

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARGARETS C of E JUNIOR SCHOOL

Rainham, KENT

LEA area: Rochester and Gillingham

Unique reference number: 118464

Head Teacher: Mr J Viner

Reporting inspector: Mrs Janet Sinclair
19824

Dates of inspection: 12 – 15 March 01

Inspection number: 207109

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior School
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Orchard Street Rainham Kent
Postcode:	ME8 9AE
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Ennis
Date of previous inspection:	10/03/97

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19824	Mrs J Sinclair	Registered inspector	Art and design, equal opportunities	The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught?
13395	Mrs J Illingworth	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes behaviour and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
14997	Mrs V Emery	Team inspector	Special educational needs, design and technology, geography.	
27242	Ms E Rice	Team inspector	English as an additional language, information and communication technology, music	
28014	Mr P Buckley	Team inspector	English, history	
12367	Mr A Green	Team inspector	Mathematics, physical education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
10270	Mrs S Teacher	Team inspector	Science, religious education.	
17932	Mr J Bald	Team inspector		How well is the school led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a large Church of England voluntary controlled junior school for boys and girls of seven to eleven years of age. There are 458 pupils on roll. The school draws most of its pupils from the community of Rainham and enjoys strong links with the parish. The majority of pupils transfer from the adjoining infant school with a small, but significant, number from outside the immediate area and levels of attainment on entry are below the national average. Pupil mobility is average and few pupils join or leave at other than the usual times. Forty per cent of the pupils have special educational needs, which is well above the national average and this is a significant increase since the previous inspection. Two per cent of pupils have a statement of special educational needs, which is above the national average. Currently eleven point six per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals and this is below the national average of nineteen per cent. Approximately one per cent of pupils have English as an additional language, which is slightly higher than most schools. Two per cent of the pupils come from ethnic heritages. The school is very popular and is generally oversubscribed.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school, which is working well to improve the overall quality of education it provides for its pupils. The head teacher and senior leadership team have worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and in this they have been successful. There is a strong Christian ethos, which permeates the work of the school. Pupils enter the school with below average levels of attainment, they are taught well and make good progress, expenditure per pupil is average and therefore the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well across the curriculum.
- Teaching is good overall; it is sometimes very good and occasionally excellent, particularly in Year 6 and this has a positive impact on the rate of pupils' progress.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and ensures they make very good gains in their learning.
- The school is well led; relationships are very good and all staff have a shared commitment to supporting pupils and raising standards.
- Provision for extra curricular activities is very good.
- Parental involvement in the work of the school enhances pupils' learning.
- Provision for personal, moral and social development is very good.
- The very good level of staffing in the school is helping to raise standards.

What could be improved

- The identification in teachers' planning of what pupils are expected to learn.
- Consistency in procedures for assessment
- Analysis and use of information from assessment.
- Procedures for marking pupils' work
- Assessment of pupils' reading skills which are accurate and consistent

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997. The school has worked hard on the key issues identified in the last report and has made good progress in addressing them. There has been a significant improvement in the overall quality of teaching, subject co-ordinators are more effective and are ensuring greater consistency of standards within each year group. Schemes of work are now in place for all subjects and good quality medium term planning has led to improvements in the curricular provision. Standards in ICT have risen well and there is an improvement in standards in art and music although work still needs to be done in art. Standards have been maintained in the core subjects in spite of a rise

in the number of pupils having special educational needs. The school has made good improvements since the last inspection and is committed to continuing this trend.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	C	C	C	C
mathematics	C	C	C	C
science	E	E	D	E

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

This table shows that the school's results are in line with the national average in English and mathematics and below the national average in science. In comparison with similar schools (based on the number of pupils having free school meals) the school is attaining at an average level in English and mathematics and well below average in science. However, these comparisons do not reflect the high number of pupils with special educational needs, which the school has, or the below average level of attainment on entry as a result of this. The school is doing well to enable its pupils to attain these standards. Taking the last three years together, standards have risen in line with national trends in English and mathematics. Standards are gradually improving in science. Overall, pupils achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress as a result of the effective support they receive. During the inspection pupils aged eleven were attaining in line with expectations in all subjects. This is good achievement considering the below average levels of attainment on entry and shows good improvement in the science provision for the pupils now in Year 6. However, there is scope for further improvement when weaknesses in assessment are addressed. The school has set realistic targets for literacy and numeracy, which it is likely to achieve.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to school. They are keen to do well and work hard in lessons and this has a good impact on their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good both in class and around the school. Pupils respond well to the school's expectations and the school is an orderly environment.
Personal development and relationships	Provision for personal development is very good and relationships are very good across the school. Very good opportunities are given for personal development and pupils show considerable maturity in the way in which they carry out their responsibilities.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend promptly.

Relationships are very good and are a strength of the school's provision.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall and as a result pupils make good gains in their learning. Two per cent of the teaching seen was excellent, fifteen per cent very good, fifty per cent good and thirty three per cent satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good. It is generally good in all other subjects except art and religious education where it is satisfactory. The specialist teaching in physical education is very good. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well in all classrooms and this results in good learning by pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Learning objectives are shared with pupils, which helps to focus their thinking and questioning is used effectively to check pupils' knowledge and challenge them further. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well and there is effective help for pupils with English as an additional language. Higher attaining pupils are challenged well in Year 5 and 6.

The main weaknesses in teaching are that some sessions are rather slow, pupils are given work to copy, particularly in science, and in some whole class English sessions pupils are not clearly focussed near the teacher. As a result pupils lose interest and fidget and in science do not make the gains, of which they are capable, in their scientific knowledge. Assessment and marking are not used well enough across the school and this is holding pupils back.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum is good. It is broad, balanced and relevant to the pupils. A very good range of extra curricular activities and good links with the community enhance curricular provision. There are very good links with partner institutions.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they learn very well. They are supported by a high level of expertise to meet wide and complex needs
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good provision. Early learners make steady progress both within the classroom and as a result of the additional support they receive.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The quality of provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good. Provision for moral and social development is very good. There are not enough opportunities to celebrate different cultures in order to increase pupils' awareness of the society in which they live.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is good provision for pupil's welfare within a hard working and caring community. Procedures for summative assessment are sound in the core subjects but weak in all other subjects. Marking is not used well to help pupils improve their work and on-going assessment is unsatisfactory.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents make a strong contribution to the work of the school and are keen to support their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the head teacher and key staff is good. There is an effective team approach, which is helping to raise standards and provide a good learning environment for the pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily and are very supportive of the school. They are less effective in shaping the school's direction and are not proactive enough in this.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The head teacher and senior management team have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and monitor progress against the priorities in the school improvement plan. However, the plan is for one year only and the success criteria are not specific enough to permit rigorous monitoring.
The strategic use of resources	The school has adequate resources, which it uses well to promote learning. Financial decisions are based on good planning and systematic budgeting. However, there are few clear financial links between the budget and school improvement plan.

The school places a high value on the quality of its staff and provision for them. It has 'Investors in People' status. Staffing is very good and teacher's individual strengths are used well to provide good curricular coverage. The accommodation, although adequate in size, is unattractive and provision in all classrooms needs to be raised to the standard of the best in the school. Resources are variable in quantity and quality and require an audit in order to establish priorities for improving them. The school effectively applies the principles of best value when purchasing goods.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and make good progress. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with problems. • The school provides an interesting range of activities. • The teaching is good and teachers expect pupils to work hard. • The school is well led • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. • Their children behave well. • They get good information from the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents would like their children to receive more homework.

The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed by parents. The amount of homework was found to be satisfactory in Years 5 and 6 but the amount of homework was uneven and not well thought through in Years 3 and 4.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school has maintained its standards in English and mathematics and has improved standards in ICT since the last inspection. Standards in science dipped during this time but during the inspection were found to be at the expected level. The school has a much higher number of pupils with special educational needs (forty per cent instead of twenty eight per cent) than it did at the time of the previous inspection so has, in effect, improved on its standards since the last inspection.
2. Attainment on entry is below average, which reflects the high number of pupils with special educational needs on the school's roll.
3. The Key Stage 2 National Curriculum test results for 2000 are average in English and mathematics and below average in science in comparison with the national average. When compared with similar schools results are average in English and mathematics and well below average in science. The school's results have remained at this level in English and mathematics over a three-year period and the school has improved in line with the national trend. Standards in science are gradually improving but at a slower rate than in English and mathematics. Over time there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
4. Inspection findings based on lessons seen, pupils work and displays, indicate that standards are being maintained in English and mathematics. They have risen in science and are now in line with national expectations.
5. Standards in speaking and listening are at the expected level. Pupils listen well in lessons, generate ideas in brain storming sessions and contribute in a clear and relevant manner in question and answer sessions. Reading is at the expected level; most pupils confidently read a range of fiction and non-fiction text. They know how to use non-fiction texts to access information quickly. Standards in writing are at the expected level. Handwriting is well formed, pupils use an increasing range of punctuation within sentences and extend their vocabulary effectively. Spelling skills are satisfactory.
6. In mathematics, pupils attain at the expected level by age eleven. They have good recall of number bonds and use effective strategies to help them with the four rules of computation. Higher attaining pupils add and subtract three and four digit numbers and work with numbers to two decimal points.
7. Standards in science are at the expected level. Pupils attain above average standards in designing and carrying out experiments. By the age of eleven they have a good understanding of the effects of different processes on the substances they are investigating. Standards in recorded work are lower as pupils generally do not write up their results; they complete worksheets to show what they have covered rather than demonstrating what they understand. This means that they are not well equipped with the skills to do well in the tests.
8. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with expectations. The school has worked very hard through a series of initiatives to improve competency in ICT and has been successful. By the time they are eleven pupils confidently use spreadsheets to make graphs for temperature in different countries.
9. Standards in all other subjects of the curriculum are at the expected level. However, as a result of the very good input of the co-ordinator for physical education, standards are rising rapidly in this subject.
10. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are developed satisfactorily across the curriculum. Literacy skills are developed well through a good variety of written accounts in history but writing is not used well in subjects such as science, religious education or geography. Teachers place good emphasis

on the development of technical vocabulary in most subjects. Numeracy skills are used satisfactorily for measuring in design and technology and in the creation of time lines in history

