noted that, when comparing the results achieved by all Year 2 and Year 6 pupils in 2000 with the results from all schools nationally, the results are as tabulated earlier. This is a consequence of few pupils achieving higher than the expected Level 2 and 4 at Key Stages 1 and 2 respectively. This, in turn, is a consequence of pupils' very low starting point and the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. It does not detract from pupils' achievements in reaching Level 2 and 4.
7. Pupils' standards are in line with expectations for their age in design and technology, and religious education, at both key stages. In art and design and music, seven-year-olds achieve the expected standards, but eleven-year-olds are below expectations. In history and information technology, standards are below expectations at the end of both key stages. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards in geography and physical education.

8. In English and mathematics, at both key stages, and science at Key Stage 1, the standard of work seen during the inspection was below national expectations. In science, at Key Stage 2, the standard of work seen was well below expectations.
9. In subjects where standards are below expectations, this is as a consequence of the very low base from which pupils commence their studies and their communications skills, which detract from the standards they achieve in almost all subjects. It is also a consequence of the very high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs, and the inadequate number of support staff available to meet their needs. Further, the standards observed during the inspection varied between year groups but evidence demonstrates that they are directly related to the standards of those pupils when they joined the school.
10. Pupils with special educational needs made good progress in parallel with their peers in both key stages. While their attainment levels may be lower than those of other pupils, their achievement is good. This is a result of teachers well-informed knowledge of their needs, and the additional limited support they receive.

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

11. The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of all children in the school are good. They demonstrate good behaviour both in and out of lessons, and their personal development and relationships with one another, teaching and non-teaching staff are very good.
12. Children in the reception class make a very positive start, and settle into school life very well. The school actively promotes their personal and social skills, and as a result pupils learn to relate well to each other, and follow instructions well. They behave well and have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. In reception and both key stages pupils are very happy to come to school, and remain on task in lessons, and are pleased to partake of the lessons provided by the school. They are happy to respond to questions, and give sensible and mature answers in discussions. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson observed, pupils at all ability levels held discussions in a sensible and mature way regarding the difference between odd and even numbers, and worked as a group in the calculation of positions within the compass. They asked sensible questions of the teacher, and behaved very well.
13. The overwhelming majority of parents report that behaviour is good. During the inspection week both in lessons, at play and lunch-times, behaviour was good. Class teachers have well-developed management skills, and pupils responded well. Pupil's behaviour around the school is good, and they enjoy talking to visitors, and are polite when doing so. Most pupils have a sensible understanding of the school's behaviour expectations. Lunch-time and playtime they respond well to the lining-up routine.
14. The school's behaviour code is known and understood by pupils, and they have a positive understanding and awareness of others. There have been no exclusions during the past year. Most pupils demonstrate a mature level of responsibility, and show concern for others. For example, older pupils assist younger pupils in the dining hall, and befriend them in the playground. Some limited opportunities exist for pupils to take responsibility as, for example, librarians and helpers in assembly, but there are too few such opportunities for pupils to develop these skills adequately.
15. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils relate well to staff, respect them, and listen to their views and advice. During the inspection week pupils were seen supporting each other both in lessons and around the school, contributing to their confidence and self-assuredness. Pupils respond very well to visitors, and enjoy relating to them.
16. Pupil's attendance rate is 94.2 per cent, which demonstrates an improvement since the last inspection. In all respects, pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development have continued to be good.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. During the course of the inspection, 44 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. In the Foundation Stage eight lessons were observed and all teaching was satisfactory or better, with 38 per cent being good. In Key Stage 1, ten lessons were observed. Twenty per cent of lessons were satisfactory, fifty per cent of lessons observed were good and thirty per cent were very good or better. One excellent lesson was observed, and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. In Key Stage 2, twenty-one lessons were observed. Twenty-eight per cent of lessons were satisfactory, 48 per cent were good and 19 per cent were very good. One unsatisfactory lesson was observed, representing five per cent of the lessons observed in the key stage. In this lesson the slow pace and a lack of focused teaching resulted in most pupils underachieving.
18. Overall, the quality of teaching observed was very similar to that reported at the time of the last inspection.
19. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is characterised by a range of strengths and weaknesses and is satisfactory, overall. Teachers plan effectively and ensure that assessment opportunities are built into the everyday cycle of activities on offer, ensuring that each days learning builds on the previous days. However, teachers' expectations of pupils are too low, and insufficient opportunities are given for pupils to extend themselves.
20. In English, teaching and learning is very good in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, teaching observed was good or excellent. In Key Stage 2, 50 per cent of lessons were good and 25 per cent were very good. The remaining lesson, constituting 25 per cent of English lessons observed in Key Stage 2, was unsatisfactory. Teachers have developed very good relationships with their pupils and these produce good conditions for learning. The methods teachers use to interest and engage pupils are varied and largely successful, ensuring that pupils are motivated. Pupils are interested, for example, in the lively introductions and expressive reading of texts. This engages their interest and helps to maintain it. Pupils know that teachers care and they respond accordingly. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and insist on classroom conventions. Their insistence on the conventions creates the conditions for good purposeful learning to take place. Teachers also use encouragement well to reward pupils for good work, further motivating them. Teachers knowledge of the subject and of the range of techniques required to teach literacy successfully is good. The school has successfully introduced the Literacy Strategy, and this is evident in the quality of teachers planning. Lesson objectives are shared with pupils and lessons usually end with useful sessions that review what has been learnt and celebrate achievement. This reinforces pupils learning. There is insufficient emphasis on literacy in the teaching of other subjects, detracting from pupils progress.
21. Teaching and learning is very good in mathematics in both key stages. In Key Stage 1, all teaching is good or better and half the teaching is very good or better. Teaching of mathematics is less good in Key Stage 2, with 50 per cent being very good or better, 25 per cent being good or better and 25 per cent being satisfactory. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and work to clear learning objectives which are told to the pupils, ensuring that pupils know what they are doing and why. Teachers promote the best use of mathematical vocabulary in numeracy lessons and make sure that their lessons involve pupils to the full, enabling them to learn effectively. Numeracy skills are being taught appropriately in many subjects. For example, in science, pupils are measuring, recording results in tables, calculating and drawing bar charts and line graphs. Pupils are learning about shape and space in art. Year 6 pupils collect weather data and use a computer to present it graphically. Despite it having been introduced some time after the Literacy Strategy, the Numeracy Strategy is well implemented and having a positive effect on pupils learning.
22. In science, only one lesson was observed in Key Stage 1. Four lessons were observed in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, the lesson observed was satisfactory. In Key Stage 2, one lesson was good and two were satisfactory. Lesson observations combined with a scrutiny of pupils' past

work and teachers planning leads to teaching in science at both key stages being judged to be satisfactory, overall, with that at Key Stage 1 being better than at Key Stage 2, and pupils making good progress at Key Stage 1. In Years 1 and 2, teachers choose tasks well, and arrange for an appropriate balance between teaching and pupils learning through experimentation. In Key Stage 2, there is less systematic emphasis on pupils developing their investigatory skills, and this has a negative effect on pupils' attainment.

23. Teaching of art is satisfactory and the lessons seen all had good features. Teachers are developing a secure understanding of the subject, which includes how to teach techniques so that work is of an appropriate standard.
24. No overall judgement is made about the quality of teaching in design and technology because only two lessons, one infant and one junior, were observed. These lessons were of good quality and resulted in effective learning. Indications from discussions with pupils in Year 2 and Year 6, and from work seen, are that provision is good, reflecting high expectations and offering suitable challenge.
25. No overall judgement can be made about the quality of teaching of geography as only one lesson was seen, in Key Stage 2.
26. Teaching of history is good, overall; teachers have a secure understanding of the subject and plan well for different levels of attainment. Resources are used well, including visits to places of historic interest such as Dover Castle.
27. No overall judgement is made about the quality of teaching in ICT because only one lesson was observed. However, indications from discussions with Year 2 and Year 6 pupils and from work on display are that provision is satisfactory. Observations in other subjects, for example, English, in which ICT was used, indicate that teachers are beginning to apply it effectively to extend pupils' learning.
28. As only one music lesson was seen, a secure judgement on teaching cannot be made. However, planning shows that teachers are developing a secure understanding of the subject through the subject guidance.
29. No overall judgement on the quality of teaching of physical education can be made as only one lesson was observed.
30. In religious education the quality of teaching and learning is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. In the good lesson observed, the teacher planned to take account of the pupils' previous learning and experience. Lesson objectives were well stated at the start of lessons, so pupils knew exactly what they were doing and why. Pupils learn well. Only in their written work do they underachieve, because of the difficulties they experience in using language appropriately.
31. Where it occurs, the provision for pupils with special educational needs, from teachers and learning support assistants, is of good quality. However, this is compromised by the limited amount of time provided for learning support. Teachers are aware of pupils' needs in considerable detail, as they are specified in the Individual Education Plans or suggested by the special educational needs co-ordinator. Learning support assistants meet the needs of individuals and groups in class well. Efforts are made to minimise the amount of time for which pupils may be withdrawn from class (the school policy is no more than 10 cent of class time), but in this way pupils may be given intensive teaching for short periods of time. Good use is made of the expertise of the schools special educational needs co-ordinator and of specialists from the local education authority, with whom he is in close contact.

