

INSPECTION REPORT

St Lawrence Church of England Primary School

Seal Chart

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118704

Headteacher: Mrs Sally Jones

Reporting inspector: Mrs Wendy Simmons
23674

Dates of inspection: 17th to 19th June 2001

Inspection number: 198791

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Church Road Seal Chart Sevenoaks Kent
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, St Lawrence Church of England Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S Souch
Date of previous inspection:	24 th November 1997

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23674	Wendy Simmons	Registered inspector	Mathematics, Science, Information and communication technology, Religious education Geography, History, English as an additional language.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well is the school led and managed? How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9092	Ron Elam	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18083	Judith Howell	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, English, Art, Design and technology, Music, Physical education, Special educational needs, Equal opportunities.	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Lawrence Church of England Primary School, is a much smaller than average school. Parents make a conscious decision to drive their children here in preference to more local schools. Sixty-six boys and girls, aged between 4 and 11, are taught in three mixed age classes. There are more boys than girls, especially in the mixed Reception/Year 1 class. There are 17 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, which is above average, at 28 per cent overall, but is very high in some year groups. This has increased considerably since 1997. No pupils have statements of special educational need. About three per cent of the pupils speak English as an additional language. Almost all pupils are of white British origin; however, a few pupils from French Canadian, Pakistani and Indian heritages also attend the school. A lower than average number of pupils have free school meals (1.5 per cent). The rate of mobility is extremely high. When children start school in the Reception classes, their attainment is average, but many pupils join classes in other year groups and overall, attainment is lower than average. The attainment of pupils joining the school has altered considerably since the last inspection. The school has faced difficulties in recruiting teachers. Three new teachers joined the school in this school year, two of whom are newly qualified.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a satisfactory school which welcomes pupils from all backgrounds, experiences and abilities. Standards are well below average in Year 6 and reflect the very high percentage of pupils with special educational needs at 50 per cent. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and personal and social development is very good between Years 1 and 6. Achievement is satisfactory for pupils in Years 1 to 6, but unsatisfactory in the Foundation Stage. The achievement of more able pupils is inconsistent. Teaching is satisfactory, as is overall leadership, which leads to satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of leadership, management and teaching by the headteacher is good and has held the school together during a difficult period.
- Pupils' attitudes, personal development and relationships with each other and adults are good and this contributes towards their achievement from Year 1 to Year 6.
- Good provision for pupils with special educational needs results in good progress.
- The provision for, and teaching and learning of, information and communication technology are very good and result in above average standards.
- Teaching and learning in the Year 2/3 class are consistently of a high standard.
- Standards are above average in music, which reflects high quality teaching and learning.

What could be improved

- Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- The achievement of more able pupils, so that it is more consistent.
- Provision for children in the Reception class.
- Opportunities for pupils to appreciate the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society.
- The school has not conducted a full risk assessment, with the Local Education Authority, on the use of the field and the movement of pupils to and from this and the village hall.
- Greater consistency in behaviour management techniques.

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 November 1997. Improvement since then is satisfactory and reflects considerable changes in the profile of pupils now attending the school, which has resulted in a decline in standards and a lowering of behaviour of a few pupils. There has been good progress in improving the use of test results and tracking of pupils' performance and in planning the curriculum, which were key issues in 1997. Very good moral and social education has been maintained. Good progress is evident in the provision for pupils with special educational needs and satisfactory progress in developing mathematics and science. Improvement has been slowed down by staff changes. Cultural development is not as good. Teaching was good overall in 1997 and is now satisfactory. However, a similar percentage of very good teaching has been maintained. Links with parents remain strong. Resources have improved. There has been a decline in the Foundation Stage. Good

improvements have been made in the accommodation and in financial planning, which took the school out of a deficit budget. The capacity for further school improvement is satisfactory.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key	
Very high	A*
Well above average	A
Above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E
Very low	E*

Standards have declined considerably since 1999, which reflects the increase in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs, few able pupils and a very high incidence of pupil mobility. Differences between year groups become especially noticeable in a very small school. In comparison with schools that have the same percentage of free school meals, this school performed in the bottom five per cent for the country. In the current Year 6, standards are well below average in English, mathematics and science. In most other subjects, they are average. In religious education and history, they are below average. Strengths include the attainment in information and communication technology and in music, due to good and sometimes very good teaching and learning. Standards in other year groups are generally higher than in Year 6. Good teaching by the headteacher and in Years 2/3 and a good curriculum enhance achievement, especially in Years 2, 3 and 4. The school is not providing adequately for children in the Foundation Stage, which hampers their progress. Overall, pupils are achieving satisfactorily from Year 1 to Year 6, but a few more able are not achieving as well as they could. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well. The school has set very challenging targets to improve results. Progress towards reaching these can be hampered by the performance of just one pupil. The school is working satisfactorily to improve standards.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are good overall. They are mostly very keen to learn and work effectively in groups and with partners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory overall. The behaviour of most pupils is very good, but a few demonstrate more challenging and disruptive behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Good overall. Relationships are good and enhance pupils' attitudes to learning. Pupils' personal development and relationships are good from Year 1-6 and are enriched by the school council, fundraising for charities and opportunities to care for other pupils. Personal and social development is not well planned for in the Foundation Stage.
Attendance	The attendance rate is very high and almost all pupils are keen to come to school and learn. Unauthorised absence is very low.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The major strengths in teaching and learning are the support for pupils with special educational needs and good relationships, which result in good attitudes to learning. Teaching is satisfactory in English and mathematics, including literacy and numeracy. The school is working successfully to develop mathematics, but problem solving work is underdeveloped. In English, opportunities to write at length are too limited. In Reception and Year 1, pupils do not write frequently enough. Strengths in teaching and learning include the good and sometimes very good teaching in the Year 2/3 class. Assistants give good support. The quality of the headteacher's teaching is at least good teaching and the headteacher also supports newly qualified teachers well. Specialist support staff, in music and information and communication technology, show high quality teaching skills. The school meets the needs of pupils satisfactorily, but provision for more able pupils is inconsistent. In the mixed Reception and Year 1 class, Reception children are not as well catered for as Year 1, because their learning is narrow and too formal, with insufficient opportunities for children to think, learn and investigate things for themselves. Difficulties in recruiting teachers and the mobility of pupils have hampered continuity in pupils' learning. There is inconsistency in the management of a few pupils with difficult behaviour.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall with very good enrichment from Year 1 to 6. Provision for able pupils is inconsistent. The Foundation Stage curriculum is too formal. There is a suitable two-year rolling programme for teaching mixed age classes, but it is insufficiently rigorous for the Year 6 pupils, particularly in English.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good, with good support from assistants. Progress is well tracked. Pupils have challenging but achievable targets. Links with support services are good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils are well included in the school. Good support results in good progress for pupils. They are well included in all aspects of school life. There is no formalised written policy for supporting pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good, with particular strengths in moral and social. There are missed opportunities to widen resources and pupils' knowledge of Britain as a multicultural society. Pupils' self esteem is nurtured. There is insufficient social and personal development in the Foundation Stage.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. Overall, there are good procedures for health and safety and risk assessment, but the field is not fenced and there are weaknesses in moving pupils between the school, field and village hall. Promotion of attendance is excellent. Assessment procedures are satisfactory.

Overall, parents like what the school does. Parents make a significant contribution to pupils' learning; moreover, there is a strong partnership between parents and the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall leadership and management. The headteacher shows good skills and has led the school forward while taking on considerable responsibility for the co-ordination of many subjects, as other staff are very new or inexperienced.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They know the school well and have a strong working relationship with the staff.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The monitoring of performance in tests and assessments is thorough. Weaker results are targeted for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning and the use of resources are good. Surplus carry forward funding is correctly identified for improvement of the Foundation Stage and the field. Administrative staff give very good support.

The school ensures that it gets good value for money. Resources are good overall, especially for information and communication technology, but inadequate for the Foundation Stage. There is limited delegation of responsibilities by the headteacher because of the newness of staff. Monitoring of the provision in the Foundation Stage not rigorous enough. The accommodation is kept very clean; it is very cramped, with no suitable hall space for the teaching of physical education.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are happy and keen to learn • Good leadership by the headteacher. • Children make good progress • The school helps pupils to mature and become responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety on school field. • A partition between Years 2/3 and 4/5/6. • Extracurricular activities. • Some concerns, from a very few parents, about changes in teaching and behaviour.

The inspection's findings agree with all of the positive comments, although progress is satisfactory. Some teachers are far more skilled at managing difficult behaviour than others. The school is addressing this and has organised training. The findings support parents' concerns about hazards at the field, but find extra curricular activities to be very good. A new partition is to be erected in the summer holidays to rightly reduce noise travelling between classes.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Overall, when children enter the Reception class, their attainment is broadly average for their age. However, by the end of the Reception year, their achievement overall is unsatisfactory. In their mathematical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world the quality of teaching is satisfactory and the children are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals, with numeracy skills supporting their learning effectively and well. Mathematical understanding is regularly assessed and, shows satisfactory progress. In the areas of learning for communication, language and literacy, physical development, creative development and personal, social and emotional development, there are some important areas of weakness. Consequently, the standards children attain are below those found in most schools (below average) in these areas of their learning by the end of the Reception year. Children's language, communication and literacy skills are taught in a formal way, which does not allow the children enough opportunities to think and learn through play and investigation, which adversely influences their overall achievement.
2. Weakness in the Foundation Stage are largely due to the fact that the curriculum is too formal and is meeting the needs of the older Year 1 pupils more effectively than the younger ones in this mixed age class. The teacher recognises this and is keen to improve provision. On the last day of the inspection, she gathered together a collection of dressing up clothes from parents and friends and the children were observed acting out fantasy stories, which enriched their vocabulary, creativity and imagination. Overall, due to her newness to the school and very wide further responsibilities, the curriculum for this age group has not been the school's major priority. The main focus for development has been on mathematics, which is also co-ordinated by this teacher and also, this teacher has worked to develop further the provision for pupils with special educational needs, which is a strength of the school. There have been good recent developments to improve the outside play space surrounding the class. This has been well thought out to encourage imaginative play. Moreover, the school is shortly to gain an additional building, which is currently used by an independent pre school.
3. From Year 1 to Year 6, pupils achieve satisfactorily from their lower than average starting point when finishing in the Reception class. Pupils of average ability achieve satisfactorily and, sometimes, in Year 2/3 and 4 achievement is good. This is due to the way in which pupils are organised and the good teaching in Years 2/3. There are few able pupils in the school as a whole, but the provision for them is currently too inconsistent between subjects and in the work and lessons seen. This influences their overall achievement, which ranges from unsatisfactory to good in lessons and between teachers. This is a weakness, which the school has already recognised in the school's development planning. Overall inclusion of pupils is satisfactory.
4. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school. They make good progress in the light of their previous attainment. This is most apparent in the development of their literacy and numeracy skills. Progress is supported by the use of individual educational plans, which are used to set targets, which are small steps in the development of key skills. Although pupils' attainment remains well below average on account of their special educational needs, there is clear evidence of good achievement. By the end of Year 2, their attainment ranges between pre National Curriculum Level to National Curriculum Level 1. Progress continues in the class for the older pupils as they consolidate their skills with regular practice and begin to acquire a wider range of vocabulary. By Year 6, many of the pupils with special educational needs are working within Level 3 of the National Curriculum.
5. Across the school as a whole, there are factors which limit better overall achievement linked to literacy. These concern missed opportunities to write on a daily basis in Year 1. Across the school as a whole there are limited opportunities to write at length, for example, by drafting and re drafting using

the computers in classrooms and pupils' own disks. There are missed opportunities to use the 30 minutes quiet reading time in an imaginative and focused way to work on specific reading skills. In mathematics, pupils are learning solid number and numeracy skills, but these are not being used enough to investigate and solve real life problems. The recent introduction of target setting for pupils, enhanced by the good use of target setting stickers, helps pupils to know exactly what they are trying to improve in their literacy and numeracy skills; however, these are not used consistently.

6. Pupil mobility is extremely high in this very small school. It currently stands at 46 per cent and this is influencing adversely standards in the school. In Year 4, for example, six pupils have left and seven have arrived, since starting in the Reception class and only three pupils have remained constant in that year group. There are numerous reasons for this. For example, some pupils join this school because they have had difficulties elsewhere and thus join at different times than would normally be expected. Additionally, some pupils come to the school, while waiting for places in local preparatory schools. Since 1998, the percentage of pupils with special educational needs has risen from 14 per cent to 26 per cent at present. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs starts to increase from the beginning of Year 2. In the current Year 2, it stands at 38 per cent.

7. Pupils' mobility has greatly affected the current Year 6. In the present Year 6, 50 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, some of whom only joined in Year 5 and have limited continuity in their learning. This very high proportion is the most significant reason why standards are well below average. One pupil is equal to 12.5 per cent, so this can quickly alter the overall percentages of pupils gaining different levels of results in school and national tests.

8. In comparison with schools that have the same percentage of free school meals, this school achieved much lower results in 2001 in reading and mathematics in Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2), but average standards in writing, which had been a focus of school improvement. In Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6), these results were very low, in the bottom five per cent for the country as a whole. Again, the effect of one pupil in a very small school is considerable and each year group is very different.

9. The trend over the last four years has been erratic but the number taking the tests each year is very small and this can lead to considerable variations from year to year. There are also significantly more pupils with special educational needs in the school in the last few years and this is influencing the proportions of pupils who reach average standards. Since 1998 and 1999, standards have declined considerably and link to the increase in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the low number of very able pupils in the school overall. The school accurately identified weaknesses in mathematics results in 2000 and insufficient higher level 5 results in science and has also worked to develop aspects of writing. These priorities for school improvement are gradually influencing overall achievement, for example, relating to spelling, investigations in science and solid teaching of basic skills in mathematics. Overall, those pupils with special educational needs and average ability pupils are achieving satisfactorily from Year 1 to Year 6, but in Year 6, in particular, the few more able are not achieving as well as they could, because of inconsistency in teaching and some limitations in the planning for English for Year 6 pupils.

10. The school has set very challenging targets for the Year 6 results, which reflect differences between different year groups, but are not now realistic, due to changes in the pupils in this group. This year's target for the percentage of pupils in Year 6 to reach average levels in English and mathematics is 67 per cent. Bearing in mind the very high percentage of pupils with special educational needs (50 per cent), this is very challenging, indeed the school is not on course to achieve this. However, what it does show is a commitment to trying to get the most from the pupils. This is also supported by booster classes and the special 'Springboard Mathematics Project' to help pupils to achieve their full potential. This is largely aimed at pupils who are performing just below the average to bring them up to average. Further to this, the headteacher has organised regular help from a voluntary male helper to help them to improve their reading and to show a positive male role model to reluctant boy readers.

11. The school is monitoring its progress and has set up tracking systems to record individual pupils' progress, which is supported by regular testing. This shows good improvement in systems since the last inspection. The school has identified its weaknesses correctly, but has not placed enough emphasis on the overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage in the development plan. Otherwise the development plan is an effective and useful tool, which is closely linked to raising achievement. There is a strong commitment to the improvement of standards. For example, the headteacher has made good links with a small schools' consortium and a 'Beacon School' to help the school to develop further and improve and staff are sent to other schools to widen their skills. Good working relationships exist between staff, parents and governors. Furthermore, there is a good working ethos and a strong team approach committed to moving the school forward.