11. Pupils with special educational needs learn very well and achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. This is because they are regularly supported by good teaching, which provides well planned work based on their personal targets. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve well as a result of good support from their teachers and specialist support teaching.
12. Pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment in English, mathematics, science, ICT, history and geography and satisfactorily in all other areas of the curriculum. This is due to the good quality teaching they receive overall and the sometimes very good and excellent teaching in Year 6.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. The previous inspection found that the school was an orderly community in which pupils behaved well, showed respect for one another, and responded very positively in lessons.
14. The school has made good progress since then. It has maintained and improved on the good standards, which were evident, four years ago. Relationships and personal development are now very good, and pupils have positive attitudes to learning which enhance their academic attainment and progress.
15. Pupils like coming to school. They are well motivated, want to learn, and are keen to take part in extra-curricular activities. They settle down quickly in lessons and are attentive, listening with care to what their teachers have to say. They respond well to challenging tasks, and are prepared to concentrate and persist until they have completed them. Pupils are full of ideas and enthusiasm in lessons where teaching is stimulating. They enjoy class discussions and are keen to show members of staff what they have learned and understood. A forest of hands usually shoots up whenever a teacher asks a question in a lesson. In general, boys are keener to answer than girls, who in some classes are very quiet and reserved. The majority of pupils are capable of taking responsibility for their own learning and are not over-reliant on adults. They are able to work independently on investigations and research, both in the classroom and at home.
16. Pupils' positive approach to work and commitment to learning are significant factors in the good progress that they make. Overall, attitudes are good, reflecting the quality of teaching in the school. They are best where teachers have high expectations, set interesting tasks and challenge pupils. In the minority of lessons where teaching lacks variety and sense of purpose, pupils lose interest and concentration. They go off task and become chatty, and their pace of working and productivity decreases.
17. Nearly all parents think that the standards of behaviour are good, and the current inspection concurs with this view. Pupils behave well in and around the school. They know and abide by the school's code of conduct, and are orderly when moving around the site. They are very polite and helpful to visitors and they respect school property. No graffiti and no instances of vandalism were observed during the inspection, and children on litter picking duty were seen to take pride in tidying up the grounds. When in lessons pupils show respect for members of staff, follow their instructions and accept their advice. This allows teachers to concentrate successfully on promoting learning. A handful of pupils, who are impatient to show off their knowledge, shout out answers to questions and interrupt speakers. However, the majority are scrupulous in following classroom rules on consideration and courtesy to others.
18. Behaviour in the lunch hour is good. Pupils are well mannered and orderly in the dining hall and they socialise well in the playground. There is no evidence of racism or sexism. Aggressive and oppressive acts, such as fighting and bullying, are not characteristic of pupils' behaviour, but do occur. They reflect the presence in school of a few individuals with behavioural problems. These pupils also account for the three fixed period exclusions that took place last year.

19. Relationships are very good and make the school a pleasant place in which to work and learn. Relations between pupils, and between pupils and adults are built on a foundation of mutual trust, creating an atmosphere of harmony and co-operation in the classroom. Pupils work well together in pairs or small groups. They are willing to share resources and offer each other help with difficult tasks. They respect other people's views and show sensitivity to their feelings.
20. Pupils' personal development is very good. Children of all ages respond very well to opportunities to exercise initiative and take on responsibility. They enjoy running errands for members of staff and are also willing to carry out more formal duties. Pupils in Year 4,5 and 6 are keen to be official "buddies". Those who are selected and trained for this role are pleased to have the chance to befriend and help others. A number of children from Year 6 also serve as prefects and pupils in Years 4 and 6 act as members of the "School Watch" team, and conscientiously carry out duties such as supervision of doors and corridors during breaks. Pupils are eager to broaden their experience and develop their independence. There is always a good response to opportunities to go on residential visits and to take part in fund raising for charity. For example, pupils regularly organise an event in support of the Blue Peter Appeal.
21. Attendance is satisfactory. The school's attendance rate is slightly below the national average for similar schools, but the incidence of unauthorised absence is well below the national figure, and very few pupils have poor records of attendance. Punctuality is good. Pupils arrive in good time for the start of the first lesson and time keeping during the school day is good. This helps pupils to make the most of their time at school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

22. In the last inspection forty per cent of the teaching was good or better and approximately fifteen per cent was unsatisfactory. Through very good monitoring of the quality of teaching the school has improved its teaching. Sixty seven per cent of it is now good or better and there was no unsatisfactory teaching observed during the inspection. Of the teaching seen, two per cent was excellent, fifteen per cent very good, fifty per cent good and thirty three per cent satisfactory. Most of the very good and excellent teaching was seen in Year 6. Pupils' learning is good overall and sometimes very good in Year 6.
23. The teaching of English and mathematics is good as are the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills. Work is firmly based on guidance from the national strategies ensuring that pupils' skills are developed sequentially and providing a good framework within which teachers can deliver structured lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan well for literacy. Planning for numeracy is more variable and is sometimes not helpful as a guide for lessons. In many lessons the learning intentions are shared with the pupils and this helps to promote their learning and increase their own understanding of what they are expected to learn. Good use is made of key words to develop technical vocabulary. For example, in Year 5 pupils understand that to 'recount the text' means to retell what has happened. Some mental mathematics sessions are used very effectively to challenge higher attaining pupils. For example, in a Year 6 lesson the teacher made good use of quick fire questions and working against the clock to motivate pupils. He also provided a strong element of challenge with some complex mental calculations for pupils to solve. Teachers question pupils effectively to consolidate learning and increase their ability to solve problems. They manage lessons well and most literacy and numeracy lessons are conducted within a good work ethic of sustained concentration. Most lessons are well organised and generally provide work that is challenging and relevant. Good use is made of resources to enhance lessons and help learning. Support staff are deployed well and through good interactions with pupils help their learning. The main weakness in the teaching of literacy is in some whole class sessions where pupils are not in a clearly focussed group close to the teacher and therefore lose interest. In mathematics, some mental mathematics sessions are slow because pupils are expected to write down their responses, which affects the pace and the effectiveness of the input.
24. Teachers make satisfactory use of opportunities to develop pupils' numeracy and literacy skills across the curriculum, particularly in history and design and technology but they could be used more effectively in subjects such as science.

25. Marking is generally not well used to set targets for improvement that are shared with pupils and this is linked to weaknesses in assessment. The school is aware of this weakness and has plans to address it as part of developments in assessment. On-going assessment of work is used inconsistently and lacks sufficient rigour to ensure a really good match to pupils' learning needs outside of the setting, which occurs in English and mathematics. There are no samples of work linked to the National Curriculum to help teachers with this aspect of their work. Without this it is difficult for teachers, particularly those new to the profession, to know what level pupils are at and what they need to do to help them improve. .
26. There are good and sometimes very good features in lessons which contribute effectively to pupils' learning. Planning is sufficiently detailed and shared at year group meetings to ensure a coherent approach to teaching subjects. All teachers have good relationships with their pupils and this creates good learning opportunities and an environment where pupils are prepared to take risks. Good use is made of support staff who make an effective contribution to pupil's' learning. Good opportunities are provided in most lessons for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills and this helps them to articulate their understanding and explore new meaning. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to work collaboratively and pupils work well together. Learning objectives are shared with pupils and this ensures that they are clear about what is expected of them. In the very good and excellent lessons teachers have very good subject knowledge, high expectations and very good questioning skills and they conduct lessons in a brisk, enthusiastic manner. For example, in a very good art lesson in Year 6, the teacher's enthusiasm for the subject enabled him to give clear explanations and ask very pertinent questions. This helped the pupils to produce work of high quality and gave them a clearer understanding of commercialism within art.
27. There are some weaknesses in teaching in Years 3 and 4, which occasionally detract from effective learning and these are slow pace, ineffective behaviour management and lack of challenge in the work. For example, in a Year 4 lesson pupils copied a piece of work rather than writing it in their own words so did not develop their writing skills. Those who finished the task early had no extension activities, did not know what to do in the time left and moved around aimlessly.
28. Teaching is good in geography, history, ICT and physical education and satisfactory in music, religious education and art. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on teaching in design and technology.
29. Satisfactory use is made of homework to help pupils' learning. Parents generally support their children's homework activities very well and are particularly supportive of reading.
30. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and this, together with the very good provision, impacts significantly on the very good progress pupils make. The special educational needs teacher and support assistants have developed wide expertise, which meets the high level of complex needs of the special educational needs pupils in the school. Pupils' individual targets are well known to teachers and support assistants. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) meets on a weekly basis with all support assistants, to give advice and support and discuss special educational needs issues and individual pupils. Members of the support team have written instructions and are well briefed before lessons. Teaching and support is mainly within the classroom, but additionally pupils are withdrawn to the special educational needs room for specific teaching programmes, which are well designed to meet individual needs. These sessions are of good quality and very good learning results through good identification of specific needs, regular targeted support and a good range of relevant resources.
31. The quality of teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory and helps them to learn and improve their understanding of English as a language.