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

32. The curriculum provided meets all statutory requirements. It is broad and balanced, and provides pupils with a relevant preparation for life beyond school. The last inspection reported a similar situation, but said that short-term lesson planning did not always provide for continuity and progression. In the present inspection, teachers lesson planning is judged to be good: a good variety of work is organised to meet differing levels of prior attainment. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are well-established, and teachers make good use of them. During the current school year, the decision has been made to adopt the schemes of work which have recently been developed for all other subjects in the National Curriculum by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). While this change is not complete, the school has moved effectively in this direction, to the extent that it has also adopted and is in part practising the associated assessment procedures. In the case of religious education, a comprehensive and well-structured scheme of work has been produced, combining the QCA recommendations with the programme of the locally agreed syllabus for the subject.
33. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage, that is nursery and reception, is newly introduced. It presently lacks sufficient emphasis on language and number skills, particularly given the very low level of skills that children have when they join the school. Consequently, children are insufficiently prepared for Year 1 and their studying of the National Curriculum.
34. Where it occurs, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers provide appropriate work for them, and they receive good support from learning support assistants, who are, however, insufficient in number. Individual Education Plans are useful practical documents, describing needs and providing suggestions for meeting them. They are reviewed termly.
35. While the National Literacy Strategy is applied well in English lessons, the school has not developed or applied a policy for literacy across the curriculum, which will meet the needs of pupils who enter school with low levels of language skills. As a result, there is a variety of practice in subjects other than English, which means that opportunities to promote communication, reading and expression are often missed or simply not provided.
36. Overall, the provision of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. In Key Stage 2, there are after-school clubs for sporting activities, like football, cricket and netball. There is a country dance and a gardening club. A school choir performs at Christmas carol concerts, and every two years there are lively dramatic and musical presentations involving up to 60 pupils. There are day excursions to places of interest, like Dover Castle and the Kent Museum of Rural Life. There are no residential trips. For Key Stage 1, there are no after-school activities, although there are day trips to places like Tyland Barn wildlife centre.
37. In all aspects of its life, the schools policy of care for pupils ensures equal opportunities for all, and effective support according to the needs of individuals. There is good provision for personal, social and health education. Elements of these are to be found in religious education, English, physical education, history, geography and science, and during acts of collective worship. There are clear policies on drugs and sex education. The school sets out in writing its aims to prepare pupils for adult life in terms of independence, decision-making, and understanding the needs of others. The effect of the application of its personal and social education policies is apparent in the responsible manner of its pupils and in the schools caring ethos.
38. The school has satisfactory links with the local community, which enhance the teaching of the curriculum. There is satisfactory liaison with other institutions providing for children. There is co-operation with a local pre-school playgroup, and the headteacher has regular meetings with others in the area. The local receiving secondary schools hold open days and send representatives to primary schools in order to ease the process of transfer from the primary to the secondary phase, and some of them provide progress reports about former pupils.
39. Overall, the school cultivates pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development well. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Assemblies meet statutory requirements, and singing in assemblies adds a spiritual dimension. While provision for pupils cultural development through art, literature and music is satisfactory, the school is not taking

effective action to compensate for children's lack of multicultural experience. Proviso for pupils' moral and social development is good. There is a clear code of conduct that is understood and adhered to by pupils. The school's strong caring ethos encourages social development.

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

40. This is a caring school where pupils feel valued and protected. Assessment was judged to be weak at the time of the last inspection. The school has improved its procedures and practice considerably since then and assessment is now good.
41. The way that staff assess children in the Foundation Stage is good. Children are assessed against the baseline criteria during their first term in school; this is carried out very thoroughly and helps the staff to know pupils well. The staff continue to assess pupils by observing them during the day and noting significant achievements. For example, a classroom assistant noted the progress some children were making in role-play activities and another recorded when a child was walking more confidently across a balance beam during a physical development session. Pupils' achievements are recorded in the child's portfolio, along with such evidence as examples of writing and drawing. Achievement is recorded appropriately against the 'stepping stones' in the six different areas of experience.
42. The school's assessment procedures were revised recently, resulting in new and more effective procedures being introduced. Staff are aware of the need to monitor the effect of the implementation of the new procedures and to refine them where necessary. This process has started. Procedures are best in mathematics and English, where the school has introduced several different assessments, such as reading tests and NFER mathematics tests from Year 2 onwards, as well as optional National Curriculum tests in Years 3 and 4. Pupils' responses to these tests are being analysed well to identify common strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and thus to inform planning. Teachers know pupils well, and in mathematics and science they make use of the assessments to group pupils and to set them appropriate work. Records are kept of pupils' achievements in all subjects, though slightly different formats are used. In subjects other than English and mathematics, the records are not always very helpful because the criteria are sometimes too broad and it is difficult to identify clearly what pupils have achieved so as to plan the next steps.
43. Teachers are setting appropriate half-termly targets for pupils in English and mathematics. The targets are helpfully shared with pupils who mainly understand them and are keen to achieve them. In Years 1 and 2 targets are usefully displayed in the classrooms and revisited as appropriate.
44. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is effectively tracked by the special educational needs co-ordinator. Individual Education Plans are useful, practical documents which are regularly reviewed and targets updated.
45. The school continues to make good quality provision for pupils welfare, health and safety. The school has built effectively on its work since the previous inspection. Staff are successful in creating an atmosphere of warmth, security and well-being, where pupils feel valued and which provides a solid foundation for pupils to make progress.
46. Procedures for child protection are in place and administered effectively. There is a good health and safety policy and the staff governor responsible for health and safety ensures that regular checks take place. Fire drills are carried out every term and fire and electrical equipment is tested regularly. Good procedures are followed for dealing with and recording accidents and sufficient staff have been fully trained in first aid procedures.
47. All adults know the pupils very well. Relationships throughout the school are good and teachers and support assistants demonstrate a genuine concern for pupils care, support and guidance. Pupils are aware that they can discuss any problems they may have with members of staff. Staff treat pupils with respect and set very good examples of how to behave appropriately.



Pupils personal development is monitored well and suitable individual targets are set to help them improve further.

48. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. Registers are marked both morning and afternoon and comply with legal requirements. The school follows up unexplained absences very quickly and this helps to reduce unauthorised absence.
49. Procedures for monitoring and improving good behaviour are very good. Some pupils have challenging behaviour, which is very well managed. The behaviour policy, which emphasises positive reinforcement as the preferred means of improving behaviour, is consistently applied throughout the school. Individual behaviour plans are used effectively to enable pupils to make good progress in improving behaviour.

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

50. The significant majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were supportive of the school.
51. These parents feel that there is good teaching, enabling their children to make good progress. They recognise that behaviour is good, and that the school is well led and managed. They also feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems.
52. A significant minority of parents feel that the school does not work closely with them. Pupils do not get the right amount of work to do at home, and the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons. The inspection findings do not concur with these views.
53. Communications from the school to parents are satisfactory. The school provides a parent-friendly brochure giving useful information to parents about organisation, school rules and ethos. The brochure does not, however, give parents information that pupils may be withdrawn from religious education lessons if parents so wish. Regular newsletters and information sheets are distributed giving detailed information about school activities and events.
54. Reports are provided to parents each year, and give helpful information about children's progress, and targets. National Curriculum test results are given where appropriate, but explanations as to grading are not provided. Reports, however, meet statutory requirements, and parents are given information about what their children know and understand, and their achievements.
55. The school holds an appropriate number of parent evenings throughout the year, and parents have constant access to staff to discuss any matters of concern regarding their children. In addition, the school provides a number of short courses for parents on technology, maths, and development in reading skills, and offers good encouragement to parents to work with their children at home.
56. Parents are encouraged to come into school to help, and a small number do so; for example, helping pupils choose books or assisting with aspects of administration.
57. Parents of pupils with special education needs are fully involved in reviews, and targets included in individual pupil's education plans are discussed with parents, and agreed with them. The special educational needs co-ordinator is available to see parents whenever they wish.
58. The criticisms in the previous inspection report regarding pupils' reports and the setting of homework has been addressed, and the satisfactory partnership between parents and the school contributes to pupils' well-being and their progress.