12. The findings of this inspection show that standards in Year 2 are below average. This is a decline on the 1997 inspection's findings, which reflect differences in pupils' overall ability from year to year and an increase in the number of pupils with English as an additional language. Compared with the results in 2001, standards in reading and writing are lower. However, results in mathematics, are similar and, indeed, this shows how the school is steadily working to raise the attainment and achievement of pupils with special educational needs as well as the more able in the class.

13. In Year 2, standards in speaking and listening, art, design and technology, geography and, physical education, history and religious education are average. In science, they are close to average, which shows the good teaching and learning to improve standards this year. In mathematics and reading, standards are below average, due to the proportion of pupils with special educational needs. This high percentage of special educational needs pupils is also a factor in why standards in writing are well below average. Additionally, the school is not getting many higher Level 3 results in tests. This is because there are few able pupils overall, but also because pupils are not writing often enough in the Foundation Stage and in Year 1. Standards in information and communication technology are well above average and in music, they are above average, which reflects the high quality teaching and learning. Standards in geography are average, despite the high numbers of special educational needs, because much of this work is based on good quality first hand investigations. Geography and information and control technology standards have improved since the last inspection. Standards in history are average because of good challenging teaching and stimulating experiences.

14. The findings of the inspection are that, in Year 6, the pupils reach well below average standards. This is a similar finding to the results for 2001, but considerably lower than at the time of the previous inspection in 1997. Standards are well below average in English, mathematics and science, including literacy and numeracy. In information and communication technology, they are average and reflect the very high quality teaching and learning, which help less able pupils to achieve average standards. The school has one computer to every seven pupils, so pupils have plenty of practise with new skills which influences their attainment. Standards in physical education are broadly average, because of the efforts that the school goes to in order to widen pupils' sporting experiences, despite the lack of an adequate school hall. In art and design and design and technology, they are also average, as pupils are able to achieve average standards due to the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum and strengths in teaching. Lower than average literacy skills influence their below average attainment in history and religious education, although their achievement in these subjects is satisfactory for their overall ability. Good teaching and learning opportunities in geography lift the attainment of both special educational needs pupils and the more able to an average standard. Good teaching and wide curricular provision in music lead to better than average standards. Since 1997, there have been numerous staff changes in the school, which have adversely influenced the pupils rate of progress. Standards in Years, 3/4 and 5 are generally better than in Year 6. In Years 3 and 4, standards are average overall, reflecting the different abilities of each small year group and the good teaching for Year 3.

15. The two pupils who speak English as an additional language, are very new to the school, but already good support is in place to further their learning. Overall, they are becoming more confident in their use of English and achieve well for their ability.

16. Boys and girls achieved similar standards at Key Stage 1, although boys did better in reading overall. At Key Stage 2, in the 2001 test results, boys did better than girls. This is also true for the findings of the current Year 6 pupils. There are more able boys in this group than girls. Furthermore, attendance is having a negative effect on girls' attainment, despite considerable efforts on the school's part to improve it to the generally excellent rate found in the school. In the school as a whole, there are more boys than girls.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. Pupils' attitudes, personal development and relationships with each other and adults are strengths of the school and make a good contribution towards their attainment and progress.

18. Pupils' personal and social development is good. Relationships between pupils and with adults are good and contribute to the quality of work in lessons. Pupils get on well with each other when playing games at break and lunch times. During a Year 2 and 3 'circle time' the pupils responded well to the classroom routines established by the teacher. They waited their turn and listened to the contributions of their classmates. However some of the pupils in the Reception and Year 1 class find it difficult to socialise especially when not directly supervised by the adults in the room. Their good spiritual development was demonstrated during a mathematics lesson about learning the rules of division. Their high self-esteem had given them self-confidence and they felt proud of their efforts. A Year 2 and 3 literacy hour showed that the teacher had developed a good open environment for learning which enabled the pupils to express their views and take responsibility.

19. The pupils respond well to the opportunities to take on responsibility in the classroom and, for the older pupils, around the school. The school fosters a caring approach by encouraging older ones to look after younger pupils. The school has a successful schools council which, together with the house system, allows pupils to develop plenty of responsibility. Pupils are very successful in raising funds for charities. The very good range of extracurricular activities and strong links enriches personal development, as do the links with the local community.

20. Throughout the school, the pupils' attitudes towards learning are good. This includes those of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. They often concentrate well and show interest in what they are doing as was seen particularly with a group of Year 4 and 5 pupils who were competing with themselves to improve their touch typing skills. Year 2 and 3 pupils showed they could listen carefully as they followed the instructions on a tape during a dance lesson. All the school showed great enthusiasm when singing. The great majority of pupils settle quickly to work in lessons and are able to maintain their interest even when not being directly supported.

21. Most pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to their learning. Both within their own classes and when withdrawn for extra support, they work hard. However, at times the older pupils in Year 6 find it difficult to listen for long periods of time in whole-class teaching and do not always accept correction gracefully. Most pupils are willing to practise areas that have been identified as part of their individual educational plans and this forms the basis for much of their individual activities during the literacy and numeracy lessons. In a number of cases, improvements in academic standards has helped improve pupils' self-esteem and has led to all round improvements in behaviour as well.

22. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. Most pupils behave very well in the classroom, at play and lunch times. They are open, well mannered and welcoming to visitors. They generally move around the school site in an orderly way although they do sometimes run in the downstairs corridor in their

eagerness to get to lunch or to go out to play. They wait patiently for other classes when going to and from their rooms for assemblies.

23. In a few of the lessons seen during the inspection, a few pupils behaved inappropriately, calling out or chatting amongst themselves. Some aggressive behaviour of one or two pupils was seen during the inspection. Sometimes, in Year 6, the lack of consistent challenges for more able pupils results in inappropriate behaviour. Behaviour was judged to be very good in 1997 so that the findings of this inspection show a decline. Nevertheless, the strong links between behaviour and spiritual, moral and social education remain as in 1997. Some teachers employ very good behaviour management techniques and quickly resolve any difficulties, but this is inconsistent from teacher to teacher. The school has been proactive in seeking guidance to enhance this aspect of their work in a future training session. This is a good decision, especially as a few pupils are now coming to the school with very particular behavioural and emotional difficulties. Racial harmony is very good in this school.

24. In the Foundation Stage, the children can sit quietly and listen attentively as a class once they are settled. However, they take some time to settle and often need reminding to put up their hand when answering questions rather than calling out. They join in with the group activities with enthusiasm and show confidence. A few children find it difficult to accept the codes of behaviour when not directly supervised by adults and, as a result, they become disruptive. Developing initiative and personal responsibility in learning is under developed and this is a weakness in planning. This, in general, reflects the lack of opportunities provided for the children. The children can operate independently within the classroom environment, are friendly and confidently exchange ideas with adults.

25. Parents reported that the level of noise between classes sometimes affects pupils' focus on their work. The inspectors agree with parents and are pleased to report that a new partition is ready for the builders to erect, in the summer holidays, between Year 2/3 and Years 4/5 and 6.

26. Attendance is excellent and is at a level similar to that of the previous inspection. The level puts St Lawrence amongst the top five per cent of schools across the country. The few absences are mainly due to the usual childhood illnesses and a very small amount of persistent, but fragmented absence. A few parents are taking their children out of school for holidays. Punctuality is very good with the great majority of pupils regularly arriving on time and any lateness being by a few and often then only by a few minutes, which is very good, because almost all pupils travel some distance to get to the school. Parents state that their children enjoy school and this is reflected in the high level of attendance.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

27. The school has experienced difficulties in recruiting teachers and, currently, has two newly qualified teachers and one other class teacher who only joined the school in January. At the time of the last inspection, the quality of teaching and learning was judged to be good overall, with no unsatisfactory teaching. Whilst the amount of very good teaching remains broadly similar, there has been a decline from good to satisfactory in the overall quality since 1997.

28. In the last three years, the school has had to make some difficult decisions to address successfully the deficit budget, which was evident when the current headteacher started her post. As a consequence of this and changes in staff, the school is now employing fewer experienced teachers than at the time of the last inspection. Furthermore, the number of support assistants has fallen, as the school had been spending a much higher than average proportion of earlier budgets on them.

29. Overall, the current headteacher and governors have worked hard, with satisfactory results, to develop teaching and learning since 1997, considering the difficulties faced and the increased mobility of pupils. However, despite good improvements to the outside play area, the school is not meeting the needs of most of the nine pupils in the Foundation Stage, and this shows a decline since 1997. Since her appointment, the headteacher has sought help from a wide variety of sources to support and develop the quality of teaching, a particular strength being by linking with a 'Beacon School' and recognition of the need to improve the attainment of more able pupils in mathematics and science.

Strengths in the teaching of music remain and there have been further developments particularly in information and communication technology and geography and recent improvements in science and mathematics attainment in the school as a whole. The school's learning environment has been improved well. Resources, such as artefacts for mathematics and religious education have improved, which is resulting in pupils learning by 'hands on' direct experiences. Since 1997, there has been good improvement in the curriculum, to ensure that pupils' learning develops progressively from year to year in almost all subjects.

30. On a whole school basis, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but is inconsistent between year groups. Teachers and pupils enjoy good relationships and pupils have good overall attitudes to learning. Rigorous evaluation of a sample of pupils' work and discussion with pupils enabled inspectors to obtain a wide overview of the overall quality of teaching and learning, even where it was not possible to see lessons. Twenty four lessons or group activities were seen during the inspection. Six lessons were very good (25 per cent); seven were good (29 per cent); nine were satisfactory (38 per cent) and two were unsatisfactory (eight per cent), one in English and one in the Foundation Stage. Overall, 92 per cent of lessons were satisfactory or better and of this, 54 per cent were good or even better.

31. The headteacher provides a good standard of teaching, and sometimes this is very good, which often benefits the pupils in the upper school She is working hard to support the two newly qualified teachers and, during the inspection, took many of the upper school lessons. The best class teaching is evident in Years 2 and 3 and this is a strength of the school, because of the consistency and some examples of very good practice. There are significant strengths in the teaching of information and communication technology and music by a specialist music support teacher.

32. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school; this is also a strength, because the school has a higher than average percentage of these pupils, especially in Year 6, where 50 per cent of pupils have quite specific needs. Teaching is good both in lessons and in small group or individual activities. Targets on pupils' individual education plans are expressed clearly and provide realistic stages of development. Teachers are sympathetic and, in most cases, appropriately ensure that pupils make steady gains in their learning. Activities are sufficiently varied to match the range of attainment of these pupils. The pupils are well supported by the learning support assistants. They know their pupils well and contribute much to their learning, especially relating to improving concentration, understanding new ideas and developing basic skills. Furthermore, they help them to produce a good amount of recorded work for their ability.

33. Support assistants give good help in group activities, which positively influences the achievement of pupils with special educational needs. However, their time is not always used to best advantage at the beginning of some lessons when the teacher is talking to the whole class. Teachers make learning intentions very clear to assistants for group work, but do not always involve them sufficiently in planning or evaluating lessons. No specific training has taken place for additional literacy support activities, but assistants manage phonic and reading activities well.

34. Sometimes, the few more able pupils in the school are well challenged and work is well planned to meet their needs. However, overall, this is too inconsistent and is a weakness which is influencing most especially the achievement of one or two pupils in Year 6. Furthermore, where teachers' expectations are not high enough for this group of pupils, it can influence their behaviour. They lose interest and concentration, do not apply enough intellectual effort in their learning and seek to distract others. However, when work is well planned, their behaviour and attitudes are very good, as seen in a mathematics lesson, when group activities included opportunities for the investigation of algebraic equations. The provision for gifted, able and talented pupils is well thought out in music and information and communication technology, but overall, is unsatisfactory. However, the school is seeking to address this and has already produced a new policy.

35. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning for the children in their Reception year in the mixed age class is unsatisfactory. Provision for Year 1 pupils is satisfactory. Planning for children in their Reception year does not take into account the recommended areas of learning. Children benefit from help from an assistant in the mornings, but there is no formalised additional help in the afternoons. Six lessons were seen during the inspection: four were satisfactory and one was unsatisfactory. One very good lesson was seen concerning the teaching of information and communication technology skills by a specialist assistant. The experiences provided for the children are too limited in range and, in many instances, unsuitable for their stage of development. For example, opportunities for the children to be involved in play or to choose activities independently are very limited, and, consequently, they are not thinking and learning enough for themselves which restricts their personal, social and emotional development. There is insufficient provision for free play to form the basis on which interaction with others develops; for example, there is very little role play. Adults praise and encourage children and show interest and care for them, which are strengths of teaching.

36. In the Foundation Stage the teaching of formal aspects of literacy and numeracy and knowledge and understanding of the world is, in general, satisfactory. For example, pupils learn phonic and number skills and have a growing knowledge of their surroundings. All adults working with the younger children listen with interest to what the children have to say and when working with them demonstrate good skills in helping them to develop their vocabulary and communication skills. For example, in a literacy session, the teacher helped the children to retell the story of 'Across the Stream' by using the precise sequence of vocabulary. The quality of relationships within the class is good and the learning support assistant provides very good support. Whole class introductions are satisfactory, but sometimes too long, and adults over direct group activities. The management of the children is mostly satisfactory, but there are times when the lack of established routines results in inappropriate behaviour by a minority of children.

37. In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress in Year 1 and often good progress in Year 2. During the inspection, five lessons were observed which were directly focused at these pupils, but other lessons for the Foundation Stage and Year 3, also had much information about teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2. Overall, teaching was 100 per cent satisfactory. Two lessons were very good: one was good and two were satisfactory. Particular strengths include the teaching of basic skills, the management of pupils, relationships and the use of resources, which result in pupils learning new skills and knowledge satisfactorily and working at a steady pace for their ability. For example, in a Year 2 numeracy session, the teacher used the time well to teach about clocks and adding and taking away time in hours using digital and analogue time. Very good teaching included a session on English and literacy and one on music, both of which demonstrated high expectations for pupils of all abilities and very good subject knowledge.

38. In Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but variable from very good in mathematics and numeracy to unsatisfactory in English and literacy. During the inspection, 13 lessons or group activities were observed. Three lessons were very good; six were good, three were satisfactory and one was unsatisfactory. Overall, 92 per cent of teaching and learning was satisfactory, with 69 per cent being good or better. Unsatisfactory teaching equalled eight per cent. The rolling programme for the curriculum works well overall, but in English and literacy, it is not meeting the learning needs of Year 6 as well as other years. Pupils in Year 4, benefit from learning with Years 5 and 6. Pupils benefit from plenty of good factual learning, as seen in a science lesson on habitats and good opportunities to use information and communication technology resources. A few boys show inappropriate behaviour in a minority of lessons, particularly when they are bored or when the teacher does not intervene quickly enough by setting clear and firm boundaries for good behaviour. In Year 3, a skilled teacher manages pupils' behaviour very well.

39. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in all subjects except geography and music, where teaching and learning are both good, largely due to high quality subject knowledge and good challenges for all

abilities. Teaching and learning are very good in information and communication technology. Furthermore, it shows good progress since the last inspection, especially relating to the introduction of the interactive whiteboard.