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

32. The school provides its pupils with a good range of learning opportunities that have improved since the previous inspection. The curriculum has good breadth and balance and is relevant to the interest, aptitudes, special educational needs and additional language needs of all pupils. It prepares them well for the next stage of their education. Statutory requirements are met in all areas, including collective worship, religious education, sex education and personal, social and health education. Key issues in the previous inspection were to improve curriculum planning, improve schemes of work to ensure continuity and progression in all subjects and to develop the role of the subject co-ordinators. These have now been addressed well. All co-ordinators have the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning and, schemes of work based on nationally produced initiatives, are now in place. Very good use is made of visitors to the school and visits in the locality. Such activities add interest and relevance to pupils' learning, contributing to their positive attitudes and personal development.
33. A good emphasis is placed on the teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Good use is made of the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy, both of which are raising standards and improving teaching. The long-term and medium-term planning of the curriculum is satisfactory and helps pupils build on their previous learning. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection. Short term planning is less well developed and is inconsistent throughout the school. Appropriate policies are in place for all subjects and are being reviewed in order to produce a common, meaningful, format and to reduce the paper work involved. Schemes of work are in place for all subjects. The majority of schemes are based appropriately on national guidelines. The scheme for religious education is in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus for Medway schools. There is good provision for personal, social and health education through the regular curriculum. Sex and drugs education is addressed appropriately across other areas of the curriculum, for example in science and 'circle time', where pupils have the opportunity to discuss various issues. Personal, social and health education is supported well by visits from the school's nurse and police liaison officer and through discussion in 'circle time'. Links with schools in Finland, Italy and Germany help promote pupils' cultural and language awareness.
34. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good and has improved since the last inspection report, when it was judged to be good. Over ninety per cent of parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that the school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. Lunch time and after school sports activities include gymnastics, swimming, football, netball, table tennis, basketball, rugby, jogging and dance. Non sporting activities include a gardening club, drama club, book club, chess, guitar, and art.
35. The school is committed to providing equal opportunities for all pupils, and has put in place good measures to promote equality of access to the curriculum. It has a comprehensive written policy on equal opportunities, and carefully monitors its work in order to ensure that there is no bias against any group of pupils. Recently the school has focused on boys, in an effort to close the gap between their attainment and that of girls. At the same time, it has continued to promote equality of opportunity for girls. For example, the school monitors the use of questions in lessons in order to ensure that teachers are giving girls an equal chance to contribute to class discussions. As at the time of the last inspection, clubs and extra curricular activities are open to both sexes, with the exception of the girls' football club. Overall, there is equal access to the curriculum for everyone and all pupils are fully involved in school life.
36. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and this, together with the good teaching, helps them to make very good progress. High quality individual education plans are produced that indicate what pupils should learn next. These plans are used well in lessons and teachers and learning support assistants know what to focus on when supporting pupils with special educational needs. The requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs are met and teachers receive effective advice when required from an appropriate range of external specialists. Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs have good quality yearly reviews and their

requirements are generally met. The school does the best it can to provide speech and language support for statements.

37. The support given to pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) is good. Early learners have input from the Language Achievement Service, working as an extension to classroom lessons. Activities are linked to their own culture, giving greater meaning particularly in multi-faith work. Pupils are able to communicate a series of events with support, relate personal news and express their feelings. Although attainment of these pupils in speaking and listening is below the national average, progress is good. Daily feedback to the class teachers ensures that work is monitored, as does end of term assessment. Discussions with staff indicate that pupils with developing or fluent English achieve well across the curriculum.
38. The local community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. For example, there are visitors to school to talk about health topics, the police talk to Year 6 pupils' about drug misuse, and historical re-enactment groups visit the school. Good links have been made with Gillingham football club and the London Towers basketball team. During the inspection week a champion gymnast held classes and demonstrations for all year groups. The swimming pool and field are used by community groups, which not only supports community sports activities but also raises money for the school. Pupils go on visits in the Gillingham area and older pupils take part in the local schools' sports, carol, music and dance festivals. Recently, Year 6 pupils took part in the concert "The Puzzle of Gondwana" at Rochester Cathedral. Year 6 pupils take part in a residential week at the Arethusa Centre on the River Medway, where they have the opportunity to take part in archery, swimming, orienteering, rock climbing and trust and team building games. Year 5 pupils go to the Isle of Wight for an environmental studies week. In recent months local businesses have donated money to the school to be used on numeracy and physical education equipment and to help develop a fitness room. Parents provide very good support in lessons, especially swimming, and trained volunteers from a national charity provide reading support.
39. Very good links have been established with partner institutions and local schools. The headteacher meets regularly with other headteachers from the local cluster of schools. The school has good teacher training links with Christ Church University College. A teacher from one of the partner secondary schools has visited the school to teach computer skills and a secondary school pupil, studying for a GCSE qualification in physical education, has taught in the school. The good links with the infant and secondary schools ensures a smooth transition for the pupils through each stage of their education.
40. The provision for spiritual and cultural development is good. Provision for personal, moral and social development is very good and requirements for collective worship are met. The school has strong links with the Church. Good relationships between staff and pupils ensure mutual respect. Visitors who take assemblies such as local clergy and the "Family Trust" serve to reinforce the caring nature of the school community. In assemblies where themes are thought provoking, pupils respond well and opportunities occur for reflection. Christian symbols, prayers and music, create a calm spiritual atmosphere.
41. Circle time throughout the school, serves to illustrate that pupils' ideas are valued. In a lesson on bullying a Year 6 pupil reflected, "We can feel inside that something is wrong". Environmental issues are introduced so that pupils can explore their place in the world. Visits to places of worship give pupils experience of other religions. Development of this aspect of the school is planned with a room being set aside for reflection and staff in- service training. A strong moral code exists within the school. The headteacher and staff are good role models, showing honesty and fairness towards pupils. In one Year 6 class a caption 'Respect for others and taking responsibility for our own actions', reflects this code. In circle time discussions occur which emphasise the difference between right and wrong. Topics such as "dangerous play situations" or "bullying" enables pupils to make choices and relate personal experiences. They are encouraged to express opinions and make thoughtful comments. After one lesson, a questionnaire was given for homework where truthful answers were expected. The ethos of the school reflects the importance of its moral code, giving the pupils confidence within a secure school environment. As a result of the assertive

discipline policy, pupils behave well in lessons, around the school and in the playground. Staff have high expectations of behaviour, dealing promptly and fairly with bad behaviour.

42. The prefect and buddy systems illustrate ways in which pupils take responsibility and develop socially. A school council meets each month to discuss developments within the school. Pupils relate well in the Breakfast Club and this has a positive effect on behaviour in school. Most pupils use their own initiative, tidy at the end of lessons and select appropriate resources. Pupils collaborate well, showing respect for others and observing group rules in class. Many pupils take advantage of after school clubs, such as chess or sporting activities. Older pupils have the opportunity to make a residential visit to the Isle of Wight, where they have the chance to be ambassadors for their school, discover what makes a good team member and learn to be good citizens. Pupils are polite and helpful, showing a friendly approach to school visitors.
43. Pupils study their own culture in many areas of the curriculum, particularly English, history and geography. Sponsored events are held in school and donations are given to various charities. Links with European schools such as Pramaggiore in Italy widen the pupils' cultural knowledge of other European cultures. Staff have made visits and future plans include pupil exchange.
44. Art and music reflect cultural diversity, as in an assembly where Chinese music was played or in art to extend pupils' knowledge of different artists and their styles. The school has an effective anti-racist policy with a positive approach to all pupils. The books in the school library have a multi-cultural flavour. However, there are not enough opportunities to celebrate different cultures in order to increase pupils' awareness of the society in which they live.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. At the time of the last inspection in 1997 the school gave its pupils good support and guidance. It has made good improvement in the last four years. It continues to provide a safe and secure environment in which pupils can thrive, and it has very good procedures for promoting good behaviour. The school's pastoral care makes a positive contribution to standards of attainment. Pupils are well looked after and happy at school, and therefore well placed to make good academic progress.
46. Pupils' personal development and general welfare are effectively monitored and supported. There are good arrangements for the induction of Year 3 pupils so that they settle down quickly and make good progress. Pupils receive good support throughout their time in the school. The curriculum of personal and social education, which includes drugs, health and sex education, helps to prepare them for life outside school. The school's very good programme of extra curricular activities and opportunities to exercise responsibility also helps them to become more mature. Pupils are well supported on an individual basis. Members of staff have very good relationships with them and know them well as people. Teachers and classroom assistants are therefore able to monitor their development closely and provide them with appropriate guidance. Pupils are also able to turn to "buddies" for help if they feel isolated and lonely. The buddy scheme is valued by pupils and makes a significant contribution to pastoral care.
47. Much of the monitoring of pupils' personal development is done informally. However class teachers record and comment on pupils' attitudes, maturity and social development in their written reports to parents at the end of the school year. Where necessary, reports include targets for improvement in areas such as concentration, personal organisation and application to task.
48. The school has good procedures for protecting the health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors. Arrangements for child protection are thorough. The school's policy on the issue gives clear guidance to members of staff on procedures, and there is good provision for staff training. The school also has a number of policies designed to help staff to meet pupils' medical needs. For example there are formal statements on asthma management and diabetes. Pupils' health and general welfare also benefit from the provision of a "Breakfast Club". Arrangements for first aid are appropriate to the number of pupils and members of staff. The school carries out regular health and safety checks of its premises and equipment and meets statutory requirements on these matters. It has completed risk assessments in priority areas such as the swimming pool, and is currently carrying out an assessment of the grounds.

