

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST. PETER-IN-THANET CHURCH OF ENGLAND
JUNIOR SCHOOL**

St. Peters Broadstairs

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118750

Headteacher: Mrs S Irvine

Reporting inspector: Mr A Everix
23079

Dates of inspection: 26th – 30th March 2001

Inspection number: 210366

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	7-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St Peter-in-Thanel Church of England Junior School St. Peters Grange Road Broadstairs Kent
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. J. Binfield
Date of previous inspection:	8 th February 1999

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23079	Adrian Everix	Registered inspector	Information technology Art Physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9537	Caroline Marden	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23487	Pat Kitley	Team inspector	English History English as an additional language	
27654	Robina Scahill	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Music Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

20506	John Tyler	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Peter-in-Thanel is a Church of England aided school which teaches pupils between the ages of seven and eleven. At the time of the inspection there were 306 pupils on roll. Pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds and most live in the area near the school. Thirteen pupils are from backgrounds outside the United Kingdom. Nine of these pupils have arrived recently from European countries. Eleven children have support for learning English as an additional language. Forty-one per cent of pupils are on the special needs register, which is a proportion higher than most schools nationally. Three pupils have statements for their needs. Pupils' attainment when they start at the school varies greatly but overall it is below average. Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed and seven new teachers have joined the staff. The number of pupils has increased significantly since the last inspection when there were 226 on roll. The increasing popularity of the school is reflected in the number of applications for next September which exceeds the places available.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school that provides a sound education. The many initiatives and changes introduced by the current headteacher over the past two years are increasing the school's effectiveness. Although attainment is below that expected nationally, standards are steadily rising in most subjects and pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The behaviour of most pupils is good. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with about half the lessons observed being good or better. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is well led with a clear focus on raising standards.
- Pupils are taught to behave well and to get on with each other. This helps to create a positive approach to learning.
- Overall, the teaching of mathematics is good.
- Good procedures for assessing pupils' achievements are helping the school to plan improvements in learning.
- Work for pupils with special educational needs is well planned and they make good progress.
- The school is particularly successful in achieving its aim of providing a caring, family atmosphere.

What could be improved

- Pupils' overall attainment by the end of Year 6, including their performance in national tests.
- The teaching of science.
- The consistency of teaching within year groups, especially in the planning of lessons.
- The range and number of reference books to support learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1999 and was judged to have serious weaknesses. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been good and the school no longer has serious weaknesses. Particularly significant is the improved leadership of the school, especially by the headteacher who has ensured that initiatives for raising standards have been implemented. Good progress has been made in addressing the weaknesses relating to the professional development of teachers, standards in information technology, provision for spiritual development, and the assessment of pupils' learning. Effective strategies for improving pupils' attitudes and behaviour have been introduced. Although standards and the overall quality of teaching are better than in the last inspection, there are still aspects

in need of improvement. The school is in a good position to improve further.

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	E	D	C
mathematics	D	E	E	D
science	B	E	E	D

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

Although performance in tests has been low for the last two years, the overall scores have improved at a rate similar to that nationally. The school's improved results between 1997, when they were very low, and 2000, have been recognised by the Department of Education with a School Achievement Award. The work of pupils currently in Year 6 indicates that overall attainment in English is similar to that of the 2000 tests. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory in speaking, listening and reading. Writing is improving but there are still weaknesses in pupils' spelling. In mathematics, good teaching is steadily raising standards, although attainment is below average when compared nationally. Targets set for the 2001 tests show a challenging but realistic expectation of improved results in both subjects. Standards of work seen in science are too low. Work is not always taught at the right level and this slows the progress pupils make. In the work seen, standards in other subjects are broadly those expected for the pupils' ages. There is much scope for improvement in the school's overall attainment levels, especially those measured in national tests. However, taking account of the proportion of children with special educational needs and the range of attainment levels when they start at the school, pupils' current achievements are satisfactory overall.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Nearly all pupils are keen to learn and enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Pupils' behaviour was judged to be good or better in three-quarters of lessons and very good in a third. Occasionally, pupils become restless when working and their learning slows. Pupils behave sensibly and responsibly when moving around the school. Nearly all are polite and considerate.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Most pupils get on well with each other and with adults. The positive relationships amongst members of the school community make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. As they get older, pupils carry out additional responsibilities reliably and cheerfully.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance rates are similar to the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Of the teaching observed, 17 per cent was very good, 33 per cent was good, 45 per cent was satisfactory and 5 per cent was unsatisfactory. The best teaching was in Year 4 in which two-thirds of lessons were judged to be good or better. In the best lessons, teachers matched work precisely to the needs of pupils and there was a good balance of well planned activities. This ensured that pupils' pace of learning was maintained throughout the lesson. In most lessons, teachers introduced topics in a lively manner, which captured pupils' interest. The very good relationships teachers have with nearly all pupils, combined with effective techniques for managing classes, ensure that most pupils work hard. The overall teaching of mathematics, especially during numeracy lessons, is good and in English it is sound. Pupils apply and develop their numeracy and literacy skills satisfactorily in other subjects. In the few unsatisfactory lessons, the work set was not appropriate to the needs of the pupils and their learning slowed. There are often significant differences in the quality and type of work planned between classes in the same year group. This was especially evident in science where learning is unsatisfactory overall, mainly because of wide variations in teachers' understanding of the subject. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Overall, the school is meeting the needs of all other pupils and they make satisfactory gains in their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	There is a suitable balance of subjects with an emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The curriculum is enriched by a variety of activities outside school hours, and a range of visitors to the school who share their expertise with pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The individual education plans for these pupils are detailed and precise. This helps teachers to plan work that takes account of individual needs. Good teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants ensures that pupils receive effective guidance and make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Suitable work is planned and the school ensures that these pupils are included in all aspects of school life.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is good overall. The very good provision for social development is particularly effective in helping pupils to play and work together constructively. Provision for moral development is good. Pupils are taught right from wrong and to be aware of issues affecting the lives of others. Good opportunities for spiritual development are planned in each subject. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very well for its pupils and has successful procedures for promoting good behaviour. The effective monitoring of academic