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

59. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and key staff is good. There are clearly stated targets for improvement that are well founded in the school's improvement plan and complement its dual aims of academic improvement and the care of pupils. Many improvements have taken place since the last inspection, including the setting of targets, and all improvements have contributed to pupils' progress.
60. There is a good program of monitoring teaching to help teachers identify their strengths and to improve in areas capable of development. This has contributed to a significant improvement in the quality of teaching, and consequently learning, in some areas of the school, but not yet in others. Largely because of the school coming to terms with the new requirements of the Foundation Stage, which includes nursery and reception, the provision for children prior to Year 1 is not as effective as in the rest of the school. This is a curriculum and organisational issue that the school is addressing.
61. The headteacher is well supported by the senior management team, who in turn support the work undertaken by subject co-ordinators. Staff, both teaching and non-teaching constitute a strong team with a unity of approach and common goals for their pupils.
62. The school is successful in using available data in evaluating its own performance and in introducing measures to deal with the information derived from the data. The school is clear about its educational priorities, and the senior management set an appropriate educational direction. This is consolidated by the targeting of funds to support areas in need of improvement. Throughout all its work, the management team very clearly reflect the school's aims and values, in particular the valuing of every pupil and the inclusion of all. This is a particular strength of the school.
63. The Chair and her colleagues on the governing body are hardworking and dedicated. They are very effective and carry out all their statutory responsibilities well. Governors participate fully in the schools decision-making processes.
64. The headteacher recognises and builds on the strengths of others, and supports those with weaknesses. His commitment to the staff is exemplified by the investment the school makes in the professional development of the staff.
65. The schools educational priorities are supported through its financial planning. The headteacher and administrative staff have a good understanding of school finance, and work well together bringing their complementary skills to bear on the financial planning and management aspects of the school's work. The school makes satisfactory use of information and communication technology in financial planning and management, and in its general administration. The school applies the principals of best value satisfactorily when purchasing resources, thus obtaining appropriate resources at reasonable cost.
66. The management plan contains criteria by which to judge the success of spending decisions. All budget decisions are analysed to ensure that they are designed to improve pupils attainment, and the budget is driven by the plan. The school provides satisfactory value for money.
67. There are enough teachers to teach the curriculum effectively and nearly all have had appropriate training for this phase of education. Support staff trained to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs are too few in number and are not always used effectively. In many lessons, such as all the science lessons observed, no such support staff were present. In some lessons, a member of support staff removed one or more pupils for small group teaching, resulting in a large number of pupils with special needs remaining in the classroom, not being specifically supported. The amount of support - in terms of time - made available to pupils with special educational needs is inadequate, and - partly as a result of the inadequacy - unevenly deployed. With over 30 per cent of pupils in both key stages on the register of special needs, the provision of the full-time equivalent of 2.5 learning support assistants is insufficient. Some classes have considerably more support time than others, and, for the majority of the school day, most teachers work without assistance in the classroom. With such a high proportion of pupils having special needs, the special educational needs co-ordinator is also allocated inadequate time to carry out all her responsibilities. At particularly

busy times when annual reviews are being carried out, she is unable to provide support for pupils in classrooms.

68. The school's accommodation is satisfactory, overall. There are two significant weaknesses. Of particular concern is the very poor state of repair of the canteen and kitchen. The portable building used as a classroom is also in a very poor state of repair. Staff are to be commended for making the area as comfortable and attractive as it is, but it is inadequate and limits the teaching of some subjects of the curriculum, particularly those involving practical activities.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69. In order to further improve the quality of education, build on the strengths of the school and to rectify the weaknesses identified in the inspection, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

(1) Continue to raise standards in English, mathematics and science, particularly at Key Stage 2, by:

- Strengthening pupils' ability to use language appropriate for their age;
- Improving the preparation of pupils for their studies in Year 1, to help them to benefit from and learn more in both key stages.  
(*paragraphs 9, 33, 71, 96-101, 106, 108-111, 117-118*)

(2) Improve the preparation of children in the Foundation Stage for Key Stage 1 studies by:

- changing the way children are grouped in the afternoon to improve the balance between their activities; (*paragraph 71*)
- introducing aspects of the literacy and numeracy lessons sooner for children in reception; (*paragraph 71*)
- including more opportunities for children to write and to increase their phonic knowledge. (*paragraph 77*)

(3) Strengthen pupils' ability to use language effectively by:

- using all available opportunities to develop pupils' vocabulary;
- enhancing pupils' speaking and listening skills by providing more opportunities for speaking and listening in lessons;
- developing and introducing a policy for the teaching of literacy through all subjects of the curriculum.  
(*paragraph 35, 106*)

(4) Improving the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs by:

- increasing the number of support staff to reflect more accurately the proportion of pupils with special needs;
- better deployment of support staff to provide for the needs of larger numbers of pupils;
- increasing the number of hours worked by the special educational needs co-ordinator to enable her to meet more fully all the demands of the role.  
(*paragraph 67*)

Further weaknesses identified in this report, which should be considered by the school, are as follows:

- Insufficient opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for aspects of school life;  
(*paragraph 14*)
- The poor state of repair of the canteen and kitchen; (*paragraph 68*)
- The poor state of repair of the demountable classroom. (*paragraph 68*)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	16	46	34	2	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		222
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		32

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		72

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	14	17	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	12
	Girls	16	15	17
	Total	27	26	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (90)	84 (93)	94 (97)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	12	10
	Girls	16	17	17
	Total	27	29	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (90)	94 (83)	87 (97)
	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	12	22	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	10
	Girls	19	14	19
	Total	27	22	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (81)	67 (57)	85 (81)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	8	10
	Girls	18	19	18
	Total	24	27	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (62)	79 (67)	82 (62)
	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	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	197
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 – Y7**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.6
Average class size	27.8

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y7**

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	104

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	399,929
Total expenditure	405,248
Expenditure per pupil	1,843
Balance brought forward from previous year	13,343
Balance carried forward to next year	8,024

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	222
Number of questionnaires returned	83

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	35	0	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	37	4	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	49	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	49	13	0	8
The teaching is good.	59	36	5	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	47	12	4	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	24	6	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	37	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	31	46	13	5	5
The school is well led and managed.	59	35	0	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	41	6	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	41	16	7	17



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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

70. The school has demonstrated its commitment to the Foundation Stage by funding, from its own resources, an extra term's education for each child. It takes in children in the term after their fourth birthday. The intention is laudable. In practice, though, it means that there are three intakes to the school, which puts a strain on foundation staff, as they have to introduce each new group of children to the routines. The induction of children is managed successfully and pupils settle in well. Children start in the 'early years class' and then move onto the reception class after two terms. Again, this involves further change for the children and staff. The two foundation stage teachers work well together and are supported satisfactorily by classroom assistants. However, given the needs of the children, many of whom come in with poorly developed social and language skills, the amount of support is inadequate. There is, for example, only one classroom assistant who works all day and none has nursery-nurse training.
71. The school has recently reviewed the way it organises its Foundation Stage classes, to enable the teachers to work together and to allow them to share the classroom assistant in the afternoon. The staff have endeavoured to adopt the principles of the new foundation stage (which started in September 2000) and to provide a mix of 'teacher-directed' activities' as well as time for children to initiate activities for themselves. This is entirely appropriate and ensures that children experience a broad curriculum. However, not enough emphasis is given to language and literacy skills or in preparing the reception age children for the literacy and numeracy lessons that they will soon experience in Year 1. Also, in the afternoon, some groups of children experience a considerable amount of time sitting listening on the carpet when one directed activity follows another. The regrouping of pupils in the afternoon makes it harder for the staff to plan for individual children and to differentiate work. There are no significant differences in the quality of the provision in the nursery and reception classes.
72. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall. It was never less than satisfactory during the inspection and was sometimes good, all the good teaching taking place in the nursery. Teachers make good use of the stepping stones from the foundation stage guidance to plan their work and to assess children's progress. Assessment is good. Baseline assessment is carried out thoroughly and staff observe pupils carefully and record significant achievements. These observations are used to build up a record of the child's progress. Staff know children really well and have high expectations of their behaviour, to which the children respond well. They provide a lively and secure environment for pupils. Sometimes, though, teachers do not challenge pupils enough and their expectations could be higher; for example, they give the answers too quickly instead of asking the children to contribute.
73. It is difficult to evaluate progress since the last inspection since so much has changed. Pupils' skills on entry are lower and there is a new curriculum. Teaching, overall, is not as good as was described in the last report, although it is satisfactory. The outside play area has improved, though it is still too small, and there is no climbing-frame.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

74. Many children enter the school with poorly developed skills in personal and social development. They make good progress in this area because of the good teaching and most are well on their way to meeting the early learning goals by the end of the reception.
75. Adults are good role models in the way they relate to each other and to the children. They treat everyone with courtesy and respect. Pupils are aware of the good routines that have been established; for example, moving between classrooms, changing and lining-up for physical education. The children respond well in registration with a polite 'good morning'. Relationships are strong and teachers adopt an effective firm but friendly approach, making good use of humour. Children are learning to take turns and to play together, as seen in role-play and

outside. They show a caring attitude towards one another; for example, one child comforted another who was upset and children help each other to get ready for physical education.