49. There are good arrangements for encouraging pupils to attend school regularly and punctually. These comply with legal requirements on the registration, recording and reporting of attendance. Teachers call class registers at the beginning of morning and afternoon school. Unexplained absences are followed up very promptly. Office staff contact parents on the first morning in order to find out why the child is away from school. Attendance rates are carefully monitored using the analyses produced by the school's computer system. The school takes appropriate action where the records show that there is cause for concern. Parents are consulted, and the most difficult cases are also referred to the education welfare officer.
50. The school has high standards regarding behaviour. These are encapsulated in its aims and objectives and communicated to parents and pupils through the home/school agreement and code of conduct. They are backed by good practical measures. The school has a well-established assertive discipline policy. As at the time of the last inspection, members of staff apply it consistently and fairly in lessons and during the lunch hour. Pupils' behaviour is closely recorded and monitored as part of the policy, and children who give cause for concern are well supported and helped to improve. The majority know what is expected of them. They understand what the consequences will be if they break the school's rules and they respond positively to the school's system of rewards. Pupils value praise from teachers and are keen to earn merits. The school is aware of the importance of rewards and formal recognition of achievement in raising standards, and is therefore introducing an annual prize giving ceremony.
51. There are good procedures for dealing with, and as far as possible eliminating, oppressive behaviour. The school has a formal anti-bullying policy, and any instances of bullying are dealt with effectively. Pupils are usually willing to confide in members of staff or in "buddies" if they become victims. Levels of supervision at break and lunchtime are satisfactory. Supervisors are well briefed on their roles, and are ably assisted by pupils on "School Watch" duty. In general they are successful in preventing bullying and fighting in the playground.
52. Very good assessments are made of pupils with special educational needs, identifying and supporting a wide range of complex needs. Information from these assessments is used profitably to prepare good quality individual education plans and the progress each pupil makes against these is monitored very well. Individual education plans are reviewed regularly and are of good quality, helping pupils, teachers and parents to know what needs to be learned next. The targets set for individual plans are well designed for personal development, literacy and numeracy support. The identification of the levels, upon which pupils are identified on the Code of Practice, is accurate and reviewed and moderated regularly.
53. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics are satisfactory. There are a variety of end of year tests in place, which are used for grouping pupils in English and mathematics. In all other subjects the procedures for assessment are generally unsatisfactory. Pupils' understanding at the end of a topic or theme is assessed in English, mathematics and science. However, daily assessment, against the specific learning objectives of a lesson, is not systematically used by all teachers and does not always inform planning and matching of work to the different ability groups in a class or set. Where assessment is used well, teachers assess pupils against the objectives of the lesson and this is used to inform the next stage of learning and to ensure that work is well matched to the ability of each pupil. However, procedures vary between classes and year groups. The assessment of reading is unsatisfactory. In other subjects assessment is unsatisfactory. Where assessment does happen, there is no consistent approach to it. Individual samples of pupils' work are kept and these show pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. The previous inspection report judged that assessment in English was developing but was inconsistent in other subjects. Present judgements are similar. However, the recently appointed assessment co-ordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development but has yet to make an impact on improving assessment procedures because of the short time that she has been at the school. The school is using data provided by the local education authority to analyse national, local and school results in English, mathematics and science, and has begun to computerise assessment data so as to be able to systematically track

the progress of pupils and trends. Subject portfolios of moderated and assessed work, to help teachers judge the attainment of pupils, have yet to be developed. The marking of pupils' work is not consistent throughout the school and does not always evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work or set individual targets for the future. The majority of teachers are setting targets for pupils in English and numeracy, but they are not always clear to the pupils or referred to in lessons.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

54. There is a strong partnership between parents and the school, and parents' involvement with their children's learning enhances attainment and progress. There has been good progress in the last four years. The strengths that were identified in the last report have been maintained, while some links, such as the e-mail focus group, have been developed.
55. The latest inspection survey shows a good degree of support for the school. Parents gave favourable responses to all the questions. They are particularly pleased with the school's expectations concerning hard work, the quality of its leadership and standards of teaching. They are least satisfied with homework. A significant minority are unhappy with the amount of work that pupils are expected to do at home. The inspection supports parents' positive views, but also finds evidence that support some of their concerns over homework.
56. In general parents take a more positive view of the school than they did at the last inspection. At that time, a greater number were undecided, and fewer expressed approval. Homework is the only matter on which parents are now more negative. In the latest survey, 22 per cent say that their child does not get the right amount. The corresponding figure in 1997 was 15 per cent.
57. The quality of information for parents is good overall. The school prospectus and the annual report to parents of the governing body are both well presented documents, which fully comply with legal requirements. Parents are kept in touch with events in school through notices and regular newsletters and information is also available on the school's website. Members of staff are diligent and prompt in contacting home if they have any concerns about a child's behaviour and progress. The quality of day-to-day routine information on pupils' academic work is uneven. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 record their homework tasks in a formal homework diary that they take home. This gives parents the chance to see what their children are learning. Arrangements are less effective in Years 3 and 4. Some younger pupils say that their parents make a note of the books that they have read, but many others say that they never take home a reading record.
58. The school makes good arrangements for consultation evenings. These are held termly, and give parents sufficient time to discuss their children's progress with class teachers. Parents also receive interim written reports in the course of the academic year. They provide a good summary of the pupil's effort and attainment in the core subjects of the curriculum. They also contain helpful comments on significant strengths and weaknesses. The end-of-year reports have some positive features. They give adequate accounts of what pupils have learned in the core subjects, and include targets for improvement in English and mathematics. On the other hand, the sections on religious education and the foundation subjects of the curriculum are weak and do not make statements on attainment. For example, the texts of reports on information technology do not tell the reader the level pupils are working at. The school is aware of this weakness in the reports and is in the process of addressing it. The overall quality of information on pupils' progress is accurately reflected in the inspection's survey of parental opinions. The majority of parents are satisfied, but 10 per cent feel that they are not adequately informed.
59. The school values its links with pupils' families and makes considerable efforts to develop them. It has good procedures for consulting parents and taking their views into account. There is a focus group who are contacted via e-mail, and there is an annual survey of parental opinion. The school operates an open door policy, and parents are encouraged to come in and discuss any concerns that they may have with teachers. The home/school agreement is in place. This promotes mutual understanding and good co-operation by setting out clearly the rights and obligations of all parties.

60. There are effective strategies in place to communicate with parents of pupils who have English as an additional language and satisfactory contact is made between school and these parents.
61. The school's work to promote its partnership with parents is effective. There is a high level of parental involvement with pupils' learning and the life of the school. Parents are interested in their children's progress and want to help them to do well. They attend consultation evenings, and are supportive if there are problems over work or behaviour. Parents contribute very well to the curriculum. For example they play a major role in the provision of swimming and helping to supervise during swimming lessons. A number of parents are active in other ways. Many support the parent teacher association and raise significant sums of money for the school through fund raising events. Some act as volunteer helpers in the library. Parents are very much involved in their children's learning at home. Most younger pupils say that their mother or father hears them read in the evening. Examples of Year 6 pupils' homework diaries show that their parents regularly read them, and are interested in and supportive of their children's work.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

62. The headteacher, together with the senior leadership team gives clear direction for the educational work of the school and this has resulted in a number of significant improvements being made since the last inspection. Their vision is focused on good quality educational provision throughout the school and their work is central to promoting the school's aims to help all pupils achieve their full potential whilst being happy in the school environment. Staff, governors and the vast majority of parents have confidence in the way in which the school is led and managed and give the headteacher their active support. There is a strong commitment to good relationships throughout the school and a demonstrable commitment to equality of entitlement to all pupils and staff. The aims of the school are often to be seen in action in the classrooms and elsewhere in the school. For instance, in many lessons, pupils showed that they were competent and confident learners and that in and around the school, they behaved in a way which showed them to be responsible members of the school community. There is a will and capacity to succeed which is evident throughout the school, and there is evidence that many of the initiatives, which have been undertaken, are being successful.
63. Since the last inspection, the school has worked well on the key issues identified. Policies and schemes of work are in place resulting in good curricular opportunities for pupils. There has been an improvement in the monitoring of the teaching. This is now evaluated regularly and effectively. Evaluation reports are analytical and identify areas for further improvements. These reports feed into the school's appraisal system. Pupils' performance in ICT has improved substantially whilst standards in music and art are now at the expected level. The school is proud of its status as an accredited *Investors in People* organisation. The procedures in operation have also laid secure foundations for the school's performance management system.
64. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been satisfactorily implemented through the school and the monitoring in these subjects has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching. Co-ordinators generally lead their subjects well or at the least satisfactorily, also an improvement since the last inspection, and the very good practice shown by the co-ordinator for physical education is being copied in other subject areas. This has resulted in a positive ethos for learning and overall good teaching. The management and organisation of the school curriculum provides good equality of access and opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress.
65. However, the senior teachers still lack sufficient involvement at present in the school's assessment systems and in analysis of performance data at pupil, class, year and end of key stage levels. The senior management team does not make full use of information from assessments for tracking and monitoring the progress of individual pupils within each key stage in order to plan whole school strategies.
66. The very good leadership of the SENCO underpins the very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Very good knowledge of the identification of the complex needs of these pupils is used meticulously to ensure this very good provision is maintained and improved. Since the last

inspection, very good improvement has been made in terms of provision and teaching, which has been skilfully developed by the special educational needs co-ordinator.

67. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties satisfactorily. They make a limited contribution to shaping the school's direction and rely heavily on the headteacher for guidance. Governors show their commitment to the school through regular attendance at whole governing body meetings and through the work of their sub - committees. Each month a governor takes on the role of duty governor and is the first point of contact for parents should any issues arise. Parents value this. Some relatively new governors, for example the finance governors, are taking on greater responsibility and are very committed to developing their roles and responsibilities.
68. The school has effective strategies for the evaluation of the performance of the staff in the school. As a consequence of monitoring and recent performance management initiatives, improved teaching and increased teacher effectiveness is having a positive impact on the pupils' learning throughout the school. The governors have set realistic performance targets for the head teacher.
69. The school's priorities for development are good and the school improvement plan is a useful vehicle for their implementation. Good improvements have already been secured in some of the school's priorities, for example in ICT and science. The main weaknesses in the plan are a lack of clearly measurable success criteria to help the school accurately assess its success and the fact that it only covers a year which limits the longer term view of the school's development.
70. There is a very good range of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum and the school makes good use of teacher expertise for the benefit of pupils beyond the class that they teach as a class teacher. The school has a commitment to employing good quality learning support staff and this was in evidence during the inspection. The employment of a swimming instructor and ICT technician is further evidence of its commitment to a broad curriculum. Support for special educational needs pupils is through very good numbers of support assistants and the special educational needs teacher; overall making very good provision
71. The school has very effective induction procedures for staff new to the school and particularly newly qualified teachers. For example, the school employed four newly qualified teachers once they graduated in June to enable them to be given a thorough induction prior to their start in September. The school provides placements for students from Christ Church University and is also a training provider in its own right under the Graduate Teacher Programme. Students are generally provided with a good training experience, however, occasionally their placement within the school is inappropriate in assisting their professional development.
72. The school makes good strategic use of its adequate resources in order to promote learning. Financial decisions are based on good planning and budgeting is systematic. Governors, through the finance committee are fully involved in this process. However there are no clear links between the school improvement plan and the budget to show how money is allocated. Grants for specific purposes are used well and the school is very entrepreneurial in raising money to support its developments, for example the grant for links with schools in other countries. The school used part of its large financial contingency effectively to provide and equip an ICT suite and employ an ICT technician. The school uses the principles of best value to consult with parents, check its results and to get quotations for work to be carried out.
73. The overall accommodation is satisfactory with particular strengths and weaknesses. The classrooms within the main pre-war building are of a good size but vary in their quality as a learning environment. The best are carpeted, have good quality furniture and are well organised with appropriate resources readily accessible. However some have tiled floors that accentuate sound, old cupboards that house 'hidden resources' and poorly displayed pupils' work. The Year 6 teachers have made every effort to provide a good quality learning environment, but the prefabricated building that houses three classrooms and the cramped mobile classroom are unsatisfactory accommodation. The ICT suite, the indoor swimming pool and spacious playing field represent good quality provision, while the hard standing and school grounds are underdeveloped for pupils' break times.