40. The quality of teaching and learning of literacy is satisfactory. Teachers work hard to widen pupils' vocabulary and develop spelling skills. Pupils read regularly in class and teachers discuss books, but there are missed opportunities to develop specific reading skills during quiet reading times. Pupils write for a range of purposes, but do not do enough sustained writing. For example, when pupils cut up and stuck sentences together in the right order for their story about a fox, they read each one carefully but did not try to write the end of the story themselves. In a very good literacy lesson, pupils quickly learned how to prepare a contents page for their own research books, because of very good demonstration by the teacher in Years 2 and 3. In Years 4, 5 and 6, one lesson was unsatisfactory, although thoroughly planned it did not capture the interest of pupils, which reduced their concentration and pace of work.

41. The quality of teaching and learning of numeracy is satisfactory overall. Basic skills are well explained so that pupils learn new skills satisfactorily. The first part of the numeracy lesson is used well to improve pupils' mental agility. For example, in Years 4/5 and 6, in one very good lesson, the pupils worked on improving their scores in their times tables. This included keeping a log of their personal scores and targets and then plotting results on a graph to record their improvement. There are missed opportunities to enrich pupils' competence by solving real life number problems. This mostly influences the few most able pupils, who are not doing enough higher Level 5 work.

42. Assessment overall is satisfactory, with some helpful assessment sheets for teachers' to evaluate their lessons. Discussions with individual pupils are usually good and are used to enhance their understanding. Marking of pupils' work is satisfactory, but sometimes lacks real challenge to help pupils to think about and extend their learning, for example, in mathematics. Homework supports the pupils' learning satisfactorily. Parents are happy with this and feel that it supports their children's learning well.

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

43. Overall, the quality and range of the curriculum provided by the school are good and offer pupils a successful range of opportunities. It includes all subjects of the National Curriculum, together with religious education and meets all statutory requirements. Appropriate policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects and each receives an appropriate amount of teaching time. Long-term and medium-term planning is good and provides for coverage of all National Curriculum programmes of study. This is a significant improvement since the school's previous inspection, which identified the need to complete the schemes of work as a key issue for action. The school makes good use of a two-year rolling programme for teaching mixed age classes in all subjects. This enables pupils from each age group to cover most of the units together. However, the three-year rolling programme for pupils in the mixed Year 4/5/6 class is insufficiently rigorous for the Year 6 pupils in English. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented appropriately and have had a positive impact on pupils' achievements.

44. The provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. Sex education and the use and misuse of medicines and drugs are taught as part of personal, social and health education through many areas of the curriculum such as science, religious education and physical education. There are also occasions when discrete personal, social and health issues are targeted towards specific groups of pupils with the support of outside expertise. For example, the school nurse teaches the sex education programme to pupils in Year 6. Until recently, a police officer gave lessons to pupils throughout the school on a range of important issues such as keeping safe and the dangers of drugs and illegal substances. Pupils are provided with accurate information, which promotes positive attitudes to a healthy life style.

45. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory. Planning overall is based on the National Curriculum subjects and is focused on the Year 1 children in this mixed age class. The curriculum is not documented or taught according to the designated areas of learning as recommended for children in the Foundation Stage. This is a decline since the school's last inspection when the curriculum was said to be an effective combination of the six areas of learning defined by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and the National Curriculum. Planned provision for indoor and outdoor imaginative play is insufficient in both range and frequency. Children are not sufficiently supported in their personal, social and emotional development or in their physical development. Reading and number activities are sufficiently well structured to develop the children's skills, but there are very few activities provided that encourage children to write in a variety of play and role-play situations that match their interests and stimulate their learning. The lack of both free and structured play on sufficient occasions and too narrow a range of activities are unsatisfactory.

46. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There are good arrangements to support pupils' learning in classes, where learning support assistants work with individual pupils or with small groups. Teachers and the learning support assistants make good use the target log sheets to track the progress that pupils make. The Additional Learning Support programme and a focused phonic awareness programme are providing effective strategies for pupils to develop their understanding of phonics. The curriculum is appropriately adapted to meet the pupils' needs. Individual education plans are well thought out and targets are challenging but achievable for the pupils. These targets focus on both literacy and numeracy, and in some cases also include physical skills and personal and social development. The school has revised its special educational needs policy to reflect the new Code of Practice and has made provision to support pupils through 'School Action' and 'School Action Plus' plans. The school encourages pupils to be involved in their own evaluation of needs, which is shared with their parents.

47. The aims of the school show a strong commitment to equality of education for all pupils and this is reflected well in most aspects of school life. However, there are times when pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn from the acts of collective worship for extra support provided by the school's learning support assistants. The school is sensitive in ensuring that these pupils have appropriate access to all aspects of the curriculum. When drawing up school policies, an equal opportunity component is included when appropriate. All pupils are fully included in the life of the school, enabling them to benefit from the many learning and social opportunities provided. Provision for the gifted and talented pupils, however, has not been formalised to ensure that their needs are fully met in all subjects. The few pupils who are learning English as an additional language are provided with good support in lessons and receive extra support from a voluntary reader helper who comes into school twice a week.

48. Additional activities undertaken by the school are wide and varied and add an extra dimension to the planned curriculum. Pupils visit different local places of interest, such as Frankfield House, the Stag Theatre, Bore Place, Knole House, Herstmonceaux and the Canterbury Tales, which all enhance pupils' learning in many areas of the curriculum. Older pupils take part in a residential visit to the Isle of Wight. Visiting theatre groups and musicians enliven pupils' understanding of historic events and different cultures. Many of these activities are undertaken with neighbouring small schools, which adds to the pupils' social experiences. Through all these visits and visitors, the pupils learn a great deal about the outside world.

49. Although a minority of parents expressed concern about the range of activities provided by the school outside lessons, the inspection team did not find this and judged the extra-curricular provision to be very good. Pupils are able to take part in a wide range of activities, either at lunch times, after school and at the weekends. Examples include gardening, choir, recorders, riding and chess. Pupils are also able to participate in a wide range of sporting activities that include football, tennis, netball,

athletics and cross-country running. Older pupils also receive specialist cricket coaching. The school has achieved success in football, swimming and in cross-country running. Staff, parents and friends of the school are closely involved in the running of these activities.

50. There are good links with the local community that make a positive contribution to pupils' social experiences and learning. Local visitors are welcomed into the school and have helped with the gardening, painting and cleaning. The school has also worked with the Probation Service on a Community Project to improve the school environment. Furthermore, the school has taken part in the Green Fingers Challenge to develop the grounds through support from the Royal Horticultural Society. As a Church school, there are close links with local church groups from around Sevenoaks and pupils lend their support to St Lawrence's Church garden party by running the stalls. Pupils also sing carols to the 'Age Concern' group in Sevenoaks.

51. Links with other educational establishments are very good. The school has strong links with the pre-school, which shares the same site and there is very close liaison with a number of the neighbouring primary schools that all belong to the local small schools consortium. For example, they participate in primary consortium concerts, sports and in-service training. Links with senior schools are also strong. Pupils from a nearby public school provide extra music tuition for pupils in the school and, as a part of the outreach programme, there are plans to extend this to include art and information and communication technology. Pupils from a local secondary school also come into the school to conduct assemblies and run workshops. Visits to and from the seven senior schools that the school feeds into are well organised and prepare pupils well for their transfer to their next stage of education.

52. The school's provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good and it makes a good provision for their spiritual development. The provision for cultural development has deteriorated since the last inspection and is now only satisfactory. The opportunities for pupils to gain insight into values and beliefs in order to develop their spiritual awareness are good. As well as providing time for reflection, school assemblies help pupils to feel a sense of belonging to a whole school community and, each week, to celebrate the contributions and achievements of others. Visitors from local churches and opportunities to go to the adjoining church enable pupils to develop an understanding of Christian worship. Other faiths are introduced in religious education lessons but there are almost no opportunities to visit other places of worship or to see visitors from other faiths. 'Circle time' helps pupils to start to appreciate their own worth and to raise their self-esteem. The gardening club, use of the trails in local woods and, for example, seeing butterflies hatching enable pupils to appreciate the exciting nature of the world around them.

53. The school's approach to pupils' moral development is very good. The school stands for positive values and there are clear expectations of high standards of behaviour and acceptable conduct to which the pupils generally respond. These standards are expressed in the rules that the pupils develop at the start of each year and help them to understand right from wrong. The great majority of pupils are self disciplined and this makes for an orderly school. The staff are good role models and the overall positive approach of the school to encouraging pupils' moral development is evident in the way that all adults show tolerance and patience when dealing with pupils with difficulties. Nevertheless, there is some inconsistency between teachers in the extent to which they are able to manage any inappropriate behaviour.

54. The provision for encouraging the social development of the pupils is also very good. The school values its members and encourages pupils to integrate well both at work and at play. This approach results in very positive relationships between pupils themselves and between pupils and staff. In the classroom, there are many opportunities to work together in pairs or groups, although, of course, the youngest pupils are often only just starting to develop their social skills. Pupils are encouraged, and are willing, to undertake various tasks appropriate for their age such as getting resources and tidying up at the end of the lessons. The older pupils have responsibilities for the younger as house captains or as reading buddies. The different clubs and sports matches and events with other schools enable pupils to

meet others of different ages and from outside their school. Personal and social development is weaker in the Foundation Stage because it is not planned for within the expected curriculum for this age.

55. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Support is good for pupils' own cultural background within subjects such as English, history and geography. This includes nursery rhymes, the study of the Vikings and the Victorians and the studies of different localities. Painting and music help the development of aesthetic awareness. The library has a range of attractive books on different cultures, but there are too few overall. Nevertheless, visitors from other backgrounds are infrequent and pupils have few opportunities to learn about the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

56. Staff show concern for the needs of the pupils and provide good role models to encourage their development. Parents are pleased with the level of support in the school, seeing it as a caring community where staff are approachable if there are any problems. The procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development and for providing educational and personal support and guidance are satisfactory. These conclusions are not as strong as at the last inspection when the support, guidance and care of pupils were judged to be very good. Nevertheless, they are satisfactory overall, with several strengths.

57. Overall, the school has satisfactory procedures for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of the pupils. The headteacher is the designated officer for child protection and the school follows local procedures. The staff have received guidance on how to deal with any situations that may arise and know who to report to in the school if necessary. The provision for first aid is good with two fully trained members of staff and others having had emergency training. Records are kept of any treatment and letters are sent home to parents as appropriate. A health and safety policy is in place and the governors are actively involved in regularly touring the school to identify any potential hazards. Outside contractors regularly check the fire extinguishers and electrical items. The teachers ensure that pupils are made aware of health and safety issues during lessons such as science, physical education and design and technology. The school has also carried out a risk assessment following the guidance of the local education authority. However, the inspectors support concerns that were expressed by parents about the nearby field and when children walk along a road without a footpath, to the village hall to use the large hall facility for physical education and drama.

58. Children in their Reception year in the Foundation Stage are well cared for and it is evident that they feel at ease. Assessment and record keeping procedures are satisfactory. Baseline assessment is carried out when the children enter the class and again at the end of the Reception year to track the progress that individual children make, although this is not repeated for personal and social development. Satisfactory on-going observations are carried out and are entered into the teacher's 'Day Book' and used to inform the planning for further lessons.

59. The care and support of pupils with special educational needs are good. Teachers and learning support assistants know the pupils they work with well. Their achievements are well recognised. Pupils' needs are quickly identified when they enter the school and appropriate arrangements are made for the regular review of their progress through the use of target log sheets. However, this has not been linked to a tracking system on the register to record the standards they achieve as they move through the school. Effective use is made of agencies outside the school to provide help and support for individual pupils.

60. The procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour and for preventing any oppressive behaviour are satisfactory. There is some variation between classes and the procedures are very good for the Year 2 and 3 pupils. The discipline and behaviour policy recognises the needs of the pupils and reflects the philosophy of the school. It sets out the expectations of good behaviour, emphasising praise and encouragement. Nevertheless, the school's approach is not always effective. This is

because of an inconsistent approach by the staff. In the two unsatisfactory lessons seen, teachers failed to control inappropriate behaviour, for example, allowing the noise to build up or not ensuring that the pace or subject matter maintained the pupils' attention.

61. Assessment procedures and the use of them to guide teachers in their planning and teaching are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the school has worked well to improve the use of test result data to help them to identify what the school needs to work on to improve. In this respect, the school has made good progress on one of the key issues from the last inspection. Furthermore, since 1997, the school has started to track pupils' progress from year to year, with termly evaluations, so that teachers can modify their teaching and set targets for pupils. However, target setting is often good, but it is still inconsistent across the school as a whole. The use of a commercial sticker scheme is very helpful, but is not fully integrated in all classes. The school makes good use of assessment data for children when they start school and at the end of Year 1 for language and mathematical skills, but it is not assessing children's personal and social skill rigorously enough as they move through the Reception class.

62. Overall, the procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance and punctuality are excellent. The ethos of the school and the support and care shown to pupils by the staff result in pupils wanting to come to school and their parents wanting to make sure that their children come. For those few pupils who may have a problem, the school provides good support and, where necessary, involves the education welfare service.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

63. In their responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting with the inspectors, parents showed that they are generally very pleased with all that the school does. Parents say that the school is well led and that the teaching is good. Their children like coming to school, behave well and make progress from the level of support they receive. The school expects them to work hard and helps them to become mature and responsible. They consider that their children receive the right amount of homework to do at home. The school works closely with parents and they feel comfortable approaching the school with any questions. Parents are kept well informed about how their child is getting on. These reactions are similar to the comments made at the time of the previous inspection. The inspection team support the majority of their positive comments though considers that there are weaknesses in the teaching of the Reception class.

64. Some parents are dissatisfied with the range of activities outside lessons but the inspection team consider that the provision of clubs, visits and other activities is very good for a school of this size. Discussions with a few individual parents highlighted several other concerns. In particular, parents considered that the behaviour of a few pupils was not always well managed and that there are potential health and safety hazards in the use of the nearby field. The inspection's findings show that some teachers are far more skilled at managing difficult behaviour than others. The school is addressing this issue and has already organised an advisor to develop greater consistency. Two teachers are skilled in managing behaviour very effectively and are sharing their skills with others. The inspection team supports parents' concerns about hazards in the field.

65. The school has established very good links with the parents and these contacts are effective. The headteacher sends home information about the school in a variety of ways. General information appears in the regular newsletters and on the notice board. Details about what is taught appear in the termly curriculum letters, government booklets and in discussion at general meetings at school. Other letters refer to more specific matters. Every morning and end of the afternoon provide very good opportunities for parents to see the headteacher. The inspectors saw several informal conversations taking place and it is very apparent that parents feel very welcome to come into the school. Almost all parents come to the formal meetings with teachers in the autumn and spring terms to discuss their children's progress. This information on progress is supplemented with the homework books and with

the termly 'work sharing' when the pupils show their schoolwork to their parents. Parents are invited to attend special curriculum presentations. The annual report on progress is sent home in the summer term. This report provides a reasonable summary for each subject of the skills and understanding acquired although the targets for improvement are sometimes phrased in general terms. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well involved in the setting and review of their individual education plans.