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

76. Children start school with well below average skills in this area and they do not make enough progress by the end of the reception. Although the teaching seen was satisfactory, literacy is not emphasised enough in the curriculum and reception children are not being prepared well enough for lessons in Year 1. Few children are likely to reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception.
77. Teachers provide good opportunities for children to listen to stories. Children listen attentively and the most able make relevant comments in response to the stories. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to involve pupils in the stories or to encourage them to speak. Pupils enjoy books and understand that print carries meaning. They have a guess at words, though few know many letter sounds. A few children can read simple words and use picture clues and the first letter sound to guess at new words. Pupils take books home and take pride in their 'word' books, in which are recorded new words that they have met. Children are being introduced to aspects of the literacy hour, but not soon enough for the reception children who will soon be experiencing the full literacy hour in Year 1. Not enough attention is given to developing their phonic knowledge, which is weak.
78. Most children make a reasonable attempt at writing their first name and, in some cases a few other words. They are provided appropriately with writing tables which they can use during 'child initiated' time. Overall, they need more practice, as their pencil control is often poor.
79. Few children speak with clarity or confidence, though some were happy to explain to the inspector what they were doing. They speak freely during 'child initiated' role-play when playing 'families'.

### **Mathematical development**

80. Teachers promote mathematical development satisfactorily during everyday classroom activities; for example, when telling stories and lining children up to go outside. Most children can count to ten, but only the more able can write numerals. Some children know how to add or subtract one from a number. Children enjoy counting and joined in a count-down to zero with enthusiasm. A four year-old child spontaneously counted the number of children waiting to be picked up by their parents and even managed to include herself in the total. Children use words like 'bigger' and 'smaller' and some recognise shapes such as rectangles.
81. Overall, pupils do not make enough progress in their mathematical development and most are unlikely to reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception. Not enough time is spent preparing reception children for numeracy lessons in Year 1.

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

82. Most children start with below-average attainment in this area. As a result of the satisfactory teaching and provision, children make satisfactory progress. Overall, though, few are likely to reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception.
83. Children are developing an appreciation of differences between the past and present. A teacher provided a good range of pictures depicting life at the beginning of the last century. Children, who were a group of four and five year olds, noticed differences such as the lack of cars on the road, the clothes and the machines used to wash and wring clothes.
84. The staff provide a satisfactory range of artefacts that capture children's imagination and encourages them to explore the world around them. For example, children are fascinated by the fish in the classroom tank and use a hand-lens confidently, though not always properly, to look more closely.

85. Children are developing their ICT skills by using the computer and a programmable toy. They are constructing 'cars' and 'lorries' outside and using these in role-play.

### **Physical development**

86. The staff have made the best use of the very restricted outdoor area to enable children to develop their physical skills. Children ride tricycles in the confined space carefully and rarely bump into one another. Good use is made of the equipment in the hall to help children develop balance, climbing, and to gain a sense of space. Many children lack confidence and need a lot of encouragement. However, they made good progress in one session when the teacher encouraged them to find different ways of moving under or over a hoop and along a bench. Several children quickly learned from, and copied, the more adventurous child who hopped over the hoop on two feet.
87. Many of the children find it difficult to handle small objects, such as simple cutting tools and pencils. They are given a range of opportunities to develop their skills through, for example, cutting out shapes from play dough, painting, and playing with sand.
88. Overall, although progress is satisfactory, many children will not have achieved the early learning goals in this area by the end of the reception.

### **Creative development**

89. The teaching in this area is good, which is helping children to make good progress, and many children are on target to reach the early learning goals in this area of their development.
90. Staff provide appropriate resources for role-play— both inside and outside—and children take part with enthusiasm and sustained concentration. They play co-operatively and sensibly. For example, tricycle riders lined up to get 'petrol' from the 'petrol pump' that was manned by a very determined child who demanded payment with great aplomb. The classroom assistant intervened sensitively and appropriately in this activity to help the children develop their language and vocabulary.
91. Children enjoy singing simple repetitive songs, such as 'Three little monkeys' and the older children remember the words and the actions.
92. The staff provide a good range of materials for children to explore painting and colour-mixing. Children are learning about different colours and what happens when they are mixed. They take great delight in mixing paints, and blending crayons and chalk to produce different colours, and they can remember what they found.
93. Children use their imagination well and make up their own games and stories either by themselves or in pairs. One child spent a considerable length of time at the sand tray, chattering away to herself as she invented different roles for her sandcastles.

## ENGLISH

94. The last inspection reported that attainment was in line with the national average in Key Stage 1, but well below in Key Stage 2. Progress in Key Stage 1 was better than in Key Stage 2. There was no overall evaluative judgement of teaching, nor was any reference made to pupils attainment on entry. The findings of the present inspection are that attainment in both key stages is below average: this constitutes an improvement in Key Stage 2. Levels of attainment are, as reported, due largely to the level of language skills with which pupils enter the school, which is well below average. Given this factor, pupils attainment develops as they move through the school, and they make good progress, largely owing to good teaching and their own positive attitudes.
95. In the 2000 national tests for seven-year-olds, the percentage reaching Level 2 or above in reading was, at 87 per cent, close to the national average, but their writing was below average. In the tests for eleven-year-olds the average reaching Level 4 in English, overall, was close to the national average. The judgement of the present inspection on two different cohorts of pupils, with different levels of prior attainment, is that standards in both key stages are below the national average. There are no significant differences between the results achieved by girls and boys. Just over 30 per cent of pupils in the school are on the register of special educational needs.
96. In the first of the three elements of English in the National Curriculum, speaking and listening, pupils attainment in Key Stage 1 is well supported by the confidence which the school nurtures and encourages, but it is mitigated by pupils low level of linguistic skill. They are attentive listeners, and are very ready to respond to teachers, but when it comes to the expression of their thoughts, they are hesitant in putting words together.
97. The same remains true in Key Stage 2. They are well-motivated and thoughtful as they listen to their teachers, but their responses are not well prepared and considered. While a small number of higher attainers can and do structure their speaking, with the majority the words spill out without conscious control, and stumbling is common, when they cannot find the right word. They are not used to formal speaking, and no examples were seen of debates, individual presentations, mock trials or other such opportunities.
98. In the second element of English, reading, attainment is below national expectations. In Key Stage 1, pupils are slow to develop the strategies that combine to make successful readers. In particular, the reserve of words which they know and can recognise on sight is relatively small for their age. They enjoy reading and are enthusiastic about books and stories they know well, but most read hesitantly and with little expression; some at the end of the key stage are not yet functional as readers. A small minority, however, are fluent, accurate and expressive readers, managing on sight words like dangerous and mustn't.
99. Reading improves as pupils move up the school, and, by the end of Key Stage 2, a significant minority of pupils read in line with or above national expectations. These pupils read accurately with a wide range of words, and the best performers read with good expression and a clear understanding of the meaning and the audience. The majority, however, have below average skills, and are defeated, even at the end of the key stage by such words as thought, flown and enough. Many pupils in both key stages report that they do not read at home to parents or other adults, that they have few books and do not use a library.
100. Writing is the third element of English, and in this, attainment is below national expectations in both key stages. In the work seen from the small number of higher attainers in Key Stage 1, handwriting was joined up, and meaning was clearly and confidently conveyed in imaginative stories. Spelling and punctuation were accurate. Pupils of average attainment for the school have appropriately formed handwriting, but it is not joined. Spelling is understandable but not accurate (tipped is tipet, dinosaur is dansore, how is wow). Narratives are well ordered but very simple. Lower attainers have poorly formed handwriting, with few if any sentence divisions. The choice of words is from a limited reserve.
101. Among the highest attainers at the end of Key Stage 2, there is well-formed and joined handwriting, and words are chosen for effect. There is some variety of sentence structure.

Middle attainers produce some lively writing, showing a sense of purpose and audience. Word choice is simplistic - almost as pupils speak - and there are many spelling and grammatical mistakes. While there is some careful, well-presented work from lower attainers, there is much phonetic spelling, which sometimes spoils a lively choice of words. Punctuation is not well understood or applied.