74. Learning resources are satisfactory. Computers in the ICT suite and the computers in all classrooms, including the prefabricated buildings, have Internet links. This is high quality provision and it is particularly impressive that there are no out dated computers in use. However, this cannot be said of other curriculum areas, where although there is new equipment, there is evidence throughout the school of old and no longer used equipment. The library is a good resource and well used, but the condition of some of the books is unsatisfactory. Resources for pupils with EAL effectively draw on their own cultural background. There is also a computer programme used to translate from mother tongue.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards and enable pupils to make further progress, the governing body, head teacher and staff as a whole team need to: -

- Ensure teachers identify in their plans what it is that pupils are expected to learn
Paragraphs: 84, 97, 105
- Provide consistent procedures for assessment in every subject so that teachers record routinely and accurately what pupils have learnt
Paragraphs: 53, 81,97,102,105,109, 121
- Analyse and use the information from this assessment to
 - a) plan what needs to be included in future lessons
 - b) provide work that is challenging and helps all pupils to build on what they already know
 - c) show pupils how well they are doing and what they should learn next
 - d) provide information for senior managers to use in planning school improvementParagraphs: 53, 65,81,102,105,109,121
- Provide consistent procedures for marking pupils' work that shows pupils how well they have done and how improvements can be made
Paragraphs: 25, 53,78,84, 85,97
- Ensure that pupils' reading skills are consistently and accurately assessed, and the information used to plan activities in lessons that systematically improve these skills.
Paragraphs: 53,78,81
- Improve the environment both internally and externally. (76,130,135)
- Improve the provision in all classrooms to the standard of the best in the school. (76,130)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	91
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	15	50	33	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		458
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		53

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		12
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		174

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	26
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	70	57	127

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	48	53	60
	Girls	43	38	47
	Total	91	91	107
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (71)	72 (64)	84 (67)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	51	53	56
	Girls	47	43	47
	Total	98	96	103
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (67)	76 (68)	81 (62)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	446
Any other minority ethnic group	4

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.8
Average class size	28.5

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	300

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	795089
Total expenditure	784907
Expenditure per pupil	1643
Balance brought forward from previous year	44336
Balance carried forward to next year	54518

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	456
Number of questionnaires returned	149

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	46	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	44	5	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	28	64	4	2	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	54	17	5	0
The teaching is good.	45	50	1	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	63	9	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	32	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	46	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	23	66	6	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	36	60	0	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	60	0	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	42	3	0	5

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

ENGLISH

75. Results of the Year 2000 national tests show pupils' attainment by the age of eleven, to be overall in line with the national average. In addition, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 is above the national average. In comparison with similar schools results are average. However, this is an improvement in English as standards have been sustained since the last inspection, despite a lowering of pupil attainment on entry. The school has fully implemented the Literacy Strategy and lessons across the school are well planned with a good focus on providing work to match the needs of pupils of differing abilities. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are arranged in ability groups for literacy and in Year 3 they are grouped by ability for 'Writer's Workshop' for one literacy lesson per week. This has an impact on raising standards in writing as teachers can plan the introduction of specific skills matched more closely to the ability range. All of these initiatives have had a positive impact on standards. Pupils, including those with SEN and EAL, achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and this is directly linked to well-structured lessons and consistently good quality teaching.
76. Overall, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is in line with national expectations by the age of eleven. They enter school from a wide range of backgrounds and ability and the teachers systematically build successfully on their skills. Pupils make good gains in their learning to attain as they do. All pupils listen well in lessons across the curriculum and this is a significant factor in the progress they make. In all year groups pupils develop speaking and listening skills through discussion and individual pupils speak confidently to adults, in class and around the school. Pupils generate ideas in brain storming sessions and contribute well through question and answer in plenary sessions such as those at the end of the Literacy hour. They listen well to their teachers and to each other and this enables them to answer questions in a relevant manner, and the more able pupils often support this with a good deal of detail. Further opportunities are provided for pupils to speak and listen during 'circle time' and assemblies, while the School Council provides a forum to debate issues.
77. All pupils use the headphones in each classroom to listen to stories as a group while following the text. They enjoy these sessions and collaboratively discuss possible answers to questions related to the text before giving their individual written answers about the passage. Pupils in Year 5 are particularly enthusiastic listeners as they also try to identify the voice of the teacher on the tape. Teachers' planning always identifies the key words used in a lesson and this contributes to the development of pupils' technical vocabulary. For example, in Year 5 pupils understand that 'recount the text' means to tell what has happened. In history they use the term 'primary' and 'secondary' when talking about sources of evidence. Year 6 pupils identify the 'hidden' meaning in a poem as what the poet is actually saying. In another lesson, lower ability pupils follow the teachers modelling of a very expressive reading and read expressively themselves.
78. Pupils make good progress in acquiring reading skills so that by the age of eleven standards are in line with national expectations. Some pupils in Year 6 are attaining at the higher Level 5 and there are really able readers in all year groups. However, lower attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they could. This is linked to a lack of clear assessment of pupils' developing reading skills in order to plan work that matches their needs. This is particularly so in Years 3 and 4. By the age of eleven, higher attaining pupils read expressively. They have personal views on the texts they are reading and know where to find the supporting evidence. They talk about their favourite authors, referring in discussion to books they have read. Lower attaining pupils generally read accurately. They are beginning to reflect on characters in the books they are reading and can summarise the story successfully. There are good features in many lessons, which help pupils with their reading. For example, in Year 4 lessons pupils analyse fiction and non-fiction texts. They enjoy the humour in the school song from 'The Worst Witch' particularly the line 'Proudly on our brooms we fly'. They easily identify adjectives, but understand that 'Great Hall' is a noun. In non-fiction texts they read a text about spiders, correctly using the term 'arachnid'. They scan through a range of non-fiction books to see if they contain 'contents, index and glossary', and judge the age group for which they are most suited. Year 5 pupils read science fiction texts, identifying sources of power and features such as good and evil represented by white and black. Pupils enjoy the group reading sessions in

the Literacy hour. However, they do not develop their skills fully within these because the sessions are not based on an analysis of their reading skills so there is not a close match to their needs.

79. Attainment in writing is similar to that in reading. By the age of eleven standards are in line with national expectations. This is good achievement given the below average attainment of these pupils on entry. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6, use paragraphs and a good range of punctuation within sentences in their writing. They punctuate their work well and develop their ideas in interesting ways. However, there are still some pupils who regularly omit simple punctuation marks. Almost all pupils use joined writing which is neat and legible and work is well presented. Across the school, writing is well taught and pupils are encouraged to write and use their literacy skills in all subjects of the curriculum. Pupils use and analyse text to help improve their own writing. For example, Year 3 pupils consider a sequel to the traditional story, 'The Frog Prince'. They agree that the main characters and the setting must be retained while writing an interesting sequel. They use planning frames, of differing complexity, to help them organise their writing. They learn appropriate grammar for their age, identifying adjectives and replacing verbs such as 'went' and 'said' with more powerful words. Their spelling is usually accurate or phonetically justifiable. More able pupils in Year 5 understand the use of paragraphs, connectives and subordinate clauses to improve their writing. They appreciate the expressive power of metaphor in, 'his heart was a runaway train'. In DH Lawrence's 'Snake' Year 6 pupils identify alliteration in 'strange-scented shade'. Pupils` make good progress in their writing as they move through the school. Most pupils have well formed, legible joined handwriting, use an increasing range of punctuation and vocabulary and their spelling is of a sound standard. The school has a wide range of ability and pupils with special educational need and higher attaining pupils achieve equally well.
80. The quality of teaching of English is good throughout the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Lessons are well planned and generally begin with good introductions. The format of the lesson is clearly shared with pupils and as a result pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn. There is a good level of challenge in the work. For example, when pupils were expected to find more powerful verbs than 'went' and 'said'. Teachers are skilled at questioning and they have good subject knowledge, particularly in the format of the literacy hour, which has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and attainment and pupil management is good. Pupils respond with very positive attitudes to their work, behave well and have equally good relationships with adults and each other. This creates a positive learning environment for pupils. Achievement in English is good and pupils make good progress. The main weakness in teaching is in those lessons where in the whole class text work pupils are not in a closely focussed group near the teacher and as a result they lose interest.
81. English is well managed by the co-ordinator who is aware of the areas within the subject that still need developing. She has ensured the effective implementation of the Literacy hour through monitoring teaching and teachers' planning. The school has started to use information from test results to monitor pupil progress and pupils` literacy books contain individual targets for improvement. However, all staff do not yet have a clear understanding of each level of attainment in English to help them refine their planning and marking to ensure the work closely matches the needs of all pupils. Reading records have limited value, as they are not based on a developmental profile of pupil's emerging and developing reading skills. The library has a wide range of books and is well used, however, some are dated and in poor condition.

MATHEMATICS

82. Results of the national tests in the year 2000 showed pupils' attainment by the age of 11 to be in line with the national average. The number of pupils exceeding the expected level was also in line with the national average. Results for the three years from 1998 to 2000 were in line with the national trend. Compared with pupils in similar school's results in 2000 were close to the average. This is similar to the judgements of the previous inspection report, when standards were found to be in line with national averages. However, the school now has a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs and, as a result, this is an improvement in standards. Results for 2000 show that boys perform better than girls do. However, no evidence was seen of any gender differences during the inspection week. Inspection findings show that the pupils' standard of work

by the age of eleven is in line with expectations in all areas of the mathematics curriculum and pupils, including those with SEN and EAL, achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.

83. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In a quarter of lessons observed teaching was very good or excellent. No lessons observed were unsatisfactory. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection, when teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall. The improvement in teaching is a clear result of the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, the appointment of a new subject co-ordinator and the monitoring of teaching and learning by the subject co-ordinator. Although teaching has improved since the last inspection, the effect on learning and the raising of standards is still working its way through the school. However, weaknesses and inconsistencies in assessment also affect standards. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. In an excellent Year 6 lesson, with the higher attaining set the teacher's subject knowledge was very good and resulted in the setting of quick fire questions and very quick responses in pupils' answers. Against the clock, pupils were asked to respond to statements read out by other pupils. The teacher was quick to assess and comment on each answer and ensured the mental warm-up never lost its very fast pace. The pupils were challenged by questions such as "I am 37, subtract from me the product of three and nine and multiply by eight" and were eager to beat their previous time. The majority of teachers clearly display the objectives of the lesson but do not always discuss the objectives or recap them during, or at the end of, the lesson. In a Year 3 lesson observed, about sorting numbers and shapes by their properties, the teacher began by reading out the objectives for the lesson and continually referred back to them with the pupils. At the end of the lesson, the pupils were asked to assess their own understanding against the objectives and this increased their knowledge of their own learning. However, this is not consistently practised throughout the school. Most teachers use questioning well to assess understanding but not all use pupils' errors and misconceptions as further teaching points or ask pupils to explain and share their personal mental strategies. The pace of lessons is generally good. However, the pace of some introductory mental sessions is slow because teachers ask pupils to write down their answers, or target individual pupils for an answer, rather than encouraging the whole class to be involved by holding up number fans or number digit cards to instantly show their answers.
84. Teachers do not always write in their lesson plans what they expect pupils to learn in the lesson. As a result, they are unable to keep adequate records that show the progress pupils make. Although the same format is used in all year groups, planning is not consistent throughout and ranges from good to barely satisfactory. Few teachers evaluate their lessons or the work of individuals or groups of pupils against the learning objectives. Recording of assessments is inconsistent. Marking of work rarely identifies pupils' strengths and areas for development. Although individual targets are set for pupils, it is not done consistently. Some teachers set and assess targets regularly against learning objectives whilst others set less specific targets. The generally unsatisfactory use of assessment makes it difficult to carefully track pupils' progress and to plan for the different ability groups in each class. Pupils are set by ability in Years 5 and 6 but work within some set groups is not always sufficiently matched to the differing needs of pupils. The lack of long-term test data means the school is not being able to carefully analyse progress by ability, gender, ethnicity and specific groups. However, the school recognises this weakness and is beginning to track pupils by using end of topic tests and the non-statutory annual tests in Years 3, 4 and 5. The end of key stage statutory tests are also being analysed to highlight strengths and areas to develop in the mathematics curriculum. There is no portfolio of moderated work to help support teacher assessment.
85. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject. They apply themselves to their work and behave well. In a third of lessons observed, attitudes were very good or excellent.
86. Pupils with special educational needs are given very good support and make very good progress. For example, in a very good Year 6 lesson with the lower attaining set, the learning support assistants were given very good guidance by the class teacher and clearly knew their roles in the lesson. This empowered them to work very well as a team and to give very good support to the pupils who were able to make very good progress. Pupils for whom English as an additional language are given good support and make good progress.

87. There is no difference in standards between the different areas of the mathematics curriculum. By the end of the key stage pupils have a good recall of number bonds and the strategies for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of number. This is being developed by quick fire mental warm-up sessions, which the pupils thoroughly enjoy. Many classes have a 'Champ of the week' or 'Whiz of the week', which encourages and motivates the pupils in their mental mathematics. When given the opportunity, pupils can describe their mental strategies for recalling number facts. They can add and subtract three and four digit numbers and multiply and divide by 10, 100 and 1000 whole numbers and numbers with decimals to two places. The higher attaining pupils can use simple algebraic formula and convert decimals to fractions and check their results with a calculator,
88. By Year 6, in their work on data handling, pupils can produce bar, line and pie graphs of their results and interrogate graphs for information. For example, pupils produce bar charts of test results, the lower attaining pupils construct graphs of a litter survey and the higher attaining pupils construct line graphs of the monthly temperature in holiday resorts and pie charts of favourite pets. The highest attaining group confidently decides on the most appropriate type of graph to use.
89. In their work on shape, space and measurement, Year 6 pupils can tell the time on a digital and analogue clock and the higher attainers can tell the time using the 24-hour system. They can use appropriate language when describing two and three-dimensional shapes, can measure acute and obtuse angles with accuracy, and measure in centimetres and millimetres to calculate the area of irregular shapes. The more able pupils can use the appropriate formula to calculate the area of circle.
90. Numeracy is used satisfactorily across the curriculum and is planned for in the nationally produced schemes being used in other subject areas, for example, in history pupils use time-lines. Year 5 pupils look at the shapes of Greek buildings. In design and technology pupils learn to measure accurately and in cookery they follow recipes. In information technology pupils input data to produce graphs and charts. In art pupils look at examples of symmetry around them.
91. The co-ordinator gives good leadership and though relatively new to the post he is making a positive impact on the subject. He is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and has a clear understanding of the strengths of the subject and areas to develop, which have been identified in the school's development plan. He is supported well by a colleague, in order to share some of the workload. Both have recently attended a substantive in-service course for mathematics. The co-ordinator has had opportunities to monitor teaching and learning and has given staff feedback on areas for further development.
92. Not all classes clearly display number squares and number lines for pupils to refer to. Where they are on display, they are often too small or inconveniently placed for pupils to see and use. The use of information and communication technology for mathematics is good. For example, in a Year 5 lesson on symmetry, the pupils also used a computer program about symmetry. In a Year 6 data handling lesson, the pupils were observed using a program that produced line, bar or pie charts. It was left to the pupils to select the most appropriate type of graph for the task. The subject makes a good contribution to the social development of the pupils through activities involving collaborative work, but opportunities are not always planned for. A successful workshop for parents was recently held to inform them about the numeracy hour. Homework to support lessons is regularly set but the amount set is not consistent across the year groups.

SCIENCE

93. Pupils' attainments in the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000 were below the national average, and well below average in comparison with similar schools. The main reason for this was that only a small proportion of pupils attained the higher level in the test. Standards in science in national tests have been below average to well below average over the past four years, but have been slowly improving since 1998. There is no significant difference between the results achieved by boys and girls.

94. Inspection findings show that, this year, eleven-year-olds are attaining in line with expectations, with good standards in designing and carrying out investigations and exceptionally good understanding of particle theory in one class. At the time of the last inspection, standards were broadly average, with similar strengths and weaknesses. However the school now has a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs and therefore overall there has been an improvement in standards. Pupils enter the school with below average levels of attainment and achieve well. However much of this good achievement is due to the good and sometimes very good teaching they receive in Years 5 and 6.
95. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in Years 3, 4 and 5 and it is the good and very good learning experiences provided for pupils in Years 6, which enable pupils to achieve well. Learning is most effective throughout the school when pupils are closely involved in practical tasks and investigations. Pupils in Year 6 develop good understanding of the effects of different processes on substances they are investigating, and learn to make sensible predictions to guide their experiments. Pupils in Year 5 make good progress in learning to use the correct scientific vocabulary in describing seed dispersal. For example, they use terms such as 'explosion' and 'animal excretion.' Standards in recording work, however, are lower, even in classes where teaching and learning are otherwise of high quality. Pupils do not always write their own accounts of their work, particularly between the ages of seven and nine, where there is too much copying and too much use of undemanding worksheets. These limit the contribution of science to pupils' literacy skills. The choice of topics does, however, promote pupils' understanding of healthy living.
96. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent and is satisfactory overall. The teaching of the oldest pupils in the school is consistently very good, and at best excellent. Teachers in these classes set up challenging tasks that bring the central ideas of the National Curriculum within the reach of all pupils. They also challenge the highest-attaining pupils to think scientifically to a high standard, consider fine points of detail in constructing investigations, and using vocabulary not often seen for pupils of their age. For example, one pupil suggested that the particles in a test tube of water and solids were behaving more like those in a gas when the test-tube was agitated vigorously, and others were concerned at the need for precise measurement of quantities to ensure a fair test. In later discussion, pupils could relate differences in the density of liquids to the behaviour of particles in them, and the teacher illustrated this with particularly clear diagrams on the writing board. Such teaching prepares pupils very well for secondary and higher education.
97. Teachers generally have a satisfactory understanding of the National Curriculum for science, and plan a sound range of learning activities. In Year 6 teachers have a much better understanding of requirements. Teachers make good use of resources in teaching science, particularly in organising practical activities for pupils in classrooms, which do not have additional facilities. Very occasionally, this includes good use of computers. Lower-attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Teachers explain issues clearly to them, and they receive effective and well-informed support from teaching assistants. At best, for example in experimental work with an older pupil with serious behavioural difficulties, this results in very good learning in difficult circumstances. However, most teachers do not match work closely enough to the learning needs of higher-attaining pupils, and most marking does not give pupils enough information on ways of improving their work. As a result, while higher-attaining pupils make very good progress as they move towards secondary school, their scientific thinking and understanding is not developed as much as it should be between the ages of seven and nine.
98. The co-ordination of science teaching is satisfactory. It ensures consistency in planning, provides a scheme of work based on national guidelines and good teamwork among the teachers. Resources are carefully chosen to enable teachers to teach the National Curriculum despite their restricted accommodation, and there are suitable targets for future development. However, the school's arrangements for managing the subject are not yet ensuring that the highly successful features in the teaching in Year 6 are fully reflected in work with younger classes.