66. Induction procedures for children starting school are satisfactory. Information sessions are held in the autumn and spring term for parents of the children due to start school that term. Parents are provided with a useful information pack about the school. Children are then invited to attend two 'taster' sessions so that they feel confident in starting school. Parents are welcomed into the classroom and many parents were seen supporting the children during the inspection. Liaison with the pre-school on site is very good.

67. Parents' involvement with the school makes a very good contribution to its work and to the attainment of the pupils. Pupils are happy in school, generally work hard and are keen to learn. These attitudes reflect the extent to which parents encourage their children to respect the school and the education process. The meetings for new parents and others on subjects such as numeracy and literacy explain how they can help at home. The parents are actively involved in helping the school to move forward by responding to the questionnaire and in commenting on the draft school improvement plan. The parent association, FOSSILS, is very supportive and arranges both fund raising and social events including ones for the benefit of the pupils. In addition, it organises weekend work parties to improve the school and its grounds. A good number of parents come into the classroom on a regular basis, helping with the library, science, art, cooking and hearing readers, and more are willing to help on trips.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

68. The quality of leadership and management by staff and governors together is satisfactory and leads to the satisfactory achievement of pupils, despite numerous changes in staffing and governors since 1997. The school is working well towards achieving its aims as detailed in the school's prospectus and, in particular, has rightly placed a strong emphasis on improving the standard of pupils' work. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory. There are noticeable strengths in the improvement in the curriculum and in the way in which the school is using the analysis of pupils' test results to track their progress and identify aspects for wider school improvement, both of which were key issues for improvement at the time of the last inspection. No overall judgement was made about leadership and management in 1997. Since then, many governors and almost all staff have changed.

69. The headteacher, who has been in post for three years, shows good leadership and management skills by giving a strong steer to the development of the school. She has worked successfully to foster a good working partnership amongst the staff, which has helped to carry the school through a difficult period of staff recruitment.

70. The headteacher has not found it easy to delegate management responsibilities due to the limited overall experience of teachers. All class teachers have been newly appointed since September 2001. Furthermore, two teachers are newly qualified and thus are not yet able to carry wider subject responsibilities. Consequently, the headteacher has been holding far more responsibility for individual subject co-ordination than is desirable. Despite this, she has worked energetically to redesign the curriculum for the mixed aged classes and has moved the school forward in developing science, mathematics and information and communication technology in particular. One more experienced teacher joined the school in January 2002 and is just beginning to shoulder more responsibility. Together with the strong support from the headteacher, she has made good progress in improving the provision for pupils with special educational need, in line with the new Code of Practice.

71. A further strength of the headteacher's management lies in the good support, training and induction of new teachers. However, training and regular liaison meetings with teaching assistants are underdeveloped. Nevertheless, all staff work as a committed team in this happy school for the benefit of the pupils. Overall, the staff's commitment to improvement is good with satisfactory capacity to succeed, as the school will be experiencing further staff changes in September 2002. In the last few years, the school has successfully shown determination to improve standards by seeking advice and embarking on projects such as 'Springboard' to improve mathematics results.

72. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well. Governors show a strong commitment to the school. Moreover, they have expertise in areas such as finance and business management, which brings high quality skills to the benefit of the school. Governors visit the school as often as their work commitments permit and this allows them to develop a strong knowledge about its daily workings. They have a satisfactory understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. However, although they complete regular and detailed health and safety risk assessments, they have not had sufficient communication with the Local Education Authority in order to help them to complete a detailed evaluation of the field and guidance on the best means of moving pupils to and from the field and village hall.

73. The governors play an active role in shaping the direction of the school and in monitoring and planning expenditure. A particular strength is the way in which the headteacher and governors have moved the school from a deficit budget three years ago to one with a higher than average carry forward for the improvement of the playing field and the Foundation Stage outside playing environment. Overall, the use of specific grants and other funding is good. Financial management is strong. For example, music shows many strengths and is co-ordinated by a very skilled and knowledgeable practitioner, who is not a qualified teacher. The decision to use the school's funding on this additional music specialist has proved to be a good decision, as it is helping to maintain the high standards that were also found at the time of the last inspection.

74. The school's improvement plan is a good working tool for helping the school to move forward. It shows clear links to financial planning and an understanding of how to achieve best value in purchasing. The plan shows clear priorities and criteria upon which to judge the success of development projects. Issues identified from analysis of tests results are clearly identified in the improvement plan. Overall, these features show good improvement on the former key issue from 1997. The headteacher and governors closely monitor the progress of the school's improvement plan. A strength of planning is the involvement of parents. For example, a huge planning paper is placed on the hall notice board and parents are invited to jot down ideas and comments. In addition, pupils and parents receive questionnaires to widen the consultation process. Currently, the improvement plan rightly prioritises the development of mathematics and science. However, there is not enough about improving the curriculum in the Foundation Stage

75. The coordination of information and communication technology is a particular strength of leadership, which is resulting in high standards. The headteacher helped the pupils to be included in a trial 'interactive whiteboard project'. This demonstrates how the headteacher has good ideas which have an impact on standards. Moreover, the very good support from the administrative officer/finance secretary in managing the project and costing the conversion and resourcing of the old office into a small specialist information and communication technology room, is a good example of how well the staff work as a team. Additionally, the very efficient and helpful school secretary plays a very positive role in the school.

76. Monitoring, evaluation and the development of teaching are satisfactory. The headteacher leads by example and has a regular teaching timetable. The monitoring of newly qualified teachers is good, but overall, monitoring of the Foundation Stage is not sufficiently formalised or rigorous enough. The school uses assessment data from the Foundation Stage when children start school and then again they evaluate children's progress before starting in Year 1. However, this focuses almost wholly on

assessing language and mathematics skills and fails to consider progress in children's personal and social development, which is an unsatisfactory aspect of monitoring.

77. Monitoring of the school's performance in tests and school based assessments is thorough. Identified weaknesses are shared with governors and then identified for action to improve results within the school's improvement plan. This shows good progress since the last inspection, when this was a key issue. Assessment data are not logged on the computer, but there are plans to develop this when further training has taken place. Nevertheless, the school makes good use of new technology to support both pupils' learning and the management and efficient running of the school. Differences between girls' and boys' performance are adequately monitored.

78. Although there have been good improvements in the outside play space for children in the Foundation Stage, the overall, provision for these children shows a decline on standards in 1997, which is a weakness. However, the teacher of these children is also responsible for mathematics and special educational needs, which have taken priority in recent school development. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is relatively new to the school and to the position. She is fully supported by the headteacher who carries out the responsibilities efficiently. The learning support assistants are well motivated and are used to their full potential in lessons across the curriculum. However, there is no structured system for the learning support assistants to meet with the special educational needs co-ordinator on a regular basis. The special educational needs designated governor is fully involved in the work of the school. Funds allocated for pupils with special educational needs are used to good effect.

79. The headteacher also oversees the support for pupils with English as an additional language, which is good, because pupils are progressing, but the school does not have specific guidelines on provision.

80. The numbers and qualifications of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum are satisfactory. The school has a sufficient number of teaching assistants for most classes, but only a part time assistant for the Foundation Stage. The ratio of support staff to pupils is better than average for lunchtime supervision, but the site is extremely difficult to oversee and thus requires a higher number than is currently available.

81. Teaching assistants provide good overall support, but do not have enough opportunities to plan and discuss their work with teaching staff. The arrangements for performance management of the teaching staff are progressing satisfactorily. Staff development is linked to the school development plan but also takes account of the individuals' needs. Teaching assistants receive some relevant training, but overall, this is underdeveloped.

82. As at the time of the previous inspection, the accommodation is broadly satisfactory, although there is no suitable hall for the teaching of physical education, which is a considerable weakness. The lack of a partition between the middle and upper school classes affects the quality of learning as noise travels, which influences pupils' concentration and reduces the impact of special and spiritual moments. The staff work hard to provide displays, which celebrate pupils' work. The school is well looked after by the cleaner in charge. The space available to the school is soon to increase, as the pre-school group will be vacating the additional classroom in September. The large playing field is a good resource for games as well as camps and imaginative play and has been correctly identified for improvement. It is sited across a narrow lane, which makes access very difficult. Parents are rightly concerned about this.

83. The overall provision of resources is good for such a small school. Nonetheless, resources for the Foundation Stage are underdeveloped. The range and use of resources to help pupils appreciate the multicultural nature of Britain and the World are underdeveloped.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

84. The governors, headteacher and staff should build on the improvements already made by:

1. Continuing to improve attainment and achievement in English, mathematics and science by:

- continuing with the development in mathematics and extending this to giving more opportunities for problem solving;
- widening opportunities in English so that there is more extended writing, frequent writing practice in Reception and Year 1; better use of reading time to teach focused reading skills and a review of Year 6 literacy planning;
- ensuring consistency in the achievement of more able pupils, including improving planning, challenges and learning for more Level 5 work;
- developing greater consistency in target setting for pupils from class to class.

Paragraphs: 1-16, 34, 43, 99-108, 111-122 and 124-127.

2. Improving provision in the Foundation Stage by:

- planning work so that it reflects the appropriate curriculum for younger children;
- enhancing opportunities in teaching for children to think and learn for themselves through investigation and creative activities;
- widening opportunities for structured play;
- developing resources;
- monitoring the provision for these children rigorously.

Paragraphs: 2, 24, 36, 45, 74, 76, 78, 83, and 85-98.

3. Providing further opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to appreciate the traditions of different cultures in order to recognise the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society by:

- planning this within lessons;
- developing resources.

Paragraphs: 55, 104 and 150.

4. Carrying out a risk assessment on the use of the field and the movement of pupils to and from the village hall.

Paragraphs: 57, 72, and 80.

5. Enhancing behaviour management techniques by continuing with the training plans so that there is greater consistency amongst staff.

Paragraphs: 23, 24, 60, 34, and 38, 109.

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- The development of book corners that are inviting and encourage pupils to browse and develop a love of reading. Paragraph 109
- Widen opportunities for liaison and planning with teaching assistants. Paragraphs 33, 71.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

24

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	7	9	2	0	0
Percentage	0	25	29	38	8	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		66
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		17

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.5

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001			13
Data not given by gender due to the number of girls and boys taking the test being below 10 in each group.				

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (100)	85 (75)	85 (100)
	National	83 (82)	89 (88)	89 (88)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	11	11	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (75)	85 (63)	92 (75)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

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

The table is omitted as there were fewer than 10 pupils in the year group

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	64
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 – Y1

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16
Average class size	22

Education support staff: YR – Y1

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	57.7

Financial information

Financial Year 2001-2002	
	£
Total income	189656
Total expenditure	176075
Expenditure per pupil	2751
Balance brought forward from previous year	20,515
Balance carried forward to next year	34,096

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	66
Number of questionnaires returned	34

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	41	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	47	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	15	73	6	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	74	0	0	0
The teaching is good.	50	44	6	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	35	15	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	35	6	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	38	3	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	53	32	12	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	50	41	6	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	53	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	32	24	0	6

Other issues raised by parents

- Safety on school field.
- A partition between Years 2/3 and 4/5/6.
- Extracurricular activities.
- Some concerns, from a very few parents, about changes in teaching and behaviour.

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

85. In the last inspection report, there was no full section relating to this age group, as is usual. However, judgements were clearly included through the report as a whole. There were no shortcomings noted in the school's previous report dealing with the provision for the children in the Foundation Stage. The curriculum was said to be broad and balanced and were effectively linked to the six areas of learning defined by national guidelines and the National Curriculum. This, however, is not the case now and there are some important areas of weakness, notably in the lack of a clearly defined programme of learning being planned for, and provided for, the Reception children in a class with Year 1 children. Therefore, children's progress cannot be assessed in comparison with the suggested goals for achievement, before their National Curriculum studies in Year 1.

86. There is no clear educational direction for the nine children in the Foundation Stage as a whole. Classroom organisation, timetabling and methods for teaching children in the Reception Year are unsatisfactory, because they focus more directly on National Curriculum work for Year 1. There is insufficient free play and free choice to facilitate the development of social relationships. Consequently, the children are not on track to achieve the expected levels in their personal, social and emotional development. The lack of a good range of resources for the Reception children, particularly for role-play, is also a weakness in the provision. However, since the last inspection, the school has improved the provision for outdoor play by developing a designated outside play area. However, there are no suitable resources, such as wheeled toys or clambering equipment, for the Reception children to use. The present teacher for the Reception / Year 1 class is relatively new to the school and is aware of the need to address many of these issues.

87. Children are admitted to school in September and January each year, either part-time or full time, depending on when their fifth birthday occurs. Many of the children attend the St. Lawrence pre-school, which is situated on the school site, before joining the main school. Overall, when children enter the Reception class, their attainment is broadly average for their age. However, by the end of the Reception year, their achievement overall is unsatisfactory. In their mathematical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world, the quality of teaching is satisfactory and the children are likely to meet the Early Learning Goals. In the areas of learning for communication, language and literacy, physical development, creative development and in their personal, social and emotional development, there are some important areas of weakness. Consequently, the standards children attain are below those found in most schools in these areas of their learning by the end of the Reception year.

Personal, social and emotional development

88. The personal, social and emotional development of children in the Foundation Stage is below average. This reflects a lack of planning and unsatisfactory teaching and learning for this aspect of learning. There are insufficient opportunities for children to become independent learners. Free play is far too limited in terms of both scope and frequency. This reduces the children's co-operation with others and their abilities to work and play collaboratively. Most children are eager to explore new learning but show boisterous behaviour when they are not under the direct supervision of an adult. They are keen to share what they have learned and talk confidently about what they are doing. During whole class, sessions the children can sit quietly for appropriate periods of time once they are settled but they do find it difficult to settle quickly. In most instances, this is due to the lack of suitable routines for the youngest children in this mixed age class. For example, in the afternoons, after spending some considerable time with reading activities, they are expected to sit and listen attentively to the introduction of the afternoon activities. As a result, they become restless and lose interest and time is lost in settling the children. However, in the more structured activities, such as literacy and numeracy, they show the ability to concentrate for longer periods of time.

89. The teacher is very aware of the need to encourage the children to take turns and share and to be sensitive to the feelings of others. In most instances, this is successful when the children are working with adults. However, when not directly supervised, they find this difficult to sustain. They are generally polite and remember to use conventional phrases such as 'please' and 'thank you' and are beginning to consider the consequences of their actions for themselves. The children attend to their personal hygiene appropriately and can see to their needs independently. All adults working with the young children treat each other and the children with courtesy and respect. This leads to constructive relationships and helps the children develop a positive attitude to school. Nonetheless, there are too few opportunities for the children to initiate their own ideas through play and to develop their independence in selecting and pursuing an activity. The range of resources available to support this aspect of children's learning is insufficient and there are few that provide children with the opportunity to experience differences in cultures other than their own. This is unsatisfactory.