102. The quality of pupils learning is good in both key stages, as a result of their own motivation, and the good teaching, which clearly places them under pressure to develop and to consolidate earlier progress, which, year on year, is good. They enjoy English, and respond very readily to the demands teachers make of them. They stay on task for what are often quite prolonged periods of time, especially for the younger ones. They work well individually and very well in pairs or groups, but examples of self-evaluation and independent learning are rare. Pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress in parallel with their peers, and their progress is good when additional support is provided for them. Behaviour is always good and often very good.
103. Teaching is very good in Key Stage 1, and good in Key Stage 2. Of the lessons observed throughout the school, 83 per cent were good or better, and 33 per cent were very good or better. One excellent and one unsatisfactory lesson was seen. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge, and they plan and prepare very well. The National Literacy Strategy is firmly established and is being put to very effective use. Teachers expectations of both work and behaviour are high, and their personal styles are engaging and collaborative, while remaining firm. Control is good, and in the best lessons the pace is so good that disciplinary interventions are unnecessary. In the excellent lesson, the quality of the teachers questioning was so good that at every moment pupils were driven to think, to decide and to make progress. In the unsatisfactory lesson there was little pace or purpose, and the pupils made little progress. Teachers have a good knowledge of their pupils, and work provided is usually adapted to their attainment levels. Marking is regular, and teachers make comments in pupils books. These are, however, mostly of bland praise and congratulation. They are not analytical and rarely make helpful developmental suggestions. Such a comment as "A good effort. Remember to use punctuation" is unlikely to provide good guidance for improvement.
104. English is very well managed by a well-organised and enthusiastic co-ordinator, who provides a good example to her colleagues. She is very well aware of the needs of the subject in the school and continuously seeks ways to meet the problems that the low levels of literacy bring. The subject policy and other documentation provide good guidance for teachers. Assessment is good, and tracks pupils progress in reading and writing as it develops. There is, however, no formal assessment of speaking and listening. There is a good focus upon reading in order to promote literacy, with regular exchanges of books and a reading record maintained by teachers, but there is little formal involvement of pupils families in enriching and extending reading skills.
105. Resources for English are good, with big books, sets of readers for shared and group reading, and books (graded to pupils attainment levels) to lend to pupils for private enjoyment. The library contains a limited collection of non-fiction, well ordered but not much used.
106. Literacy is not well promoted in the teaching of other subjects, and this is regrettable in view of the need to improve pupils language skills so that they can attain higher standards across the curriculum. While the specific literacy lessons provide well for pupils, inspectors of a number of other subjects report that there is an inconsistent approach to the correction of technical errors in marking, too little attention is paid to research and independent learning, there is no evidence of talks or presentations by individual pupils, and standards of writing are of low level. There is a school Literacy Policy, but this refers only to the national strategy. There is no formal framework for the promotion of literacy throughout the school.
107. English makes a very good contribution to pupils moral and social development, through the collaboration necessary for the Literacy Hour, and through the discussion of deeply felt issues -

like hunting - arising from their reading. Its contribution to pupils spiritual and cultural development is good, through their own writing and through contacts with great literature.

## **MATHEMATICS**

108. Attainment in mathematics is below average. The overall performance of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils in last year's national tests was well below average. However, the proportion of Year 2 pupils who gained the expected Level 2 was close to the national average. Few, though, achieved the higher Level 2 scores or Level 3. Similarly, the low performance of Year 6 pupils was mainly due to the small proportion who gained Level 5 (which is above the expected Level 4) and the significant number who did not reach Level 3. Standards are rising, albeit slowly. Girls do better than boys at the end of Year 2, but there is little difference by the end of Year 6.
109. Standards in the current Years 2 and 6 are below average, but are satisfactory in relation to where pupils started. Pupils begin Year 1 with below-average skills in mathematics and make satisfactory progress as they move up through Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils perform better in lessons and in their classwork than they do in the national tests, where, sometimes their reading and writing skills let them down. Standards in number work are better than in the other areas of mathematics and pupils make good progress due to the good teaching of numeracy. The school has worked hard to improve pupils' mental mathematics skills and this is having a positive impact.
110. By the age of seven, pupils can add and subtract numbers to 10, though not always in their heads. A few can understand the place value of digits in numbers beyond 100 and can remember the 5x and 10x multiplication tables. The most able pupils in Year 2 are familiar with negative numbers. Most pupils know the difference between odd and even numbers and the names of common two- and three-dimensional shapes, for example, cube and rectangle, and how many sides they have. They do not have enough experience in applying their mathematical skills, although this is improving.
111. By the age of eleven, many pupils can reduce fractions to simpler forms and work out in their heads calculations such as 'How many eighths are there in two and three eighths?' More able pupils quickly pick up the link between ratios and fractions and use correct language to explain their answers. Pupils measure length, capacity and angles and the more able calculate areas of simple shapes. They draw bar charts but do not have enough experience of drawing and interpreting line graphs. They sometimes apply their skills to everyday contexts, such as in a lesson when they worked out the proportion of people in the classroom who wear glasses or who eat packed lunches. They are not given enough open-ended problems to solve, in which they have to use a range of skills, and they rarely explain in writing how they have worked something out. Pupils are much better orally than in writing. When faced with written problems they are less confident and more likely to make silly mistakes (which they understand as soon as they are pointed out).
112. The teaching is of a good quality, overall, in both key stages. Sometimes it is very good. Teachers plan well and set clear objectives, which they share with pupils and usually revisit at the end of the lesson. They direct questions effectively, taking account of pupils' confidence and prior attainment. As a result, pupils are prepared to forward answers and are not afraid to be wrong. Teachers often ask pupils to explain how they worked something out, but do not always draw on this to discuss different approaches and to consider which might be the most efficient.
113. Teachers use the first part of the mathematics lessons (mental/oral starter) well to revise earlier work and to promote pupils' mental skills. Pupils are very quick at this, and boys particularly enjoy the challenge seen in the Year 6 class of competing to work out the answer first. Sometimes teachers spend too much time with the whole class on mental/oral work and introducing the main activity. Pupils, particularly those who are less able, begin to lose concentration and there is less time for them to practise and improve their skills.

114. Teachers' assess pupils' progress well and mark their work regularly and carefully. Their comments are encouraging but also challenging at times. Target-setting is being introduced and this is particularly effective in Years 1 and 2 where pupils' targets are displayed in the classroom. Work is differentiated well in the main part of the mathematics lesson where teachers group pupils by ability. Pupils are given work that is appropriate. Teachers often target their questions well during whole-class discussions so that pupils of all abilities are involved and gain a sense of achievement. This was done particularly well in a Year 5 lesson. Pupils with SEN who were helped by support staff made good progress. In most lessons, though, they do not receive extra support and in general, pupils with SEN make only satisfactory progress.
115. Teachers have extremely good productive relationships with pupils and get the best out of them in terms of work. They have high expectations of behaviour. Pupils respond well and usually enjoy their mathematics lessons. They work hard, concentrate well and take pride in their work. Work in books is well presented.
116. In many respects there has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced effectively and teachers are more confident about the subject. Procedures for monitoring the teaching of mathematics have improved. Standards in mathematics have risen since the last inspection, although they are still below average and worse than standards in English. Some of the weaknesses reported then are still present, for example in problem-solving. The school has identified the need to improve pupils' skills in problem-solving and shape, space and measures, but has not provided enough guidance for teachers as to what to do in the classroom. Although pupils are given problems to solve, they do not have enough experience of applying their skills and knowledge to novel and real-life situations. Also, not enough use is made of computers to support pupils learning in mathematics. The leadership of the subject has been sound in most respects, but it has not been effective in bringing about rapid improvement, as progress has been slow. Despite this, the overall good quality of the teaching and the attempts to tackle the weaknesses suggest that the school has the capacity to improve.

## **SCIENCE**

117. Standards attained by pupils currently in Year 2 are below those expected for their age. Pupils enter the school with well below average attainment in communication skills and, by the end of Year 2, a significant number still experience problems when explaining their work and in making task-related observations. Pupils in Year 6 attain standards that are well below average, particularly in scientific enquiry. The skills required to investigate and experiment have not been progressively developed in the school. In consequence, pupils in Year 6 have not acquired the skills needed to conduct the whole process of independently planning and carrying out experiments. This has implications for staff training to increase confidence in teaching pupils the important skills of scientific enquiry, which are central to learning in this subject.
118. Results of the 2000 test for Year 6 pupils, show that standards were well below the national average. Although the number of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 was close to the national average, the number reaching the higher level was well below average. This is the reason why standards, overall, were well below the national average. When considering the results over a four-year period to 2000, results show that the school has kept pace with the national trend. Standards are now better than they were at the time of the last inspection. Teacher assessments of pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2000 show that standards were well below average compared with those of other schools nationally.
119. The school explains that last year's Key Stage 2 results were influenced by a significant number of higher-attaining pupils moving to other schools during the year. Thirty per cent of pupils currently in Year 6 are on the register of special educational needs and this, together with the weakness in investigative science already identified, is another reason why standards are still well below average. The learning of pupils in this class has been disrupted, when, in the absence of their regular teacher, they were taught by a succession of different teachers.