ART AND DESIGN

99. Standards in art and design are at the nationally expected level by the age of eleven. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. This is an improvement on the previous report when a significant amount of the work was found to be below national expectations.
100. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good and is satisfactory overall. There are wide variations in the short term planning for the teaching of art skills. Some plans either give little mention of the skills to be taught or teachers do not take them fully into account during art lessons and this detracts from pupils' learning. In the good and very good teaching, teachers have a good subject knowledge and clear direction and thought is given as to how skills will be taught and developed. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 6 pupils were given clear guidance on the use of shading and tonal change in order to help them improve their work. Pupils were clearly familiar with terms such as 'cross hatching' and used them to good effect in their work. In a good lesson in Year 5 the teacher made good use of technical vocabulary and effective questioning to help pupils gain a clear understanding of how to use textiles to create visual and tactile effects. Through satisfactory teaching in Years 3 and 4 pupils learn to create a variety of interesting patterns using shapes in an overlapping, rotational or repeated manner. They learn how to make advertisements that are eye-catching. Through effective questioning they learn the important features of adverts and use these well to create their own. For example, an advert for 'the softest chair ever' was accompanied by a carefully drawn picture of a comfortable, well-cushioned chair. Some pupils made good links with a French lesson and completed their advert in French. Pupils use their art and design skills effectively to design and make chairs in a variety of styles. In one class in Year 4, pupils made good use of their observational skills to draw detailed pictures of footwear.
101. Evidence from work on display and in lessons indicates that national guidelines for art are being used satisfactorily to provide a variety of media with which pupils can work. However, indications are that there is too little emphasis on the development of skills. This is noticeable within sketchbooks and in work on display and sometimes there is little evidence of progression across year groups. The work of artists such as Monet and Lowry are interpreted satisfactorily. By Year 6, helped by the generally good teaching in this year, pupils attain at the expected level. They improve and modify their work and many have developed good observational skills and use an appropriate variety of techniques.
102. The co-ordinator manages the subject satisfactorily but it tends to have a low profile within the school as a subject for development and therefore weaknesses in skills development are not addressed. Medium term planning for the subject is generally good, but its implementation is not always effective in terms of developing pupils' skills. There are no systems in place to assess pupils' attainment. This leads teachers to planning work that is not always matched to pupils' needs, including the needs of higher-attaining pupils, and is preventing the school from gaining full benefit from the good teaching in individual lessons. The school is considering the use of assessment within the national guidelines they are using and this would be very helpful in ensuring work is more clearly targeted at pupils' needs. There is an extra-curricular art club, which is run by the co-ordinator and is very popular with pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection period and there was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching. Evidence obtained from talking to pupils and looking at their work shows that pupils meet the expected standards at the age of eleven, with some attaining above this. The issues raised in the last report have been addressed well and there is now good evidence that pupils' skills improve steadily. Additionally, pupils now take appropriate account of those who will eventually use products. Resources have also been improved. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment.
104. Good evidence on display around the school indicates appropriate progression in skills and an increasing range of materials being used. For example, seven year olds make 'moving monsters', using a planning frame. They use mainly card, paper and balloons or washing up liquid bottles and are told to list materials and make diagrams and note changes in their planning. By the time they

are nine, this work is carried out independently. At the age of eleven, in the lesson seen, pupils evaluate strengths and weakness in the manufactured slipper designs they disassembled. They could suggest areas of improvement and development. In making their own slippers. Most make detailed accurate drawings, which are labelled and materials listed. Wide consideration is given for design in terms of who will wear them and for what purpose, as well as cost and durability. The pupils' evaluation is detailed and problems and difficulties are discussed and changes made. For example, some pupils found that the type of stitching used was not sufficiently durable, or the material used on the sole was not sufficiently hard wearing for the purpose

105. Management of the subject is good and has taken full account of the shortcomings found in the last inspection. Additionally, teachers' confidence in design and technology has improved through systematic support and training, such as demonstration lessons being undertaken. The role of the co-ordinator has developed considerably since the last inspection and now includes such aspects as resource management and monitoring of teachers' plans. Formal assessment procedures have not yet been developed. It is difficult for teachers to use previous information to plan future work through this lack of assessment information. Additionally, not all classes have designated books, where planning is recorded and kept, so it is difficult to track individual progress through the school.

GEOGRAPHY

106. Pupils meet the expected standards in geography. They achieve well in relation to their prior attainment because of good teaching and appropriate curriculum coverage. Standards have remained the same since the last inspection. Good improvements have been made in extending resources for geography and there is now some evidence of work being matched to pupils' different abilities, particularly at the top end of the school.
107. The teaching is good overall and never less than satisfactory. The teaching in the classes for eleven-year-olds is consistently good. Pupils lower down the school were studying weather forecasts and could explain the symbols, such as seen on television weather maps. They learn about Rainham and know that it is in the South East of England. They are able to compare our weather with that of hotter countries such as Spain. They make satisfactory gains as they move through the school, learning about far off countries such as India. Nine-year-old pupils learn to compare the highest mountains, longest rivers and population of India and Great Britain. A good focus on investigative and research work was seen in the classes for ten and eleven year olds. Good examples of this are the investigation of property usage in Rainham and research work into the characteristics of mountains. Pupils are often well supported by skilled learning support assistants who make a valuable contribution to helping pupils to develop geographical skills and a wider geographical vocabulary. A particular example of good teaching and well-planned work, which took account of pupils' different abilities, was seen in the lesson for eleven-year-olds. Pupils were researching the characteristics of mountains. Higher attaining pupils researched independently, answering questions from a range of resources such as reference books, atlases and the Internet. Lower attaining pupils had extra adult help and modified tasks. In lessons such as these, all pupils learn well and good gains are made.
108. Particular strengths in the teaching are the good attention paid to the development of geographical vocabulary and teaching of geographical skills. For example, mapping skills, which are taught well throughout the school. Strong behavioural management is another good feature, as well as good opportunities for group and collaborative work. It is mainly because of these features that pupils' response is good and lessons proceed calmly and pupils enjoy their work. They settle quickly to tasks and work well individually, with partners and in small groups.
109. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator. New planning systems have been established and the work suitably resourced. Professional knowledge of the subject has improved through further training and teachers' planning is monitored by the co-ordinator. As yet, there are no formal assessment systems. This leads teachers to plan work that is not always matched to pupils' needs and is preventing the school from gaining full benefit from the good teaching in individual lessons.

HISTORY

110. Pupils' standards in history at age eleven are in line with expectations. This is a good achievement because pupils enter the school with below average skills. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained. The scheme of work for each year group has been reviewed. It is based on national guidance, has breadth and balance and is supported by a range of appropriate visits. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
111. Year 3 pupils take on the role of an archaeologist to use sources of evidence to find out about the past. They look at what an object can and cannot tell them, and understand that, for example, artefacts discovered near a skeleton can give clues that person's position in life. Pupils in Year 4 studying the Tudor period develop a sense of chronology and use dates and terms relating to the passing of time through times lines and comparing a modern street and shop sign to those of the period. In Year 5 pupils investigate the influence of Ancient Greek architecture by identifying features, such as, 'Corinthian', 'Ionic' and 'Doric' columns in buildings of a later period. Year 6 pupils` acquire knowledge and understanding of episodes and events in history in their study of World War II. They try to gain an empathy with such events as rationing, air raids, propaganda and entertainment, and the plight of children of their age as evacuees. Pupils organise and communicate their findings well. They record events well. Written accounts in a variety of styles are well supported pictorially and the focused use of appropriate vocabulary reinforces literacy skills across the school.
112. Throughout the school all pupils experience opportunities to enrich their experiences through a good range of visits and visitors. This has included role-play such as, Year 6 pupils' experiences as evacuees, and a Year 5 Greek – style Olympics. Adults dressed as 'Roman Soldiers' have visited Year 3 pupils and Year 4 pupils have experienced life in an Iron Age village.
113. The teaching of history is good. Teachers plan their lessons well and have a clear expectation of the skills, knowledge and vocabulary that pupils' should acquire. They use question and answer effectively and have a high expectation of pupils` ability to set out and organise their own work rather than relying on the support of work sheets. Specialist expertise is used when, for example, a colleague with a background in archaeology presented the role of an archaeologist to four Year 3 classes prior to their study of the Anglo Saxons.
114. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The school has adopted national guidelines and the subject is monitored by the co-ordinator who looks at pupils` work to check on aspects of geography such as curriculum coverage. Analysis of pupils` work by inspectors shows a good range and quality of written work with good use of literacy skills. Teachers are making increasing use of ICT to support the subject through CD ROMS and visiting historical web sites.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

115. Evidence from lesson observation, pupil's work and discussion with pupils indicates that they are working in line with national expectations by the age of eleven. Pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Basic skills such as loading, printing and saving work are sound. Word processing is used to draft work and overall, pupils have confidence in using computers. The subject is used across the curriculum, enhancing study skills and presentation. Pupils are able to use spreadsheets and simulations, scan images and understand simple programming. They use the Internet for research and are able to convey information accurately. Pupils generally have a wide knowledge of computer technology and how it is used in the modern world.
116. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to good and is good overall. The most effective teaching shows a good knowledge of the subject with challenging tasks set for all pupils. Objectives for lessons are clear and questions thought provoking. Explanations are appropriate and lessons move at a brisk pace ensuring pupils' learning is maximised. Some self –assessment is evident at the end of lessons and this gives pupils a clear understanding of their own learning. Less effective teaching occurs when tasks are not matched to the ability of pupils.

117. By Year 6 pupils have gained greater independence in their use of ICT. They are able to discuss their work and follow instructions with accuracy. They edit and experiment to find solutions. Pupils understand the operations they have used and work competently. They collect information, interpret their findings and present them in clear forms. Some higher attaining pupils are able to reflect carefully on their work in order to make improvements. For example, in Geography pupils use spread sheets to make graphs for temperatures in different countries. Pupils with special needs and those with English as an additional language gain confidence by using technology as a learning resource.
118. A quiet working atmosphere is in place in lessons. Pupils are on task and make good progress. They demonstrate high levels of concentration and enjoy the challenge of learning new skills. They collaborate readily, listen well and are eager to learn. One Year 3 pupil was heard to say, "Now I know what to do, I enjoy it." These pupils were able to create a picture, and change the consistency of the outer lines and the colour. Pupils in Year 4 learn to control events and simulations using programs such as 'Mission Control'. Pupils find a good level of challenge in such tasks through working with 2 and 3D simulations and programming
119. Resources have improved greatly since the last Inspection. The new ICT suite is the focal point of learning in the subject. It is linked to classrooms and the curriculum network. Software is used to match the ability of the pupils and National Curriculum programmes of study. Videos are used in many subjects. In physical education for example, the activities were evaluated by video coverage. The school has Internet access and a comprehensive website. Computers have been updated and the ratio to pupils has increased. It is now 12: 1. Communications have developed within the school, and links are now formed to give parents more information.
120. Although in a transitional stage, the subject is well co-ordinated. The previous co-ordinator produced a planning document with clear teaching objectives, which is used throughout the school. In-service training for all staff has increased competence in ICT teaching. The only real weakness is in the lack of assessment of pupils to clearly target the next step in their learning. The school uses ICT well, and is doing well in helping pupils to attain the national expectation.