Communication, language and literacy

90. Children enter school with average attainment in this aspect of their learning. In general, their communication skills are sufficiently well developed for them to talk confidently about their own experiences and the things that interest them. However, they have little opportunity to take part in role-play and free play is limited, which restricts their language development. They enjoy listening to stories but, at times, find it difficult to sustain attentive listening. Overall, they do not make sufficient progress in this area of learning and are not on track to meet the recommended Early Learning Goals for language and literacy. There are weaknesses in teaching which influence learning and this is unsatisfactory. In general, their achievement in writing is unsatisfactory. Children enjoy books, handle them well and understand how they are organised. They know that words and pictures carry meaning and most are able to retell a story accurately. Consistent strategies used by the teacher enable pupils to recognise and say the initial sounds of words. However, they do not apply this knowledge to their writing. This reflects the lack of planned opportunities for the children to experiment with writing for themselves. There are very few activities provided that encourage children to write in a variety of play and role-play situations that match their interests and stimulate their learning. In general, the teacher acts as scribe for the children and, as a result, they do not attempt writing for themselves or are sufficiently prepared to meet the demands of the National Curriculum in Year 1. The analysis of their written work showed that few children were able to draw on their vocabulary as a basis for story writing.

91. The teaching of literacy is very formal and is more suited to the Year 1 children in this mixed age class than the Reception children. Good features include the shared reading time at the beginning of the literacy hour. For example, while reading the story, 'Fox went out on a chilly night' the teacher used her voice well to bring the story alive for the children. Questions such as 'What does, "grease my chin" mean?' made the children think and brought the response, 'you look juicy enough to eat'. However, in the group activities, there was insufficient provision for the younger children and, in general, the activities were better suited to the children in Year 1. The Reception children were, however, well supported by the learning support assistant, who helped them to focus on the task. As a result, in this lesson, the children gained a better understanding of how to sequence a story. Resources are good to teach the more formal aspects of this area of learning, but there is little to support children's role-play activities.

Mathematical development

92. The attainment and achievement of children in mathematics are satisfactory and, by the end of the Reception year most children are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals. Most children can count beyond 20 when counting out loud. They have an idea of what numbers one to ten represent and are familiar with the terms 'add' and 'take away'. Most children are able to do some simple addition with guidance. They copy-write their numbers and, by the end of the Reception year, are beginning to record their numbers unaided, although some numbers are reversed. Most children develop an

appropriate understanding of mathematical language and use words such as ‘largest’ and ‘smallest’ when ordering numbers. They talk about objects being ‘heavier’ or ‘lighter’ when balancing and comparing different objects and are familiar with 1, 2, 5 and 10 penny coins.

93. The quality of teaching and learning in this area is satisfactory. The more formal activities for mathematics are introduced to the children through the framework for teaching numeracy and, in general, meet the varying learning needs of the children. For example, in a lesson on weight, practical activities were used to give the younger children the appropriate experiences. In this lesson, the Reception children benefited from the good support of adult helpers working with them. For example, while the learning support assistant worked with a small group of children on practical weighing activities, a student played shopping games with another small group in the ‘class shop’. However, there were areas of weakness in the introduction to the lesson, which related to the use of a balance for comparing a bag of sand to a bag of corks. The accompanying explanations were not made clear to the younger children in the class and, consequently, they gained little from the demonstration that followed.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

94. Children enter the Reception class with a wide general knowledge, which the teacher builds on appropriately, helping them to learn more about the world around them. The teaching and learning are satisfactory and many children are on course to meet the expected standard by the end of the Reception year. The planning overall is related to the National Curriculum subjects rather than the curricular guidance for the Foundation Stage. However, in general, the children are offered an appropriate range of experiences to extend their knowledge of the world around them. The children are encouraged to explore and investigate through a suitable range of practical experiences. For example, in science, they have worked with different materials such as, butter, bread and water to find out what happens when they are either put into a fridge or placed in hot place. They record their findings appropriately by writing words such as ‘hard’, ‘soft’ or ‘same’ to explain what happened. As part of their work on light and dark the children made peephole black boxes to explore and find out what they could, or could not, see in the dark.

95. The children develop an appropriate understanding of the past as they study homes from long ago and have the opportunity to find out about the history of their school and church. Work on display shows that they develop an awareness of the wider world by following the travels of Barnaby Bear from Chester to Roscoff. They mark the route on a map, and draw pictures of the different ways of travelling from England to France such as by train, ferry and walking. However, there was little evidence of the children making their own simple maps. In the lesson observed, the teacher made good use of the story ‘A balloon for Granddad’ to introduce the children to the idea of looking down on the land from above to help them understand the meaning of a ‘bird’s eye view’. Previous to this lesson good use was made of the immediate local area by taking the children to visit the village hall, the church and the grounds of Frankfield House.

96. An appropriate range of construction toys and materials are provided for the children to explore and use their skills to make models. In design and technology, they make fruit salad and learn about the benefits of fruit and how the processing can affect the appearance and taste of the fruit. The Reception children make very good gains in their knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology, as there is a dedicated teaching time each week, taken by the technical assistant. They can confidently click on text to highlight it and change the size, colour and style. Records show that they have acquired a wide range of skills from using the arrow keys and space bar to using the flood fill and spray tool to create pictures. Careful consideration has been given to supporting children and deepening their knowledge of a suitable range of beliefs and religions, through religious education lessons. However, there are very few role-play resources that reflect a variety of different cultures.

Physical development

97. Overall, the attainment and progress of most children in their physical skills are below average. Their manual dexterity is however, well developed by the end of the Reception year. Children are able to use writing and drawing tools well, and manipulate small-scale construction toys skilfully to make intricate models. Teaching fully maximises what the children can do in this aspect of their physical development. However, their larger movements are relatively uncontrolled and underdeveloped. Although there is a designated outdoor play area for the children, the resources such as push and pull toys, wheeled toys and clambering equipment are inadequate. This is an area still under development and shows some improvement since the last inspection when it was noted that there was inadequate provision for outdoor play. Because of the constraints placed on the school by the smallness of the hall, the children have only one designated lesson a week for physical education. In the summer term, this involves walking to the village hall for dance lessons. No lessons were observed during the time of the inspection but, although the children moved with confidence in the outdoor play area, the lack of resources limited the development of their large-scale movements. Although much has been done to help overcome the lack of suitable facilities for the young children in school, overall, the provision for appropriate and frequent enough free physical play is inadequate.

Creative development

98. In their creative development, the children are not likely to meet all the Early Learning Goals in this area by the end of the Reception year. The planning for art is based on the work for Year 1 children and, consequently, there are too few opportunities for the younger children to explore a suitable range of media or experiment freely with paint or modelling materials on a regular basis. Thus, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Their work on display shows little creativity and in general appears to be very adult directed, as seen in their collage work, based on the story of the Three Billy Goats Gruff. They have, however, printed with sponges, done some finger painting and used pastels to draw detailed pictures of Noah's Ark. Their information and communication technology lessons contribute well to their artwork. There are, however, very few opportunities for the children to use their imagination through role-play. When this does occur, they respond enthusiastically and delight in taking on different roles such as, a shopkeeper phoning the police to report somebody stealing goods from the shop. However, this aspect is not planned for and there are few resources available to support the children's ideas. Very few reflect a variety of different cultures. Music lessons are planned for and taken by the music teacher, who introduces the children to a variety of songs and instruments. However, it was not possible to observe a music lesson during the inspection.

ENGLISH

99. Standards in Year 2 are below average in reading and well below average in writing. This represents a decline in standards since the school's inspection when standards were judged to be well in line with those expected nationally. In speaking and listening, however, pupils' standards are average. The findings of the inspection differ from the results of the 2001 national tests where standards were found to be average in reading and above average in writing. However, when compared with similar schools, standards were well below average in reading and average in writing. The trend over the last four years has been erratic but the number taking the tests each year is very small and this can lead to considerable variations from year to year. There are also significantly more pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 2 class than in the previous year and this has had an impact on the proportions of pupils who reach average standards.

100. Overall, standards in English in Year 6 are well below average. This shows a significant decline in standards since the last inspection when standards were well in line with national expectations. The findings of the inspection are similar to the results of the 2001 national tests where standards were well below average in English and very low when compared with similar schools. Analysis of the school's results for the Year 6 national tests shows an erratic picture since 1998. This is not unusual when numbers are small and reflects the differences between year groups in a small school. Standards have also been influenced by a significant number of pupils who join the school in

later year groups who have experienced a disrupted education and have a variety of special educational needs. In addition, the more able pupils often leave the school, as places become available at local preparatory schools. As a result, the school did not achieve its targets for the percentage of pupils expected to reach average standards in the 2001 national tests. This also reflects the school's view that the targets set for 67 per cent of the current group of pupils in Year 6 to reach average standards in 2002 is unrealistic and will not be met. The school has taken appropriate measures to assist teachers in tracking the progress of pupils by introducing the optional tests for pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 and is using this data to set individual targets. Past results have shown that girls do less well than boys in the national tests although this was not apparent during the inspection.

101. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs achieve good standards compared with their previous attainment because they receive well planned and effective support in class and their progress is regularly reviewed. However, the more able pupils in Year 6 are sometimes underachieving. This has been due, to some extent to the lack of challenge in the teaching and the way in which the three-year rolling programme for literacy is organised for the mixed-year class that contains Year 4, 5, and 6 pupils.

102. In Year 2, standards in speaking and listening are average. Pupils retell stories using a lively range of vocabulary, ask pertinent questions of their teacher and listen carefully to instructions and ideas. This was evident when Year 2 pupils listened very attentively to their teacher during a literacy lesson and spoke confidently about the content of non-fiction books. By the end of Year 6, however, pupils' speaking and listening skills are below average. In lessons, a number of pupils find it difficult to listen attentively for long periods of time and need constant reminders not to call out. Pupils' responses to questions can, at times, be inappropriate and are often used to gain attention. However, in lessons where they are fully engaged in their learning, for instance those taught by the headteacher or when listening to visiting speakers such as the 'Chaucer Man', the Year 6 pupils are able to listen carefully, take turns in discussion and make contributions relevant to the discussion. Nevertheless, a number of pupils do not have a sufficiently wide range of vocabulary to draw upon that enables them to contribute to situations with different demands. In general, there are few planned opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in more formal contexts, such as short prepared presentations or mini-debates.

103. In Year 2, standards in reading are below average. Pupils enjoy reading and are keen to talk about the books they have read. They know, understand and can use technical terms such as index, sub-headings and 'blurb' and give sensible explanations of the differences between fiction and non-fiction. They use the pictures and contents of the story as well as the sounds of the letters to help them read any unfamiliar words and take their books home regularly to practise their skills. More able pupils read fluently and are able to express their preferences. Average pupils read simple texts accurately but sometimes, when reading aloud, they do not show an awareness of the grammar of a sentence, such as pausing at full stops and leaving a gap before reading on. There are a high percentage of less able pupils in Year 2 who still need the extra support of an adult to help them reach the expected levels in reading. Pupils lose their interest in, and enthusiasm for, books by the end of Year 6. As a result, standards overall in reading remain below average. Most pupils read suitable books for their age and ability with an appropriate understanding of the text, but do not read expressively. Although they can talk about the books they have read recently, such as the Harry Potter books, they are not able to explain their preferences in terms of styles and only a lower attaining pupil was able to name a favourite author as being Jacqueline Wilson. The above average pupils in Year 6 are not sufficiently challenged in the application of literary appreciation and, consequently, are becoming increasingly disaffected with reading. Higher order reading skills such as the use of inference and deduction receive insufficient attention. As in Year 2, there is a high percentage of average and less able pupils in Year 6 who still need the extra support of a booster class to help them reach the expected levels in reading. Research and referencing skills are appropriately developed and most pupils are familiar with the Dewey system of classification.

104. Standards in writing are well below average in Year 2. This in part, reflects the large number of pupils with special educational needs in this year group. Only a few pupils convey meaning in simple sentences and sequence them correctly to make stories of sufficient length that contain interesting vocabulary. Some of these pupils have a lively sense of style and are beginning to use words for effect. For example, when writing a story on the theme of a chocolate garden, a pupil wrote, 'MUM, DAD! Come quick the grass is chocolate, the flowers are sweets and the leaves are candyfloss.' The range and forms of pupils' writing are appropriate and the good emphasis given to the teaching of handwriting enables many pupils to develop a joined style by the end of Year 2. The relatively high number of less able pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their previous attainment but, in general, have a variable understanding of how to form simple sentences accurately, particularly in their use of basic punctuation.

105. In Year 6, pupils' writing is well below average. The range of writing is limited and, in general, pupils do not develop their ideas in sufficient detail. Writing which uses a more formal range of structures and tone is insufficiently represented in their work. In the best writing, there is a good range of vocabulary and an imaginative use of language to create deliberate effects. For example, when writing about The Pied Piper of Hamelyn, a more able pupil set the mood of the story well and captured the attention of the reader immediately with the phrase, '...mysteriously attacked by a swarm of vermin'. A small number of more able pupils are beginning to use paragraphs appropriately in their writing. However, an analysis of the pupils' writing indicates variable levels of accuracy, particularly in the consistent use of basic punctuation. The average and lower attaining pupils use mainly familiar vocabulary in their writing, write few complex sentences and find it difficult to develop their ideas in sufficient depth and detail. There is evidence of some pupils planning, drafting and refining their written work appropriately. The analysis of work revealed that the pupils in Year 4 and 5 generally make satisfactory progress but the demands made of pupils in Year 6 in this mixed age class are too low because they are very often set the same work.

106. There are indications that the school's approach to developing pupils' standards in spelling is successful. However, the use of the daily time spent on reading that occurs outside the literacy hour lacks focus. There was little evidence to suggest that pupils use information and communication technology to write at length although they learn good cut and paste skills.

107. Throughout the school, standards in literacy reflect those found in English. The development of literacy skills across the curriculum is generally satisfactory. Although there is evidence of some productive links in subjects, such as history and science, to develop pupils' writing skills, there are missed opportunities to develop fully the depth and range of pupils' reading and writing skills in Year 6. This is so, particularly, in the opportunities for these older pupils to develop the skills of skimming and scanning in their reading and to write at length in a more formal persuasive style. However, in Year 2, the scope is wider and pupils are already using their research skills appropriately to obtain information and make notes to construct their own contents page.

108. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in English is satisfactory, but, within this, there is a wide range of quality. In the lessons seen, teaching was very good in the Year 2/3 class but unsatisfactory in a Year 4/5/6 lesson. The analysis of pupils' work, however, shows that most pupils from Year 3 to Year 5 make satisfactory progress and that pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their previous attainment. However, the higher attaining pupils make insufficient gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding of the subject in Year 6 and, consequently, they make limited progress. In the school's previous inspection, the quality of teaching was reported as being good. Where teaching is very good, in the Year 2/3 class, learning objectives are shared with pupils so that they are more clearly involved in their own learning achievements, and there is a brisk pace to the session so that pupils work at a good rate. This was well illustrated in the very good literacy lesson, in which the pupils were developing their understanding of the use of a contents page. The teacher's lively presentation engaged the pupils, sustained their concentration and

helped them to understand not only how to use a contents page but to design their own. Through effective questioning, such as ‘Why do we have a contents page?’ and ‘What should we put in our own contents page?’ the teacher encouraged all pupils to participate and helped them to develop a greater understanding of non-fiction books. There was also very good co-operation between the teacher, learning support assistant and a parent helper, who were productively involved throughout the lesson. Very good relationships and high expectations of pupils’ behaviour, personal responsibility and standards of work ensured that pupils made very good gains in their learning.