120. Boys did not achieve as well as girls in the tests at the end of Key Stage 2. Although some boys do not readily offer to answer questions, there was no evidence during the inspection of a difference in the attainment of boys and girls. In most lessons, teachers are careful to encourage all pupils to answer questions, and groups are mixed, with girls and boys working together at all levels of attainment.
121. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is satisfactory, overall. Of the five lessons seen, teaching was good in one and satisfactory in four. There was no significant difference between teaching in Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2. However, analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils indicate that the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 has been better through the year than in Key Stage 2, and that pupils are making good progress in their learning. The work of pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 shows that interesting tasks are well chosen, with a good balance of direct teaching and opportunities for pupils to apply their enquiry skills to find things out for themselves. A good example of this was where pupils were taught about simple series circuits of wires, batteries and bulbs, and went on to discover how they could open and close the circuit using a switch. Pupils discuss their work enthusiastically and show real interest in the subject.
122. The influence of teaching on learning in Year 6 is weakened because pupils' investigative skills have not been systematically developed year on year. It is clearly obvious that many pupils find it difficult to employ observations to reach conclusions when considering whether their conclusions justify the predictions they have made. The good learning seen in a Year 4 lesson was the direct result of the teacher challenging pupils to predict whether a bulb would light in various circuit arrangements. Pupils worked well in groups to test their predictions and to present their findings using the correct scientific vocabulary. They were well-motivated by the teaching and this resulted in worthwhile group discussions. In all lessons, pupils behave well and concentrate on what they are doing. These good attitudes make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
123. Apart from the weakness in provision already mentioned, all other aspects of science are given due attention. Pupils in both key stages have a sound knowledge of life processes and living things because this aspect is generally well taught. Teachers make effective use of the school's own 'habitat area' as a resource for learning. Pupils in Year 2, for example, recognise that different things live in different habitats and that food and water are essential to the growth of plants and animals. Pupils in a Year 6 lesson were gaining a sound understanding that micro-organisms are living things often too minute to be seen, and that they can be beneficial or harmful. In this, and in other Key Stage 2 lessons, there were too few opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves.
124. Analysis of pupils' work shows that there is an increasing emphasis on developing the important skills of enquiry in some classes, but that these opportunities are not yet consistent through the school. Pupils in Year 3 and 4, for example, are introduced to fair testing and the importance of making predictions. A good example is where pupils in Year 3 predict which material would make the best sail for a boat. They test their predictions after discussions based on their scientific knowledge. In all classes, pupils' work shows that there is good emphasis on pupils' recording their work neatly in a range of ways. These include drawings, tables, bar charts, Venn diagrams and well-written explanations. In this way the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' mathematical and writing skills. Pupils' work is generally well marked, indicating how they can improve. Tests are set regularly to find out what pupils' know and understand about various topics. However, teachers do not make enough use of these tests to plan revision work for those pupils whose answers show that they do not have a thorough grasp of the work covered.
125. Teachers are aware of the needs of pupils with special educational needs. However, there was no extra support provided for these pupils in any of the science lessons observed. Although the support they receive in literacy skills gives them access to the whole curriculum, they often need support in understanding the work and contributing answers in science lessons.



126. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject and provides good leadership. She has clear plans for the future improvement of investigative science and for improving teachers' understanding of the importance of this aspect of the subject. The leadership of the subject has improved since the last inspection when insufficient time was given to monitoring and evaluating the teaching of the subject. The co-ordinator now closely monitors lessons and gives supportive and positive feedback to teachers. Resources are good and are well managed. However, more use needs to be made of information and communication technology as well as other information sources to support pupils' learning. Assessment procedures are developing, but need to be more rigorous in identifying the skills to be developed so as to ensure a greater rate of progress for all pupils. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and social development, as they consider environmental and health issues.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

127. There has been satisfactory improvement in the areas for development from the last inspection. The subject leader has reviewed the teaching of the subject and used some of the information from this to help staff improve their teaching. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject is beginning to improve because of the new subject guidance, although more work is needed on three-dimensional work and pupils' knowledge of the specialist language of the subject. The need to extend three-dimensional work has been recognised as an area for development by the school.
128. Attainment in art is average for seven-year-olds and below average for eleven-year-olds. Attainment is improving due to the new subject guidance, which is helping teachers' confidence with the subject. Most pupils achieve appropriately as a result, including higher-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Weaknesses in attainment are in pupils' evaluation of their work and that of others, and in their knowledge of the styles of different artists. However, a good lesson with a Year 5 class encouraged pupils to reflect upon how they could improve their work.
129. Seven-year-old pupils talk about the features of the work of illustrators of books, but have little knowledge of the work of well-known artists. However, they enjoy art, particularly mixing colours. Boys and girls have a good understanding of primary and secondary colours and what happens when they are mixed. Pupils in Year 1 talked about the effects they wanted to achieve in collages they were creating. A few pupils think about improving their work, but this skill is not well-developed. Seven to eleven year olds are starting to use sketch-books to try out their ideas and are developing an understanding of perspective. This was seen in early sketches of buildings around the school and in still-life paintings of glass bottles by pupils in Year 6. A few pupils in Year 5 produced highly intricate designs based on their study of the work of William Morris. The work showed very good attention to detail and careful use of the technique of shading in pencil. Many pupils are uncertain about the work of well-known artists; one talked about Lowry and could discuss his style, others about the work of Botticelli, but they were unable to describe features of his work.
130. Many pupils enjoy art and work hard. They are pleased to discuss what they have done with adults and other pupils. They work well in groups and share equipment sensibly and amicably. Behaviour is good, as this expected by all teachers. Relationships are very good, so pupils have confidence to respond in class.
131. Teaching is satisfactory, but is improving, as teachers begin to gain in confidence as a result of using the relatively new subject guidance. There were good features in all the lessons seen. Many pupils in Year 4 who were asked to sketch chairs achieved high standards because of the careful teaching of techniques. The teaching of techniques was also a good feature in a Year 1 lesson. In this lesson, the teacher encouraged discussion about collage by showing one of her own designs. This appealed to the pupils and prompted much discussion about the choice of materials and colours. A Year 5 class, sketching figures, gained a good understanding of how to approach the work by looking at the styles of Cezanne, Lowry and Seurat. In this lesson, the interest of the pupils was maintained by the good use of resources,

including the pupils themselves as models. Careful use of questions and praise helped pupils in Year 1 to improve their work. Information and communication technology is beginning to be used in some classes.

132. Although attainment in art for eleven-year-olds is below average, attainment throughout the school is rising because of the subject guidance, which is giving teachers confidence and beginning to ensure that pupils achieve appropriately as they move from class to class. Seven-year-olds have a good understanding of the primary and secondary colours and know what happens when they mix them. Eleven-year-olds are developing a range of techniques, such as where to start when drawing from observation and how to shade for the desired effect.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

133. Standards in design and technology have improved since the last inspection. At that time, the attainment of infant and junior pupils was judged to be slightly below average. This was attributed to weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge, occasionally low expectations and gaps in coverage. Attainment is now average for pupils aged seven and eleven. New guidelines, drawing on nationally available advice, clarify for teachers the ground that is to be covered and the order in which knowledge and skills are to be taught. This has improved teachers' subject knowledge and improved the quality of planning. The subject curriculum is now covered satisfactorily. Assessment arrangements, linked to planning, track pupils' progress and help to ensure that the work is pitched at a suitably challenging level.
134. Younger pupils begin to communicate their design ideas in drawings and writing and the more able younger pupils label their diagrams accurately. Pupils begin to plan their projects, for example, in making a vehicle. They consider how best to sequence the stages of making, what materials they will need and how to join them. In one very good lesson, pupils made a moving model to illustrate a nursery rhyme theme, such as the 'Cow jumping over the Moon'. The teacher used points drawn from pupils' work very effectively to motivate, stimulate interest and enrich learning. She established very good relationships. This added to pupils' enjoyment in their learning and gave them the confidence to explore ideas. It also helped to promote good collaboration between pupils.
135. By the age of eleven, pupils make accurate, detailed plans, giving careful attention to a range of design features. For example, in designing and making a slipper, they consider the exact requirements of the end-user by measuring and making a template to ensure a good fit. They choose styles, materials and making techniques to give the required appearance and ensure comfort and durability. They select from different ways of joining and decorating. Pupils consider ways in which their products might be improved, sometimes evaluating them and proposing changes as work progresses. In discussion, pupils recall a good range of work and talk with a sense of achievement about the models they have made; for example, those incorporating switches, cogs and pulleys. Pupils have improved their understanding of how these components work by disassembling mechanical toys and investigating them. This makes good a weakness identified in the previous report.
136. In both infant and junior classes, the attainment of many pupils is limited by language difficulties, particularly in speaking and writing. Many pupils, despite their enthusiasm for the subject, find it hard to explain their ideas clearly, to make and label diagrams accurately, to do justice in writing to their designs and to evaluate their products concisely.
137. Because of the school's timetable arrangements, only two lessons in design and technology could be seen. Consequently, no overall judgement of the quality of teaching can be made. The lessons seen, one infant and one junior, were both of good quality. Teaching reflected high expectations, which motivated and challenged pupils well. Teachers successfully encouraged pupils to share ideas and work constructively together. Pupils responded with enthusiasm and worked hard. Their behaviour was very good. These elements combine to promote effective learning.
138. The recently introduced planning arrangements are rapidly becoming established. They have already improved progress by helping teachers plan tasks that offer interest and challenge at

the right level. They are supported by well-designed assessment arrangements. These enable teachers to track each pupil's progress accurately. However, they are not yet used with full effectiveness to ensure that pupils' skills are built on systematically from year to year.