MUSIC

121. Attainment at the end of the key stage is in line with national expectations and this is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were found to be below expectations. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment.
122. Pupils sing with a sweet tone, especially during assemblies and their diction is clear. Traditional and modern songs are performed as well as familiar hymns and pupils have a good repertoire of known songs. By the end of the key stage they understand gradual change in loud and soft tone and have developed a sense of musical expression. They can improve their work and when appraising music use appropriate vocabulary.
123. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to good and is satisfactory overall. It is most effective where learning objectives are clear and lessons well planned. For example, in a musical appraisal lesson in Year 5 pupils were developing good listening skills. They understood how technology could be used in music. Pupils were able to experiment in modifying musical sounds. Where teaching is focused, pupils sing with expression and keep time to the music. This is a good improvement in pupils singing skills since the last inspection. Musical accompaniment shows sound knowledge of the subject. Explanations promoted learning and the subject was taught with enthusiasm. In less effective teaching there was not a good match of work to pupils' ability and this limited their progress.
124. Pupils in instrumental lessons follow simple scores, are familiar with notation and understand rhythm and pitch. They are able to judge the quality of their performance and make steady progress.

125. Some pupils learn recorder, guitar, and keyboard through the tuition provided by the Kent Music School. Pupils perform for a larger audience by joining in Church Festivals and linking with other schools. Photographs and written work from "The Puzzle of Gondwana", indicated that this musical experience was rewarding.
126. Pupils respond well during music lessons. They enjoy music, working with interest and generally with concentration.
127. Musical resources are adequate. Tuned, untuned percussion and keyboards are used. Recorded music helps to develop musical appreciation. Library resources however, are limited. A large music room is available but is not a stimulating environment for pupils to work in. Co-ordination of music is satisfactory. A new scheme of work is being developed with the aim to help non-specialists and to raise standards. Strategies are in place to release the co-ordinator so that progress in music may be monitored.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128. By the end of Year 6, standards are in line with national expectations in all areas of the physical education curriculum and have been maintained since the previous inspection report. The breadth and range of the physical education curriculum is very good and has improved since the last inspection, when outdoor and adventurous activities were judged to be in need of development. The wide and varied curriculum includes swimming, volleyball, badminton, short tennis, orienteering, gymnastics, netball, football, hockey, basketball, junior javelin, shot, discus, outdoor adventure and orienteering. Pupils currently achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. However, the impact of the new co-ordinator on teaching and therefore learning is already affecting pupil achievement positively
129. By the end of the key stage, pupils are able to perform with suppleness, control, accuracy and safety, a range of basic skills such as throwing, catching, balancing and travelling in a variety of ways and directions. They demonstrate good control when linking actions together. They work very well in teams and understand the tactics and rules of a variety of attack and invasion games. The majority of pupils can swim 25 metres.
130. The quality of teaching is good overall and has improved since the last inspection when teaching was judged to be satisfactory. In sixty-percent of lessons teaching is good and in forty per-cent of lesson teaching is very good. This is a direct result of the support and encouragement given to staff by the newly appointed co-ordinator. She is an exemplar of very good teaching and her enthusiasm and knowledge for the subject is clearly improving the quality of teaching and learning, although the improvement in teaching has yet to impact on standards. The school also employs a well-qualified and enthusiastic learning support assistant to teach swimming. Teachers have good subject knowledge and set a good example to pupils by dressing appropriately and leading by example. They stress the need for safety in all lessons. For example, in a good Year 4 hockey lesson, the teacher ensured that the pupils held the hockey sticks correctly and safely and taught attacking and defence skills by insisting that the pupils worked in pairs in "slow motion". This gave the pupils the confidence to play against each other without fear of hurting one another and so they were able to concentrate very hard on developing their skills. Their attitudes were excellent and they were able to make good progress in a safe environment.
131. All lessons include the essential elements of warming up and cooling down. In some lessons observed pupils were given the opportunity to discuss and refine their work with each other and with the class teacher, but this did not consistently happen. Teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and manage the pupils very well throughout lessons. Where teaching is very good there is an obvious enthusiasm and a good knowledge of techniques, which enables the teacher to intervene and move individual pupils' learning to a higher level. In a very good Year 6 dance lesson, with a 'sporting actions' theme, the learning support assistant used her knowledge as a karate expert to lead the aerobic warm-up and cool-down. The class teacher then taught the main part of the lesson and enthused and supported the pupils very well with her own very good

knowledge and understanding of the movements, that was needed to represent a sporting theme. As a result, the pupils' attitudes and behaviour were very good and they made very good progress in the lesson. Pupils work purposefully to produce improvement and they make good use of practice and repetition in order to refine performance. For example, a Year 5 class was observed refining a whole class Greek dance, based on the music from "Zorba the Greek". They worked enthusiastically as a team and clearly felt a sense of achievement when they performed the final production of the dance to a video camera. Good use is made of information technology to support teaching and learning. Lessons are filmed on video and played back to the pupils to inform them of their progress and achievements.

132. Pupils are enthusiastic about physical education lessons. They respond well to activities and show enjoyment in lessons. They work well individually, in pairs and in groups and when given the opportunity to evaluate each other they do so effectively. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated and involved in physical education lessons and are given good support by their class teachers and learning support assistants. Pupils unable to physically take part in a lesson because of illness are set a worksheet based on the lesson to ensure they are still involved.
133. The school uses national guidelines as a basis for planning. This ensures continuity and progression. However, daily planning is inconsistent and the use of assessment is unsatisfactory in almost all areas of the physical education curriculum. In most lessons pupils do well by following the activities planned for them but teachers have no idea of individual abilities and don't help pupils to develop specific skills. Only in swimming is there a consistent approach to assessment to inform planning and to track progress. The school has a large playground area for outdoor games, a hard netball pitch, a large field with one full size football pitch and two five-a-side football pitches and a ten metre long, seventy-five centimetre deep, heated indoor pool. The pool is long enough and deep enough for pupils to learn to swim the minimum requirement of 25 metres, and to swim underwater, but is not large enough to make further skills progress. The few markings on the playground and netball pitch are faded and difficult to see. The playground lacks stimulating games' markings. There is a good range of equipment to support the subject.
134. There is a very good range of extra curricular activities, which includes football, netball, jogging, swimming, rugby, table tennis, basketball and gymnastics. These are organised by staff and volunteer parents and all are open to boys and girls. Good links have been established with Gillingham Football Club, the London Towers basketball team and a local golfer. The school successfully takes part in inter-school swimming, football, basketball, cricket, rugby and netball tournaments. Parents give very good support for swimming and after school activities, such as rugby. The subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, and social development of the pupils. For example, during the inspection week a nationally renowned gymnast visited the school as part of the "Get Fit Kids" initiative. She demonstrated a range of skills, and also involved the pupils. Throughout her demonstration pupils watched with delight, awe and wonder at her strength, agility and flexibility and were spellbound by her abilities. The co-ordinator is outstanding and is providing very good leadership for the subject. Although in post for a relatively short period of time she is already making a very positive impact on teaching and raising of standards.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135. Standards are broadly in line with those set out in the Local Agreed Syllabus for most pupils, with high standards of work reached in some aspects of Christianity. As the Agreed Syllabus is a new document there are still significant gaps in the knowledge and understanding of eleven-year-olds of the other world faiths. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment across the syllabus except in work on Christianity, where they achieve well.
136. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good for pupils aged seven to eleven, and is satisfactory overall. Most teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject, plan effectively and relate the moral issues to a religious base. They make good use of religious stories from the Bible, such as The House on the Rock or the parable of the Sower and enable the pupils to relate these moral messages to their everyday lives. Pupils understand that the rock symbolises

the strong things in their lives and the sand the weak things. They express their own opinions and points of view, which contributes well to their speaking and listening skills.

137. Pupils aged nine and ten learn about Sikhism. Good teaching and their own knowledge of Christianity enables the pupils to make a comparative study between the two religions. The study of other religions helps to foster a strong sense of respect for a range of religious beliefs. This is reinforced by pupils' learning in art and in assemblies. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on the stories they have learnt. In a very good lesson in Year 6 pupils were encouraged to reflect on the key words, which demonstrated the symbolism in one of the parables. In year 3 lessons pupils relate the story of Jesus in the wilderness to things they might give up for Lent. They display their ideas for helping others on the "Helping Hands Tree." In lessons where teaching is less effective, there are limited opportunities for pupils to record their own work and the resources and religious artefacts are not fully used. By the age of eleven pupils clearly know about the life of Jesus, the parables he told and the moral messages contained in them.

138. Teachers do not yet assess pupils against the attainment targets of the Agreed Syllabus. This leads them to planning work that is not always matched to pupils' needs, including the needs of higher-attaining pupils, and is preventing the school from gaining full benefit from the good teaching in individual lessons. As a consequence, ten- and eleven-year-olds have good knowledge of Bible stories commonly taught to younger children, such as the story of "Moses in the bulrushes" or the parables of Jesus, but have more limited knowledge of the world's leading faiths. Work in religious education does not make an effective contribution to pupils' literacy skills. Pupils are not always encouraged to write independently, and too much is copied. Work is not always recorded. There are too few links between religious education and the literacy hour, and limited use is made of computers in teaching the subject. The subject co-ordinator is new to the role, but has already undertaken monitoring of teaching and learning through classroom observation and looking at pupils works. The very good and good quality teaching in individual classes, and the respect with which pupils and teachers throughout the school treat the subject, place it in a good position to make further improvements.