109. In the Year 4/5/6 class, where the management of the pupils’ behaviour is sometimes difficult, too much time is spent waiting for the disruptive pupils to be settled. Although the planning is suitably detailed, the three-year rolling programme for literacy is not sufficiently demanding for the Year 6 pupils in this mixed age class. Too often, the work set for the higher achieving pupils is not developed in any depth. This constrains their progress. For example, in a literacy lesson in which pupils had to write a first draft of a story in the fantasy genre, several of the older pupils showed a complete lack of enthusiasm for the activity and did not even attempt to complete the task within the allotted time. However, the younger pupils in Year 4 did and were able to produce a first draft of a story plan, which had a traditional fairy tale plot and characters. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported in the class, try hard and make good progress in relation to their learning targets. The teacher’s marking is thorough and pupils are given good recognition for their achievements, combined with constructive and clear indications of how they can improve their work. Individual pupil targets are set and referred to and brought to the attention of pupils in the marking. Although reading is given appropriate attention in the guided reading sessions, there are not enough examples of language around the classrooms to extend the pupils’ range of language. There is a good range of books available for the pupils but the book corners are not inviting and do not encourage pupils to browse and develop a love of reading.

110. The organisation and delivery of the National Literacy Strategy are generally satisfactory for a small school with mixed age classes. However, for the pupils in Year 6, the programme is not sufficiently rigorous and this is beginning to have a detrimental effect on pupils’ learning. Teachers show confidence in managing the different components in the literacy hour and there is an appropriate balance of whole class, group and individual work. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall. Pupils are provided with group and individual targets in literacy, which helps them to be involved in taking responsibility for their own learning. The school provides additional literacy support to groups of identified pupils in Year 3 and a ‘booster’ programme for pupils in Year 6. Homework is used appropriately to support reading and spelling across the school and, at times, is used to reinforce the work covered in class. Resources in English are good. There is an extensive range of sets of group reading books and a good selection of non-fiction books to support pupils’ learning. The school has two library areas that pupils can easily access for research purposes. The headteacher currently has the responsibility for co-ordinating the subject, amongst many others. In September, the Year 2/3 teacher is to take on the responsibility and the headteacher has done much to prepare her for the role. The subject is enhanced by events including visits by drama groups and a book week. A very useful initiative taken by the school is to secure the support of a voluntary reading helper who comes into school twice a week to provide extra help to identified pupils on a one-to-one basis. English makes a good contribution to pupils’ spiritual, social and cultural development, for example, through the opportunity to work together and through reading a range of traditional tales, poems and stories from other cultures.

MATHEMATICS

111. Pupils in Year 6 are achieving standards overall which are well below average. There is considerable variation in attainment between one year group and another. Overall, girls and boys achieve similar standards, but girls are often more passive in lessons and have to be encouraged to

suggest ideas and give answers. In Year 6, boys are achieving better than girls. Inclusion is satisfactory overall, with good inclusion in Years 2, 3 and 4.

112. There are several reasons why standards are well below average in Year 6 and not as high as in 1997. These reasons include the much higher than average percentage of pupils with special educational needs and high pupil mobility, which has influenced continuity in learning and fragmented knowledge. Furthermore, provision for the most able pupils is not consistently challenging. Poor attendance, which is very unusual in this school, is having a significant impact on the progress made by girls' and their test results. Achievement is satisfactory overall, but variable between groups of pupils and between classes. There are numerous reasons why there is variation in attainment and achievement in different year groups. Overall, there are consistent factors. Firstly, lower attainment overall reflects the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. They achieve well for their ability, due to good support and planned work that specifically supports their mathematics targets as specified in their individual education plans. Secondly, high mobility influences results.

113. Improvement since the last inspection is broadly satisfactory but is hampered by pupil mobility and staff changes in the last few years. The school has identified the need to improve pupils' attainment in mathematics and is steadily working to improve the provision, with most success in developing the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The school has sought the advice of mathematics consultants, although the class teachers who attended these have now left. There is evidence of good recent improvement in attainment this year in Years 2 and 3, in particular. Learning resources have increased greatly, for example, the purchase of a new commercial scheme of work to support pupils' learning. Assessment procedures are used satisfactorily to track pupils' progress. The school is making good use of test results to help it identify strengths and weaknesses in its work. Links with information and communication technology show good improvement.

114. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall in Years 1 to 6. This reflects the three lessons seen and the sample of work and discussions with pupils. Teaching in Year 2/3 is good and is a strength of the subject. It is satisfactory in other years, with good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Overall, expectations for more able pupils are too inconsistent and this is a significant weakness of mathematics. Planning and teachers' subject knowledge are both satisfactory. Basic skills are well taught within numeracy lessons. Teaching methods are satisfactory, usually balancing pupils' time between listening to the teachers' whole class input and group work. The management of pupils is satisfactory and teachers effectively keep pupils on task working at a steady pace. Homework supports learning satisfactorily through games and tables activities.

115. Teaching and learning are both satisfactory in Year 1, in the lower school class, but the most able are inconsistently challenged. Their work shows opportunities for practical investigation and recording, with a strong reliance on the new mathematics work scheme.

116. In Years 2 and 3, the middle school class, good teaching and learning are having a significant impact on pupils' progress and good overall achievement. Attainment is broadly average despite 38 per cent of the group having special educational needs. Average and more able pupils are beginning to be confident with mental and written calculations up to 100 and they know their two, three and five times tables. They have an average knowledge of shapes, space and measurement. Planning and use of support staff are good and result in a clear focus to their work with groups. Expectations are good for the more able, but there are very few more able pupils in the class, especially in Year 2, due to high pupil mobility. These strong qualities were observed in pupils' work and in the lesson on Venn diagrams. Here pupils had to sort themselves out into those who liked broccoli, carrots, both or none. The good and steady explanation by the teacher meant that pupils understood what to do and could then link this to sorting similar factors of the two and five times tables. The most able were then challenged further to work on factors in the two and three times tables. There was very good use of jottings to test connections and sort numbers. Good support was given to pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, which allowed them to

achieve well. However, there was a tendency to do too much for the pupils, which reduced their individual intellectual effort. Relationships were of a very high standard, with lots of praise. Pupils concentrated well, even when the noise from the adjacent class filtered in.

117. The three year groups, which are clustered together in the upper school, were taught by the headteacher during the inspection, as their normal class teacher was absent. Teaching by the headteacher is good, but the sample of work suggests that teaching and learning are, overall, both satisfactory. Year 4 pupils attain average standards, despite the high mobility in this year group. This is largely because pupils benefit from being with Year 5 and 6. In Year 5, pupils' attainment is below average. Here, the quality of teaching and learning for average ability pupils is satisfactory and for pupils with special educational needs, it is good.

118. More able pupils are not applying their intellectual ability to enough problem solving in Years 5 and 6. Furthermore, this can result in the inappropriate behaviour of a few boys, as they lose interest and seek to interrupt the learning of others. For example, in the good lesson, despite very good management of the pupils' behaviour they were not involved enough in the introduction to divisibility rules of numbers. Because these boys already knew about the two, four, five and ten rule, they started fidgeting and chatting to each other, or calling out "what about decimals?" Here, there was a missed opportunity to suggest that they worked on the rule for divisibility by three, six or seven. However, there was a miraculous transformation in their attitude once the group work started and they were given exciting simple equations to solve to find the value of different letters such as $g \times a = a$, so, $g = 1$ and so on, until they had a value for every letter of the alphabet. Here, expectations were good.

119. The work sample shows that expectations are not always high enough in the work undertaken for more able pupils, especially in Years 5 and 6. More able pupils have completed a mass of basic rules work, which were usually correct. However, they are not using this knowledge enough to show perseverance, interest and independence in their thinking and learning, when working on real life mathematical problems. Work shows a considerable shortage of notes and jottings to indicate the problem solving process. Furthermore, there is not enough learning about mode and mean and little higher level work seen on ratio, proportion, probability and more demanding fractions, percentage and decimals work.

120. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and teachers use the information to plan further work and track pupils' progress. Targets are set for pupils to work towards, which helps them to understand how to improve, but many of these targets have not been updated since the spring. For example, in Year 4, the teacher had identified one target to recognise negative numbers, but there were no further comments or any recognition of how well the pupil is getting on in achieving a better understanding. However, target setting is good in Years 2/3; for example, to know the value of each digit in a three digit number, which was ticked and dated and a further challenge given. Targets for pupils with special educational needs are good and well tracked.

121. Marking of pupils' work is satisfactory, but usually consists of ticks, crosses and congratulatory comments. Teachers miss the opportunity to extend learning further by providing challenging thought provoking comments, which require further intellectual effort or help to clarify misunderstandings. For example some pupils had not grasped addition of decimals and marking did not help to clarify pupils' understanding in Year 6. Pupils do not always complete corrections.

122. The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. The school is successfully using the guidance from the Local Education Authority about how to plan for mixed aged classes, but this does not include Year 5 and 6 work. Booster class have been used satisfactorily to raise attainment and the school has made good use of the 'Springboard' learning programme. Links to other subjects are good overall, especially information and communication technology linked to spreadsheet work and the use of control technology to learn about angles and measurement. Numeracy is taught satisfactorily overall. The subject enhances pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning satisfactorily.

123. Overall, the quality of the current leadership and management is satisfactory, but still too closely held by the headteacher. The school's action plan correctly identifies the need to improve the attainment of the most able pupils. Monitoring of pupils' work has slowed down recently, but has included a focus on the mental warm up of the numeracy hour and data handling across all year groups.

SCIENCE

124. Pupils in Year 6 are achieving standards overall which are well below average. In other year groups, standards are broadly average and demonstrate the improvement in the curriculum, and good support to raise the attainment of pupils with special educational needs. Overall, girls and boys achieve similar standards, but girls are often more passive in lessons and have to be encouraged to suggest ideas and give answers. In Year 6, boys are achieving better than girls. Inclusion is satisfactory overall, with good inclusion in Years 2, 3 and 4.

125. There are several reasons why standards are well below average in Year 6 and not as high as in 1997. These reasons include the much higher than average percentage of pupils with special educational needs and high pupil mobility, which has influenced continuity in learning and fragmented knowledge. Furthermore, provision for the most able pupils is not consistently challenging.

126. Achievement is satisfactory overall, but there are pockets of good achievement, especially for pupils in Years 2 and 3. Older pupils in the mixed classes in Years 2/3 and 4/5 and 6 are doing work which leads to average levels of attainment, whereas, the younger groups rise to the challenge and actually achieve well for their ability. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well supported and they make good progress and achieve well for their ability. The school has worked to develop investigations in science and this often underpins work on life processes, materials and physical processes. For example, they investigated and described the manner in which everyday objects, such as ice and chocolate, alter when heated and cooled, while also considering the suitability of different materials to insulate the objects.

127. The achievement for more able pupils is inconsistent, which is a weakness. Overall, teachers' expectations are too variable and this is unsatisfactory. However, the investigation into how to alter the pitch of wind and stringed instruments shows better practice, as more able pupils had to explore this using several instruments, while others worked on a single instrument. Moreover, this work was well marked with thought provoking comments from the teacher. In Year 6, opportunities for independent thinking, researching and learning, beyond average Level 4 work, are too patchy. Overall, more able pupils are not doing enough Level 5 work. Lack of sufficient challenge for more able pupils was also identified in the findings of the last inspection report in 1997.

128. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. This judgement reflects the good development in improving the curriculum and the continuing good progress made by the increased number of pupils with special educational needs. However, the school has made slower overall progress in improving provision for more able pupils, although this has hastened in the last year.

129. Assessment is satisfactory, but there is no easy procedure that identifies the differences between pupils' average Level 4 and above average Level 5 work. Marking of pupils' work is satisfactory, but tracking of pupils' progress is limited. Nevertheless, there have been improvements in assessment procedures since the last inspection. For example, by regularly testing pupils' knowledge at the end of topics of work. As a result, pupils' misconceptions are identified and corrected. A good example of this was seen in the assessment on force. Here, in Year 3, a pupil tried to explain why, in a tug of war, the rope is stationary. The pupil said, "because both teams are strong". The teacher followed this up by explaining how the force was equal in both directions.

130. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in the two lessons seen was good; in fact, one lesson was very good. Nevertheless, when considering the wider evidence in the sample of work, teaching and learning are both judged to be satisfactory across the school as a whole. This is largely

because of variation in teachers' subject knowledge and class organisation. However, Year 2/3 shows good teaching and learning, which is helping pupils of all abilities to acquire good knowledge and skills by the end of Year 2.

131. In Year 1, teaching and learning are broadly satisfactory. Work in this class is varied, but is over directed, which limits independent thinking and learning. Across the school as a whole, particular strengths include the improvement in investigative work as specified in the school's development plan. Other strengths include the good use of time; teaching of basic skills and the teaching and learning of factual information, as seen in the good lesson taken by the headteacher in Years 4,5 and 6. Here, very good use was made of a CD Rom and the interactive whiteboard to help pupils to learn about muscles. Furthermore, good questioning encouraged pupils to think for themselves, beyond one word answers. Links with literacy are satisfactory: teachers talk about new vocabulary such as, 'contracting', 'expanding' and the 'Achilles tendon', but big books are not used linking science to guided reading.

132. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory and often very good, but a group of boys in Year 6 often need constant reminders to focus their attention. For example, in the lesson on muscles, a few boys were not attentive at the beginning of the session. This improved as the lesson progressed, especially when pupils were able to work independently at their own level of understanding. When pupils are given better challenges in group work, behaviour improves. For example, more able boys researched and shared their findings with the class about voluntary and involuntary muscle groups and this resulted in a good conclusion to the lesson.

133. In the mixed Year 2/3 class, one very good lesson was observed, which showed very good inclusion for pupils of all abilities. As a result, despite the high number of pupils with special educational needs, average levels of work were achieved. This was due to high expectations, very good planning and good support from the teaching assistant. All pupils were able to predict and test whether wood lice prefer wet and dark habitats or light and dry habitats. The good questioning allowed more able pupils to make hypotheses and give reasons for them, but the teacher missed the opportunity for more able pupils to design their own experiment. Overall, this teacher has excellent relationships and very good behaviour management techniques. As a result, pupils work hard, and gain confidence, which enhances their self esteem.

134. The quality of the curriculum is good. The headteacher has worked hard to develop the subject since the last inspection. Links with a 'Beacon school' have resulted in a special science fair for parents and pupils. Visits support the curriculum well, including a visit by an astronomer and visits to Herstmonceaux to explore truss bridge designs and force. Links to other subjects are good, including mathematics and numeracy, as pupils record measurements to one decimal place when using a Newton measure. Links with information and communication technology are good, although there are no sensors. The subject enhances pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning well. For example, assemblies provide special spiritual moments as pupils think about the life cycle of caterpillars, observe their daily development and are trusted not to touch them.

135. Overall, the quality of the current leadership and management is generally good. The school's action plan correctly identifies the need to improve the attainment of the most able pupils. Monitoring is developing appropriately. Learning resources are good, but storage is cramped.

ART AND DESIGN

136. Standards in art and design are average in Year 2 and in Year 6. Judgements are based on the two lessons observed, an analysis of the pupils' work, photographs, displays and on the school's planning. These standards are similar to those reported in the previous inspection. Pupils' achievement in the subject is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs achieve similar standards to other pupils. The appropriate range of experiences planned for pupils is evident in their previously completed

work, but less so in the classroom displays. There are no differences between the attainment of boys and girls.

137. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, although good teaching was observed in a lesson taken by the headteacher in the Year 4/5/6 class. Pupils' skills are built on in a systematic way from year to year. Photographs show that the youngest pupils in the Reception /Year 1 class have produced some attractive leaf and garden sculptures in the style of Andy Goldsworthy. The three-dimensional form of art is built on well in the Year 2/3 class as pupils design and construct models of chairs using recycled products. The finished products show that they have applied paint imaginatively to produce a visually pleasing effect. In the lesson observed in the Year 2/3 class, based on making the form of a figurehead using newspaper, good features included clear explanations by the teacher, so that pupils knew exactly what was expected of them and skilful questioning which encouraged pupils to put forward their own ideas. However, when the pupils came to making the figureheads, the materials provided were already cut to size and the teacher moved between the groups to join the 'eyes' to the heads for the pupils with the masking tape. Completed work on display showed a limited range, but included paper weaving and work linked to pupils' learning in history based on a study of the Vikings. Their sketchbooks show that pupils have made observations of objects such as leaves and catkins and have used pencils appropriately to put in the necessary detail.

138. Overall, pupils attain satisfactory standards in drawing and in their three-dimensional work but there is less evidence of individual flair or imagination in their artwork.

139. An analysis of the pupils' work indicates that the teaching of a range of skills in art and design enables pupils to make satisfactory progress in their learning. Teachers use sketchbooks appropriately to teach observational drawing skills. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have produced some good drawings of plants, shoes and hands. This is developed further in Years 5 and 6 where pupils have drawn flowers that show greater attention to detail, shape and tone. However, their drawings of people in action are of a lower than average standard. Previous work produced by the pupils showed little evidence of them exploring the work of famous artists. However, in a lesson in the Year 4/5/6 class, the work was based on the work of the artist Durer and used well to develop the pupils' drawing skills. Because the lesson was well organised and characterised by high expectations, the pupils made good progress in their understanding about creating texture in their drawings by using pencils in different ways. The good pace, skilful demonstrations and constant use of questions challenged the pupils to concentrate carefully to produce effective pictures that appeared to 'stand off' the page by the use of shadows and different line lengths. All pupils learned from this lesson as the headteacher was able to develop the skills of the more able by on-going assessment to lift the quality of work and the pupils with special educational needs were fully included and well supported. Consequently the overall standards achieved by the pupils by the end of the lesson were good. Pupils in this lesson were able to evaluate each other's work to consider how they might be developed in the future. There was some evidence on display of pupils using watercolour paints appropriately to produce attractive paintings of flowers, but, in general, there was little evidence of a wide variety of paintings in different styles.

140. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory, especially considering the wide range of subject responsibilities that the headteacher has. Strengths include the good use and development of resources. The school has adapted the units of work from national guidelines appropriately to meet the needs of a small school. By basing the work on a skill development programme rather than the activities, the pupils' progress from year to year is ensured in the mixed aged classes. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and include on-going comments being added to the 'Day Book' sheets that the teachers keep. Pupils also have a sketchbook that stays with them throughout their time in the school. Information and communication technology contributes to the breadth of the art curriculum. There is a good range of resources for the subject, but examples of artwork from a range of cultures are limited. However, overall, the subject makes a good contribution

to the pupils' spiritual, social and moral development, for example, through the opportunity to work co-operatively with others and by raising pupils' self-esteem and personal achievement.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

141. During the inspection, it was not possible to observe the teaching of design and technology. Judgements are based on the analysis of pupils' work, photographs and teachers' planning. Indications are that standards are average in Year 2 and Year 6, which is similar to the judgements made at the time of the school's previous inspection. Pupils' achievement in the subject is satisfactory, including pupils who have special educational needs. There are no differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

142. Although there was little evidence of pupils' completed work on display, the analysis of their work in books and photographs show that they are given a suitably broad range of experiences in designing and making throughout the school. Evidence shows that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school. Photographs show that teachers make effective links with other subjects of the curriculum. For example, following a visit to Knole House, pupils in the Year 2/3 class constructed models of Tudor houses using a variety of materials and joining techniques. In art, they have designed and made three-dimensional models of chairs. The making of frog puppets involved pupils in joining pieces of fabric and linked well to their work in literacy, based on the 'Frog and Toad' stories. Photographs of containers the pupils made for packaging a product show that they have measured accurately and worked with tools carefully to cut and join the materials. Pupils are encouraged to label their designs and evaluate their work once it is completed. All pupils have access to a suitable variety of materials and tools.

143. The analysis of pupils' work in the Year 4/5/6 class indicated that the pupils are given an increasing range of experiences in designing and making that build effectively on their previous learning. Photographs show that the teaching of skills is built on carefully and enables pupils to design and make a range of products that demonstrate that increasing care and effort has been put into completing them. Pupils have designed and made moving toys, musical instruments and purses. Their designs for the purses are labelled and show that attention has been given to considering the suitability of the materials used and the different purposes the purses are to be used for. They modify their designs accordingly and decorate the purses appropriately with embroidery. Food technology is well catered for throughout the school. The youngest pupils in the Reception /Year 1 class make fruit salads and, in the Year 2/3 class, pupils have designed and made Christmas cakes. Pupils in the Year 4/5/6 class have the experience of making bread from all round the world that is closely linked to their work in science on food groups and keeping healthy. The analysis of pupils' work indicates that teachers place sufficient emphasis on the evaluating process.

144. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The long and medium term plans give sufficient support to guide teachers in the teaching of design and technology. The two and three year rolling programme incorporates units from the national guidelines that have been implemented appropriately for a small school. Good links are made with other subjects such as, history, science, music and art and design. The school ensures that the key concepts and skills for design and technology are taught systematically throughout the school. There is evidence of teachers using information and communication technology appropriately to contribute to pupils' learning through the design process. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are satisfactory and include end of unit comments being entered on to the 'Day Book' sheets that teachers keep. There is also a useful collection of photographs that show pupils' achievements. Learning resources, including tools, equipment and materials, are good. Overall, the subject makes a satisfactory contribution to the pupils' social, moral and cultural development by providing opportunities for pupils to work co-operatively and to develop the ability to make a reasoned evaluation of their own work.

GEOGRAPHY

145. The current group of Year 6 pupils are attaining broadly average standards, despite the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Average attainment is due to three main factors. Firstly, the good overall teaching and very good subject knowledge of the headteacher. Secondly, the range of learning experiences is good and is enriched by a residential trip to the Isle of Wight. Thirdly, basic skills are well taught with a good range of opportunities for pupils to think, question, research and learn for themselves by collecting information and drawing their own conclusions. As a consequence, pupils are applying good effort in their work.

146. Even though it was not possible to see a geography lesson, the evidence from the work and discussions with pupils and staff show that teaching and learning are good at both key stages. Sampling of work was made particularly helpful because the pupils continue to use the same geography books from year to year. Overall, standards have improved since the last inspection in Year 2 most noticeably.

147. Assessment takes the form of pupils working in pairs to talk to the class about the work covered and the completion of a self assessment sheet. This is good practice as it identifies what pupils have understood, while also acting as a way of assessing their speaking and allowing pupils to grow in their personal confidence. From this, the teacher can monitor progress and alter curriculum planning to meet the needs of the pupils. As a consequence, pupils have a good knowledge of their own learning as targets are set for their individual improvement.

148. Teaching shows high expectations, which results in good overall achievement. Inclusion is satisfactory for pupils of all abilities. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well included in learning and often achieve average standards, because of this good support. Sometimes, work is specifically organised to ensure that they are especially well included in activities, for example, in Years 2/3 the local field study worksheet. Moreover, more able pupils have satisfactory opportunities to enrich their knowledge and understanding and, in this respect, teaching shows high expectations. For example, in Year 4, a more able pupil compared localities and developed opinions about America and Afghanistan following the collapse of the World Trade Centre. In Year 6, a more able boy researched jet power, hydrofoils and many facts about the sea, which also linked learning to the water theme. Homework is also inclusive; for example, pupils researched newspaper articles, and then wrote about such events as the drought in Ethiopia and fires in Sydney, both of which were linked to their work on water and maps.

149. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning, which are enhanced by strong links to other curriculum subjects. For example, changes in soil are explored in science and linked to work on flooding. In addition to this, pupils have looked at 'Seascape' by the Japanese artist Hokusai. Links with literacy are developing well, but are not consistent between all classes. Pupils write stories about flooding, list facts in bullet point format and develop their own spelling banks and vocabulary. They make good use of fieldwork activities for map work, but more able pupils are not yet doing enough six figure reference work or using a wide variety of different scaled maps. Links with information and communication technology are good, as pupils use the roamer to design routes and link their learning to measurement, angles and points of the compass. In mathematics, pupils collect and analyse data about the quality of the school environment and compare differences in the use of time in Britain with the daily routine in an Indian village. In Year 1, pupils use aerial photographs to observe features of their immediate environment and they are interested learning about 'a bird's eye view'.

150. Geography makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development. Spirituality is fostered well through consideration of pupils' own opinions and discussions about special places. Their writing shows good reflection, especially in their description of why they like the wooded environment so much as a special place. Social and moral awareness is strong, as pupils learn about their responsibilities for the environment and how to improve it. Cultural development is good overall, as pupils know about their immediate locality and the links to history as well as

comparing their locality with Chembakoli in India. However, they are not as clear about Britain as a multicultural society and school's resources do not reflect this diversity enough.

151. Overall, pupils achieve well for their ability and develop skills progressively from year to year. The rate of progress and achievement for pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 is particularly good. This is largely because of the school's organisation and planning which mean that these are the youngest pupils in their classes and they benefit specifically from learning with older pupils.

152. The headteacher leads and manages the subject well. She has a very good knowledge of geography and monitors pupils' work thoroughly in order to improve how the subject is taught. Improvement since the last inspection is good and shows development in teaching and the curriculum and wider opportunities for the use of information and communication technology.

HISTORY

153. The current group of Year 6 pupils are attaining standards that are below average. This is largely because of the higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. However, although average ability and more able pupils can understand and do average level work, the most able are not consistently well stretched. Pupils, with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are given good support and achieve well. Overall, the school is working satisfactorily to be inclusive. However, girls and boys achieve similar standards, but in Year 6, boys are attaining higher standards due to differences in individual pupils' abilities.

154. The quality of teaching and learning are both satisfactory overall at both key stages. Teaching is best in the mixed Year 2/3 class where it is good overall and is influencing the pupils' above average standards in Year 2. Judgements are based on discussions with pupils and staff and a thorough scrutiny of the pupils' work over the last few years. This was made particularly helpful because the pupils continue to use the same history books from year to year. Some books do not have wide enough lines for the younger pupils to write on and this influences their presentation.

155. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily for their ability, with a steady rate of progress in the work seen from Year 1 to Year 6. However, the rate of progress and achievement for pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 is good. This is largely because of the school's organisation and planning which mean that these are the youngest pupils in their classes and they benefit specifically from learning with older pupils. As a consequence, they acquire skills, knowledge and understanding which is directed more specifically at the average learning needs of the older pupils in the classes. For example, Year 2 pupils of all abilities can talk about the Romans, Celts and Anglo Saxons and why they came to Britain. Work tends to level out to reflect planning for satisfactory achievement in Years 3, 5 and 6.

156. Even though teachers are trying hard to be inclusive, there is too much inconsistency in the provision for the most able pupils. Teaching does not allow these pupils enough opportunities to think and learn for themselves by widening the selection, organisation and interpretation of historical information. The best example was seen in the work about a day in the life of a Victorian flower seller because the most able pupils in Years 5 and 6 extended this from a factual account into a two-day diary extract. Here, pupils used good literacy skills by writing in the first person using a good range of adjectives to describe the character's feelings as she struggled to make a living.

157. The use of information and communication technology is good overall, with particular strengths in the use of the Internet to research significant social and cultural events between 1952 and 2002. Additionally, the work on Florence Nightingale shows better than average amalgamation of historical facts and good links to literacy by paragraphing sections and checking accuracy using the spell checker. Links with other subjects across the curriculum are good, including religious education, design and technology, literacy and numeracy. For example, pupils made a Victorian database to support work on graphs and spreadsheet information. Links with art are underdeveloped as drawings often lack precise detail when observing artefacts.

158. One of the main strengths of learning concerns the use of visits out and visitors into school. For example, pupils visit Lullingstone Roman Villa and enjoy trying on Tudor costumes when visiting Knole House. This results in good learning from direct and engaging experiences. These visits enrich the curriculum and contribute well to pupils' personal, social and cultural development.

159. Assessment of pupils' understanding is satisfactory, but work is not evaluated for a specific National Curriculum level. Marking is satisfactory and is often of a good standard and helps pupils to feel confident and develop self esteem from the positive comments made by teachers. Furthermore, marking helps pupils to gain clarity of thought and an ability to suggest arguments for and against changes in different periods of history. For example, a teacher had marked a picture and information about the development of steam power and had then posed a further challenge: "Now, what are your arguments in favour of steam power?" However, pupils do not always re-visit their work, for example, as homework, to follow up the teacher's comment, which limits the effort involved in marking on pupils' learning. Nevertheless, teachers often make comments about presentation, spelling and handwriting and this is usually well followed up by pupils.

160. Pupils show positive attitudes to history and often listen very attentively, as evident when the 'Chaucer Man' visited the school during the inspection and pupils listened to story extracts using Middle English and Anglo Saxon words. In addition, links with the local community help pupils to enjoy learning about the past. They have strong links with 'Frankfield House' and can recount the spooky unsolved mystery, as told by the owner of the house, about the 'Murder of Stone Street'. Links with the church are strong and pupils have a growing knowledge about the history of their church. Parents play an important role in learning as they regularly help with visits and group work activities.

161. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed by the headteacher, who carries the responsibility for several other subjects. There is good vision for the development of the subject, which is reflected in the widening of resources and visits to support learning. Furthermore, progress since the last inspection has been good, with development in the curriculum, which was identified as having insufficient guidance about teaching from year to year. Additionally, attainment is above average in Year 2 and was only average at the time of the last inspection. Elsewhere attainment is broadly average, with the exception of Year 6. The school has a good range of books to support research, but few which reflect Britain as a multicultural society.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

162. This is a considerable strength of the school. The appointment of a teaching assistant with specialist knowledge of information and communication technology is resulting in well above average standards from the Foundation Stage through to Year 4. However, in Years 5 and 6, standards are broadly average, as some pupils have not benefited from the skilled teaching as they have only arrived recently in the school. Girls and boys achieve similar standards overall, but in Year 6, there is a higher proportion of more able boys and girls.

163. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are equally well supported as other pupils. More able pupils are well challenged in this work and are given plenty of opportunities to work independently. There has been very good further improvement in the provision for this subject since the last inspection, when standards were also above average.

164. Achievement and inclusion, for all abilities, are very good and directly reflect the very good teaching and very high expectations for learning. Teaching methods are excellent, because all pupils receive one to one support and work on their own targets for improvement, which results in pupils learning skills quickly, as they really understand what they are doing. A particular strength of assessment is the 'computer suite passport', which is being used to assess what pupils have covered and can do. In addition to this, every pupil has their own disk, which also charts their progress. Moreover, the school is planning to develop assessment and has sought the advice of the Local

Education Authority in supporting this. Currently, it is not easy to identify which pupils are working at specific National Curriculum levels.

165. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall at both key stages. Pupils go to the special suite for focused lessons. For such a small school, this is a significant achievement, which reflects strong leadership by the headteacher and governors and very good use of financial resources. Recently, the school has created a small but very appropriate information and communication control technology suite in the former school office. The number and quality of computers are better than average. The staff's have a positive approach to developing opportunities and resources. For example, staff and pupils have used the interactive whiteboard for a research project. Time is well organised to give pupils regular and focused opportunities to work in small groups. This is especially effective for the work on learning touch-typing skills.

166. Pupils show excellent attitudes to learning, because it is focused, creative and very individual. The very good ongoing guidance results in accuracy and raised self esteem for all abilities. For example, one boy was delighted when he achieved 100 per cent in his personal target for touch-typing. Homework supports learning very successfully.

167. The curriculum is very good overall, showing a wide variety of opportunities to enhance pupils' learning, including a lunchtime club. The school does not have sufficient sensors to link measurement work to science and geography, although the pupils have used information from a weather station. Nevertheless, links with all subjects are developing very well overall. Links with literacy are strong, as pupils learn how to cut/paste and check spellings, when writing about becoming a pop idol. In another example, pupils wrote about school and had to highlight the adjective 'nice' and replace it with alternatives such as wonderful, fun and exciting. In design and technology, pupils write questions linked to their designs for frog puppets. Furthermore, work on control technology is imaginative and gives plenty of opportunities for problem solving, as pupils work out measurements, angles and turns to write secret words using the Roamer. In art, they have designed harvest festival paper using different fonts and colours. Pupils learn how to use databases in mathematics for work such as 'where we live in oak class'. In science, pupils sequence their experimental writing. Spreadsheet work starts in Year 4 and includes comparison of height and weight, which is then linked to graph work. Pupils use the e-mail and have also selected a basket of shopping using one of the supermarket sites. This work was very well linked to healthy eating in science.

168. There are only a few weaknesses. Firstly, pupils are withdrawn from assembly to do this work on a very regular basis and secondly, pupils are not using taped stories to support their reading development, especially in the younger classes. Lastly, during the inspection, within class based lessons, computers were not always used to best advantage. A particular strength is the partnership with parents. There is a very comprehensive list of Web sites, which have been compiled for parents, pupils and staff. Parents are very well involved in learning, through homework and by coming into school to find out more about the subject.

MUSIC

169. Standards in music are above average for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. This judgement is the same as that made by the school's last inspection. Evidence also came from a video recording of the older pupils taking part in a theatre workshop at Shanklin during their visit to the Isle of Wight. Pupils' achievement is good and is particularly strong in the area of composing. The two lessons observed during the inspection indicate that the specialist knowledge of the music teacher has a significant impact on the quality of pupils' attainment. Music enhances the self-esteem of pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress. No differences in the attainment of boys and girls were seen. Gifted and talented pupils make satisfactory progress.

170. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good. A specialist teacher is employed by the school to teach music. The lessons are challenging and pitched at a brisk pace. The

very good relationships between teacher and pupils inspire confidence and the teacher's very good subject knowledge creates high expectations. With a good eye to detail, the teacher challenges the pupils to work hard and concentrate and improve their performance during the lessons. A very good lesson with pupils from the Year 2/3 class illustrated many of these strengths. The teacher skilfully introduced the concept of non-traditional notation to the pupils by asking them to clap the rhythm patterns written on a board. This they did with confidence and, when asked to use their voices to follow a graphic pattern, they were able to do this with reasonable accuracy that showed good control of pitch, tempo and dynamics. The pupils' learning developed well as they moved into small groups to compose their own patterns. The teacher used her musical ability effectively to provide support and guidance to the pupils as she circulated between the groups and developed their composing skills to a high level. The teacher demanded more from the pupils as the percussion instruments were introduced with the expectation that the pupils performed their own compositions to class. The quality of learning in this lesson was increased because there was sense of fun and clear expectations of what the pupils should do. All pupils in this lesson made a good effort and thoroughly enjoyed their music making.

171. In the lesson observed with the Year 4/5/6 pupils, the quality of teaching and learning was good. The lesson was well presented with pupils having the opportunity to listen to the lyrics of three different songs and to consider the nature of the contents. Most pupils responded well to this but a minority found it difficult to listen attentively to the detail in the lyrics of the songs. As a result, they were not always productively engaged during this part of the lesson. However, with the teacher's good lead, pupils' interest noticeably improved during the lesson as they listened to the piano accompaniment to the songs played by the teacher. Consequently, the quality of learning increased and most pupils developed a suitable understanding of how the mood of songs is often dictated by the lyrics. The lesson culminated in the pupils singing a selection of songs from 'Three Cheers for Mrs. Butler' in readiness for the school's summer concert. This they did with enthusiasm and confidently sang a two-part round with good rhythm and pitch. The good quality of teaching ensures that the pupils are taught a wide range of musical activities and acquire good progression of skills as they move through the school. However, there is little evidence of pupils recording their own compositions and singing and evaluating and improving what they have done.

172. The music teacher provides effective leadership for the subject, but because she is only in school for half a day a week, the headteacher has the responsibility of managing the subject. In the circumstances, this is appropriate. The music teacher's secure subject knowledge is used well to extend pupils' musical experiences and has a significant impact on the good standards they achieve. Pupils have the opportunities to join the choir and take part in recorder lessons. The singing of pupils in the school's choir is very good and shows a range of styles. For example, when singing the hymn 'Jesus remember me,' they maintained the tone quality effectively when singing quietly and, when singing 'Hand me down my silver trumpet', they adjusted their performance to the style of the song and sang the 'on top' and 'underneath' descants with increasing skill. Pupils attend frequent church services where singing has an appropriately high priority and, as a member of the small schools consortium, have the opportunity to participate in primary consortium concerts. All pupils participate in the school productions. Visiting musicians help to broaden the pupils' experiences. A particularly innovative scheme is the good link with the public school, 'Sevenoaks', whereby pupils come into the school to provide music tuition. The school has a coherent scheme of work based on units of work from the national guidelines. The subject is adequately resourced with an appropriate supply of percussion instruments, tuned instruments and recorded music to listen to. Overall, music has a high profile in the school and makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. The pupils listen to and sing reflective pieces of music and have good opportunities to collaborate in performing. The use of information and communication technology is satisfactory, but is not as well developed as in other subjects.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

173. Standards in physical education are average in Year 2 and in Year 6. The picture is very much the same as in the last inspection, with similar strengths and weaknesses. Judgements are based on photographic evidence, discussion with teachers and the observation of a dance lesson in the Year 2/3 class and an athletics lesson in the Year 4/5/6 class. To meet the constraints of a suitable size school hall for physical education, the school has skilfully adapted the programme to ensure that the pupils receive their full entitlement. This was noted in the previous inspection. The physical education programme is split into three terms. In the autumn term, the pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 travel by coach to swim at Sevenoaks pool weekly. In the spring term, the school hires the hall at Seal Primary School for gymnastics and again travel by coach and in the summer term, the pupils walk down to the village hall for dance. The school does, however, have its own field that is used for games and athletics. In swimming, school records show that most pupils swim at least 25 metres safely and confidently before they leave the school. Many of them exceed this level and have learned a range of personal survival skills. There are no significant variations in attainment or progress between boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the support given to them in lessons, which results in their making satisfactory progress in their application of skills in order to reach the appropriate standards.

174. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in both the Year 2/3 class and the Year 4/5/6 class. No overall judgement was made in the school's last report. In the Year 2/3 class dance lesson, the teacher made appropriate use of a taped movement lesson to motivate the pupils and helped them to translate their ideas from the stimulus of a story, based on 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice', into movement. The pupils listened carefully to the tape and to the teacher's instructions and eagerly attempted to move imaginatively. As they travelled around the hall, they changed the speed, level and direction of their movements to suit the mood of the story and the music. When interpreting the mixing of colours by the colour maker's assistant, the pupils showed imaginative movement and gesture to create the different moods of the colours. The brisk pace ensured that pupils were constantly engaged in the activities, concentrated well and worked hard to improve their performance. However, at times, the teacher missed the opportunity to become fully involved in the lesson as a role model to help develop the pupils' creative dance movements even further. A feature of this lesson was the guidance given by the learning support assistant to the pupils with special educational needs. This enabled them to take a full part in the lesson and achieve average standards. All pupils understand the need to warm-up for any physical activity and to cool-down afterwards.

175. Pupils in the Year 4/5/6 class joined in enthusiastically with circuit training exercises. The planned activities included skipping, star jumps, squat thrusts, bean bag throwing and shuttle runs. The good organisation and management enabled all pupils to be involved and work hard to develop their skills. However, many of the pupils found it difficult to listen attentively and follow instructions. Consequently time was lost and they did not manage to complete all the activities, much to their disappointment, as they enjoyed the lesson. The headteacher showed a confident approach and provided clear instructions with appropriate demonstration of techniques when necessary to help pupils develop their skills. In general, the pupils carefully watched these demonstrations before they practised them. Pupils were helped to improve as the headteacher carefully noted and addressed weaknesses in their performance. Most pupils managed to skip with a rope successfully and throw a beanbag with reasonable precision into a hoop. They had to work hard to develop the technique of squat thrusts and, in some cases, found star jumps more difficult to sustain when working within a time limit of two minutes. When running, they managed to pace themselves appropriately in the challenge and tried hard to sustain their speed. Good links were made with science and information and communication technology. For example, the pupils developed a greater understanding of why exercise is necessary for a healthy life and, as part of the sequence of lessons over four weeks, the pupils are keeping records of their own achievements to provide data for their information and communication technology work.

176. The headteacher has responsibility for physical education at present, along with many other subjects. The Year 2/3 teacher who is designated to take over this responsibility in September has received good support from the headteacher in preparation for the role. Planning for the subject is based on national guidelines. Outdoor and adventurous activities are provided for the older pupils as part of their residential visit to the Isle of Wight. Procedures for assessment are satisfactory and are based on the school's approach to recording pupils' achievements in the 'Day Book' sheets. Considering the constraints of the accommodation for physical education, the school works hard to provide a suitable range of extracurricular activities for sport. Additional parental support is invaluable in developing the programme for football and netball. The football team achieved success last year when they came second in the Sevenoaks league. A local family donated the team's football strip. Pupils also have the opportunity to receive short tennis lessons and horse riding lessons, which their parents pay for. A specialist cricket coach is employed by the school to take the older pupils and a swimming instructor assists teachers in the lessons for all pupils at the swimming pool. The subject is well resourced for the teaching of games and there is a good sized sports field. However, the school hall is much too small and restricts the opportunities for pupils to reach high standards in gymnastics. The school makes the very best use of all available facilities. The subject contributes well to pupils' personal development. It gives opportunities for pupils to and compete fairly.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

177. The current group of Year 6 pupils are attaining standards that are below the expectation of the locally Agreed Syllabus, which shows a decline on the standards for this year group at the time of the 1997 inspection. This is largely because of the higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Although, average ability and more able pupils can understand and do average level work, the most able are not consistently well stretched. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are given good support and achieve well. Writing skills often detract from pupils' spoken knowledge; for example, pupils with special educational needs in Years 4,5 and 6 can talk about the Five Pillars of Islam better than they can write about it. Inclusion is satisfactory. Overall, girls and boys achieve similar standards. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily for their ability, with a steady rate of progress in the work seen from Year 1 to Year 6. However, the rate of progress and achievement for pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 is good from the samples and lesson seen. The standard of work is average in these year groups and matches the findings of the 1997 inspection. Progress in Year 6 is slower overall, because the most able are not given enough interesting and challenging activities.

178. It was only possible to see one lesson, but the scrutiny of work and evaluation of curricular planning suggests that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall at both key stages. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge that results in pupils learning a satisfactory range of facts. A good feature of teaching is the way in which pupils are encouraged to consider their own opinions. Improvement since the last inspection is good, with developments in the curriculum and artefacts, which were judged to be insufficient in 1997. Work is suitably planned so that pupils do not repeat learning in the mixed aged classes and is enhanced by themes in assemblies, such as the story of Elisha and developing peace through friendship. Lesson planning is satisfactory and makes clear to pupils exactly what they will be learning about. In the good lesson in the mixed Year 2/3 class, the pupils talked about faith, following the Bible story about a boy who was ill and how trusting in Jesus resulted in his getting better. Here, the teachers told the story in a captivating way, so that special spiritual moments could be shared with the pupils. This was further enhanced because the adjacent class was out of the room and no noise seeped in to spoil the atmosphere. Pupils' knowledge and understanding were developed well because the teacher encouraged pupils to feel confident and to express their own ideas about faith. Pupils concentrated and showed good interest, although there was a missed opportunity to use drama to demonstrate trust. Ongoing assessment in the good lesson resulted in pupils ending the lesson by thinking and learning for themselves. Overall, assessment is satisfactory, with end of topic evaluations. The marking in pupils' books usually gives lots of praise, but

rarely focuses on how to develop or extend ideas, although there is a strong emphasis on improving pupils' presentation of their work.

179. Overall, teachers have satisfactory expectations of what the pupils are able to do, but it varies from class to class. In Year 1, expectations are satisfactory, but in Year 2/3, they are good. Work was well planned for different abilities in the good lesson. This resulted in good inclusion for pupils with special educational needs, who drew pictures and labelled them to show who they had faith in. More able pupils worked quickly and independently giving written reasons for why they have faith in doctors, parents, family, pets and teachers. However, overall, in the sample of work seen, more able pupils do not benefit from consistent, challenging activities. In Years 4, 5 and 6, the work on Sikhism and Islam is interesting and shows a steady development of knowledge, but for more able pupils it does not maximise opportunities to develop research and enquiry skills. The work on membership to different groups shows a better range of challenges for pupils of different abilities.

180. Pupils make very good use of the local church, but visits to other places of worship are underdeveloped. Links with a local 'Beacon Status' school is resulting in the developing links between religious education and other curriculum subjects. This is good practice, as they are currently underdeveloped overall. However, in the good lesson, the teacher showed the pupils how to approach their recorded work by demonstrating writing, which showed good links to literacy. Furthermore, pupils sing hymns and songs with a religious theme tunefully and with feeling. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory, especially considering the wide range of subject responsibilities that the headteacher has. The curriculum is well balanced and constantly evolving as the headteacher monitors the curriculum, which is a modified version of the Kent Agreed Syllabus and national guidelines. The school is improving posters that link art and religion and is widening religious education artefacts satisfactorily. This provision was unsatisfactory in 1997. Links with information and communication technology are satisfactory and developing. For example, the assistant in charge has organised a list of Internet sites to visit to support pupils' learning about a wide range of faiths. The subject contributes well to pupils' social, cultural, moral and spiritual development. Through religious education, teachers are working to widen pupils' awareness of the world as a multicultural place, for example, by talking about Hinduism and festivals such as Diwali. Nevertheless, there are missed opportunities to help pupils to understand that Britain is a multi faith society. However, the good inclusion of a one or two Sikh and Muslim pupils is helping to address this. There is a good range of books on Christianity but a limited number of attractive books on other faiths.