139. Standards in design and technology are in line with the expected levels in the infants and juniors. This is an improvement since the last report, when standards were below average. Infant pupils describe in detail the process they use to make a vehicle, carefully considering materials and processes. Junior pupils make clear plans, for example, when designing a hat, consider design options very fully and evaluate their product with a view to improving it. However, the attainment of some pupils is limited by poor recording and writing skills.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

140. In the last inspection, average attainment was reported in each key stage. Only one lesson could be observed in the course of the present inspection, and there was insufficient evidence to support a judgement on standards.
141. However, some observations may be made from this one lesson, from wall displays, and from pupils written work. In Key Stage 1, pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge of how maps work, and the more able understand and can use co-ordinates. The most successful work is in Year 2, with Barnaby Bear goes to Dublin, with pupils planning their packing and their routes, and making good comparisons between transport in Dublin and transport in Sittingbourne. They also show a sound awareness of how the weather and the climate affect life in different countries.
142. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils analyse the difference between their town and that of the East Midland school with which they have developed links. In group discussions, they devise informed questions to put to pupils in the other school in order to draw out particular features - landscape, leisure, education and commerce. Their books show some competent weather recording.
143. Pupils take care in the presentation of their work, and sometimes diagrams and maps are very neatly drawn. Their interest in other people stimulates a lively engagement with the topics studied.
144. Judgements about the teaching suffer from the same limitations as those on attainment. There is a good scheme of work, based upon the advice of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, and when it is followed, geography is usually well taught. The Barnaby Bear units are a good example of this. However, the variety of teachers during a maternity leave in Key Stage 2 has meant that there was insufficient subject coverage in one year group. Pupils work is always marked, though not always analytically or involving setting targets that will carry pupils progress further.
145. The co-ordinator for geography has a clear idea of the development necessary for the subject, and of the need to ensure that the newly adopted scheme of work is observed fully. She acknowledges that resources, though satisfactory, need to be improved, especially atlases and globes, which are large enough for whole-class use in every classroom. She monitors teaching by looking at planning and exercise books and by observing lessons.
146. Geography plays a satisfactory role in promoting pupils literacy, in that emphasis is placed upon the subject vocabulary (pupils were heard discussing urban, rural and suburban localities), and that there is evidence of some independent research and reporting - although much of this is copying.
147. The subject contributes to pupils social and cultural development through the examination of other ways of life and the reasons for them. A particularly strong example of this is in the units on Mexico in Years 2 and 4 and on St Lucia in the Caribbean in Year 3.

## **HISTORY**

148. In the last inspection, the area identified for improvement was the content of the history curriculum as not all aspects were covered satisfactorily. This has improved with the recent introduction of guidance for the subject, which has been discussed by all staff. Although attainment is below average throughout the school because of the poor literacy skills of a large number of pupils, they achieve well in history and make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the past and in their development of historical skills of research. This is because the subject is made interesting for them by their teachers. Higher-attaining pupils are usually challenged by the work and so they make good progress. Pupils who are lower attaining achieve well because the work is usually carefully matched to their needs. There is little support in the classroom for those with special educational needs, but teachers generally are aware of their needs and try to give the support that is needed, so progress is generally good.
149. Seven-year-olds are developing a good understanding of the passage of time. They talked about Florence Nightingale living a long, long time ago. Many pupils have a good knowledge of life in the Middle Ages, one boy talking graphically about *nasty things they threw out of windows!* They could explain how The Great Fire of London started and were tentatively beginning to think about the effects of the fire on subsequent life, for example, that people had to move south. They are developing a good understanding of differences between the past and the present; pupils in Year 2 discussed how steam trains were different from trains today. Although work is proudly presented and handwriting is clear and legible, a significant number of pupils have difficulty with basic literacy, which affects their ability to present information accurately.
150. This is also true of older children, whose literacy skills impede their attainment, despite the best endeavours of the teachers. Pupils in Year 6 who watched a video about the 1950s were asked to make notes using simple guidance. They were encouraged to use these in the final discussion about life in post-war Britain and many did so confidently. Many pupils use skills of research proficiently, as teachers expect them to find out about the past from a range of sources. Pupils in Year 5 were asked to find out information about the Greek theatre from reference books and a CD-ROM. They were adept at using the computer and higher-attaining pupils and many average-attaining pupils used reference books competently. The pupils in Year 6 studying life in post-war Britain could explain why rationing happened after the war. They develop a good understanding of life at different times in history. One pupil, writing a diary account as a child hiding with her family from the Nazis wrote; *"I'm so fed up. I hate having to hide out. I can't do anything here. I don't have any friends, I only have my little sister Anna. .... My mum and dad argue over little details, "Don't go too near the window, someone'll see you."*
151. The written work of many pupils lacks detail and is inaccurate which is affecting their attainment.
152. Many pupils enjoy history. A pupil in Year 4 who had studied the Aztecs previously, selected a book about them during reading time and was able to find information of interest which she shared with the class. Younger pupils, including boys, talked with great interest about their work. They usually work hard because this is expected by their teachers. When they are asked to work in groups, they share and collaborate well together. They develop good skills of working independently, when they use books for research, as this is a feature of the teaching of history in the school. Teachers have good skills of managing behaviour, so pupils behave well and are co-operative.
153. Teaching is good, overall. In addition to the features already mentioned, teachers are using the new guidance well to ensure that their teaching of history is accurate and also takes the pupils' learning forward. Resources are used well, although there is a shortage of artefacts to prompt discussion about the past. Visits, such as the one to Dover Castle, help to develop an interest in, and deepen understanding about, the past. History makes a good contribution to the teaching of literacy through its emphasis on using skills of research and presenting information in a range of ways. The subject leader is developing the links between literacy and history appropriately.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

154. There have been significant improvements in provision for information technology since the last inspection. Then, pupils' attainment was judged to be clearly below average and there were significant weaknesses in planning and subject leadership. Adoption of nationally available guidelines for the teaching of information technology has now clarified planning arrangements, so that progress in the necessary skills is becoming more secure and purposeful. Subject co-ordination is now satisfactory. Monitoring of the subject, although still insufficiently frequent for full effectiveness, is systematically planned and carried out. Action planning draws on a sound analysis of what is required to improve standards. A thorough programme of staff training is extending and consolidating teachers' subject knowledge. There is a satisfactory range of well-chosen, up-to-date resources. When used to full advantage, these should enable pupils to build a satisfactory range of skills, which they can learn to apply in many different areas of their school work. The results of these changes are already beginning to be seen in improvements to the quality of learning and a wider, more rewarding subject curriculum.
155. However, despite recent improvements, standards in information technology remain below average for pupils aged seven and eleven. The school has been slow to respond to the findings of the previous report. As a result, the apt and soundly planned measures that teachers are now putting in place have not yet had time to influence results.
156. By the age of seven, average and above average pupils use simple word-processing programs to present their work. They recognise, from their own experience, some of the advantages of technology; for example, that it allows spelling to be checked and writing to be presented neatly and saved easily. They use and understand some relevant technical vocabulary, such as 'load' and 'font'. Average pupils have basic competence in the use of the mouse and keyboard, while more able pupils, for example, explain and can use spellcheck. Pupils gain some useful experience of using information technology in different subjects, for example, in geography to design a town. In discussion, pupils showed enthusiasm for information technology and explained how they enjoyed using it in their work. However, the range of work that pupils follow in school, though expanding rapidly, is still relatively narrow. As a result, pupils have insufficient experience and understanding of the many different ways in which information technology might be used to support their learning.
157. The school's timetabling arrangements allowed only one information technology lesson to be seen. Because of this, no overall judgement on the quality of teaching can be made. An effective session was seen in the upper junior class, in which the teacher introduced pupils to e-mail. The teacher's good subject knowledge enabled her to give explain and demonstrate effectively. Good relationships and a purposeful, good-humoured atmosphere gave pupils the security and confidence to ask questions and contribute their own ideas. The teacher engaged pupils very well, generating real enthusiasm during the lesson and eager anticipation for the lessons to follow. This promoted effective learning.
158. In discussion, junior pupils found it difficult to name the programs they had used and recalled only a small number of ways in which they used information technology in school. These included word-processing, following a maths program and an interesting project in which weather data was entered on a spreadsheet and faxed to a link school. Work displayed around the school shows that many teachers are beginning to make use of information technology to support work in a range of subjects. For example, pupils in the junior classes use a CD-ROM and the Internet to research St Lucia for their work in geography and life in ancient Egypt for history. Pupils in Year 4 use Colour Magic to make images that reflect the style of Matisse. These experiences enable pupils to practise their information technology skills and improve their understanding of how they may be applied. Until recently, too few such opportunities have been provided, but analysis of teachers' planning and observations of lessons in other subjects show that this aspect of provision is improving.

159. Pupils' attitudes to learning, in the lesson seen and in discussion, are good. Pupils show great enthusiasm for information technology. When working together, for example, during English, they readily co-operate and support one another. Pupils in infant and junior classes concentrate well when working at the computer, whether individually or in pairs. Their behaviour is consistently good. However, few pupils have the confidence to work independently at a suitable level. For many pupils this is because their information technology skills are insufficiently developed. Many pupils also experience difficulties with reading and writing that limit their capacity to work without support.
160. Information technology is a developing subject. From a low base of experience, pupils are beginning to make satisfactory progress. The curriculum has yet to be fully established but now rests on secure, well-informed planning that offers good guidance to teachers. This should help teachers to build the necessary depth and range in the subject and to identify opportunities for pupils to practise their ICT skills more widely in different subjects. Suitable assessment arrangements are in place. These usefully track the knowledge and skills that pupils have covered but are not yet used effectively to help plan future learning. More purposeful use of assessment information is required if the best possible progress is to be achieved.
161. Standards have risen in ICT since the time of the last inspection because of the renewed emphasis recently given to this subject, well-directed training to increase teachers' subject knowledge and improvements to resources. However, pupils' attainments remain below average and pupils still have insufficient experience of applying ICT in other subjects. For example, while many pupils are confident in basic word-processing few use it to full effect as a means of improving their writing and few have sufficient grasp of the potential of ICT for research and data handling.
162. No overall judgement is made about the quality of teaching in ICT because only one lesson was observed. However, indications from discussions with Year 2 and Year 6 pupils and from work on display are that provision is satisfactory. Observations in other subjects, for example, English, in which ICT was used, indicate that teachers are beginning to apply it effectively to extend pupils' learning.

## **MUSIC**

163. Little music was taking place during the week of the inspection, so evidence is drawn from talking with pupils and teachers, listening to some tapes of their work and analysis of documentation.
164. The last inspection found that assessment was not used, and that weak areas were listening and appraising and written work. The subject now has a system of assessment, but it is not used to improve attainment. Listening and appraising and written work are still weaker areas as the school has recognised in its school improvement plan. The new subject guidance is beginning to have an effect as it is helping teachers to develop confidence in teaching the subject.
165. Evidence from the tapes shows that pupils' skills in performance, including composition, are below average by the time pupils are eleven, but that the increased confidence of staff is improving attainment and the achievement of pupils. The attainment of younger pupils is average and pupils are beginning to achieve satisfactorily. Seven-year-olds enjoy singing and unprompted, in discussion, sang a well-known song with accuracy and great delight. Their listening skills are satisfactory and they can follow a simple notation to make music. They can name a favourite instrument. Eleven-year-olds can name instruments and discuss the sounds they make. They sustain their parts well in composition and listen carefully to each other, but they do not use a musical vocabulary and have little understanding of how to improve their work. They have little knowledge of the work of famous composers. Music is played in assembly but is not discussed, which would help them with this. Singing in assembly, although voluble, lacks expression and notes are not sustained.

166. Pupils generally enjoy music, especially the younger ones. In assemblies, they have the confidence to sing and are led by Year 6 pupils who sing with enjoyment. They talk with interest about their favourite instruments.
167. As only one lesson was observed, a judgement about teaching cannot be made with security. However, the new subject guidance is beginning to ensure that pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning.
168. All year groups have the opportunity to take part in a production, such as the Christmas play for younger pupils and *Bugsy* for older ones. The choir sings in the local church and at other venues from time to time. These productions, and school ones such as *Oliver* that take place every two years, give pupils the opportunity to extend their knowledge of music and are greatly appreciated by the community.
169. Attainment in music is below average for eleven-year-olds, but is improving throughout the school and for seven-year-olds is average. This is because of the new subject guidance, which is giving teachers confidence to teach the subject. Seven-year-olds have satisfactory skills of listening and they enjoy performing. Eleven-year-olds are developing skills in performing through their composing, and they listen well to one another and have a good sense of rhythm. They are less skilled in appraisal and have little knowledge of how to improve their work.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

170. Because of the school's timetable arrangements only one physical education lesson could be observed. Secure judgements on standards, pupils' attitudes to their work and the quality of teaching cannot, therefore, be made.
171. In the infant lesson seen, pupils showed average co-ordination in throwing, striking and catching a tennis ball. They moved energetically and safely, showing good awareness of others. Pupils clearly enjoyed the activity. They practised sensibly in pairs, co-operating well and concentrating hard to improve accuracy and control. Pupils listened carefully to the teacher and, as a result, many improved the accuracy of their striking. Teaching set appropriately high standards and the teacher managed the pupils securely. Careful attention was given to safety. A good balance was struck between vigorous activity and rest and valuable opportunities were provided for pupils to develop co-operation. As a result, learning was generally effective. However, there were few opportunities for pupils to learn by studying and commenting on each others' performance.
172. At the time of the previous inspection, the physical education curriculum did not meet national requirements because swimming was not provided. There are now satisfactory arrangements for the teaching of swimming and most pupils can swim 25 metres competently by the time they leave the school.
173. Subject management is satisfactory. Planning shows that the subject curriculum covers the full range of knowledge and activities, including dance, games, gymnastics and athletics. Lessons are valuably enhanced for junior pupils by a range of extra-curricular activities, including cricket, rounders, football and netball. These are well supported. Pupils gain wider experience by participating in inter-school sports competitions and dance presentations. These activities, alongside the planned PE curriculum, are valuable in promoting pupils' personal and social development.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

174. The last inspection did not report any judgement on attainment in religious education, but concluded that pupils made steady progress and that teachers knowledge and understanding was good. The findings of the present inspection are that attainment is in line with what might

be expected, considering pupils ages, and that teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2.

175. In Key Stage 1, pupils show a good knowledge of religious stories from the Christian, Hindu and Jewish traditions. They retell them orally and in writing - sometimes at some length. They know what happens in places of worship, and demonstrate a sensitive awareness of the abstract aspects of religion. When asked about special places, like churches, pupils relate their own experiences: We went there to pray for my dad; It makes me feel tiny.
176. In Key Stage 2, while studies of Christianity and Judaism continue, Islam and Sikhism are introduced. There are also discussions of moral and social issues. Pupils written work shows a good engagement with the topics, and a satisfactory knowledge of the features that make each religion special and different. They enjoy and remember the stories, but their best work is about personal or social consideration - as when they are writing about friendship or producing their own prayers, and when they discuss communities and responsibilities within them.
177. The positive attitudes which pupils bring to the subject ensure that the quality of their learning is good, and they make good progress. They listen quietly and patiently to stories and to teachers descriptions, and they respond well when asked. When they answer questions, it is clear that they do so thoughtfully, although there is some hesitancy in expression which is due to limited language skills. In groups and pairs, discussion is good and respectful. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, along with their peers, although they do not receive additional support. Teachers usually ensure that appropriate work is set for them.
178. Teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Teachers generally have satisfactory subject knowledge. They plan and prepare resources appropriately and manage classes well. The good teaching is characterised by lively enthusiasm (which the children catch), and by methods of questioning, which promote thought and selectivity in pupils responses. Marking is only sometimes developmental, but all work is marked.
179. The co-ordinator for religious education is an experienced and well-motivated teacher. She knows the subject well, and is in the process of producing a new subject scheme of work which will take account of a recently revised Locally Agreed Syllabus and of the advice provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. This will provide a rich and broad programme, well-tailored to the needs of the school. The arrangements for the monitoring of teaching are good: the co-ordinator checks planning and exercise books, and observes teaching in each class at least once a year.
180. Resources for religious education are satisfactory. There is a small but good collection of artefacts from the Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Hindu traditions. There is only one half set of Bibles. Some use is made of visitors who represent particular religions, like a Hindu teacher, the parish priest and a Salvation Army officer. While pupils make visits to the parish church, no visits are arranged to other places of worship.
181. While in the good teaching there is continuous promotion of childrens powers of expression, there is little conscious subscription, overall, to the development of pupils literacy. A positive contribution is made, however, in the frequent discussion of religious topics, which develops skills of informal speaking.
182. Religious education contributes well to pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through its consideration of religious ideas, rules of life and the duties of individuals towards others, as well as its focus upon the ways in which religions influence the expressive arts of many cultures.