	progress and personal development helps teachers to plan for individual needs. Apart from weaknesses in the setting of homework, the school has established a good partnership with parents.
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HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and is supported effectively by senior managers. Developments in numeracy, information technology, provision for special educational needs and strategies for improving pupils' behaviour have been particularly well managed. Although all staff are committed to raising standards, some inconsistencies in teaching have yet to be fully addressed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a very clear understanding of the priorities that will help the school to improve further. They take an active part in planning developments and are very supportive. The governing body ensures the school meets its statutory duties.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school rigorously evaluates its own performance and sets challenging targets for improvement. The monitoring of teaching and systems for staff development are good. They have been used well to rectify weaknesses identified in the last inspection, for example to improve the teaching of information technology.
The strategic use of resources	Finance has been used well to support the school's priorities for improvement. Good financial control and the increasing numbers of pupils attending the school have helped greatly to reduce a past overspend on the budget. Educational and financial decisions are carefully considered to ensure that the school provides sound value.

Accommodation is adequate and there are sufficient teachers. The good provision of learning support staff enhances pupils' learning. The new computer suite has helped to raise standards in information technology. There are insufficient reference books to support pupils' learning in several subjects. Teachers borrow resources to cover inadequacies in history and geography. Overall, other learning resources are satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school. • The school is well managed and led. • The teaching is good. • Children are expected to work hard. • The headteacher and staff are approachable. • Behaviour is good. • Children are helped to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework. • Information about their children's progress. • Greater consistency in the use of the reward system. • How closely the school works with them. • The range of activities outside lessons.

Inspectors agree with most of the positive views of parents. Whilst a significant proportion of teaching was good, inspectors judged it to be satisfactory overall. There are too many inconsistencies in the

amount of homework set by teachers and, whilst some homework diaries are used well, others are rarely filled in or checked. There are suitable arrangements for parents to discuss their children's progress with teachers. Pupils' reports give satisfactory information on their achievements. However, they do not all clearly indicate where pupils need to improve. Apart from these aspects, the school provides good information for parents, and endeavours to involve them well in the life of the school. Rewards are usually used well to motivate pupils. However, the use of house points varies greatly amongst teachers. The school has a good range of activities outside lessons including clubs, a residential visit and participation in community events.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. An analysis of test results from Year 2 shows that the levels of attainment when pupils start at the school vary greatly but, overall, they are below the national average.
2. The school's recent test results for 11 year-olds in English, mathematics and science, have improved in line with the national trend, although they were well below the national average in 1999 and 2000, (apart from English in 2000 which was below average). The improved results between 1997, when they were very low, and 2000, have been recognised by the Department of Education with a School Achievement Award. Compared with similar schools in 2000, test results were average in English and below average in mathematics and science. Although the scores fluctuate from year to year, overall test results show that girls are not doing quite as well as boys. However, the inspection team identified no significant differences in the performance of girls and boys.
3. Inspection evidence shows that overall attainment in English and mathematics is below the national average in the current Year 6. In science, standards reflect the national test results and are too low.
4. More able pupils and those of average attainment make sound progress. Work is usually suitably matched to build on pupils' current knowledge and skills. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are supported well. Those with individual education plans meet and often exceed the challenging targets they have been set. Overall, pupils who are learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. This includes a group of pupils recently arrived from European countries who are at very early stages of English acquisition
5. In English, pupils achieve satisfactory standards in speaking and listening. Attainment in reading and writing is below that expected, partly because of the high number of pupils on the special educational needs register with language difficulties. In reading, pupils enjoy books and know how to find information in them. They use different strategies to help them understand the text but not all make good use of "phonics" (knowledge of individual and blends of letter sounds) for this purpose. Pupils write for a wide range of purposes, and standards of handwriting are satisfactory. However, pupils' spelling is weak. Standards in mathematics are rising and better than those indicated in recent test results. The overall good teaching of the numeracy strategy and "setting" of pupils from Year 3 are having a positive impact on pupils' progress. Pupils apply their numeracy and literacy skills satisfactorily in other subjects.
6. In science, a significant number of pupils throughout the school are achieving less than they could due to weaknesses in teaching. Attainment in information and communication technology is broadly

that expected by the end of Year 6. Good teaching in the new computer suite has raised standards since the last inspection. In design and technology, art and design, geography, history, music and physical education, pupils achieve the standards expected for their ages.

7. Taking all factors into account, pupils' current overall achievement is satisfactory. However, progress is uneven because of some differences in the quality of teaching between classes in the same year groups.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. This is a clear improvement since the last inspection. Nearly all parents, responding to the inspection questionnaire, report that their children enjoy school. Pupils were observed coming eagerly into school and quickly settling down during registration. In lessons they concentrate well and are keen to take part in whole class discussions. Pupils' interest in lessons is evident in their willingness to respond to teachers with questions and ideas. For example, during a Year 3 history lesson, the teacher's explanation of mummification fascinated the pupils. Consequently, when the teacher asked them to research different aspects of ancient Egyptian life, they applied themselves diligently to the task. Occasionally when the pace of a lesson slows, or the task is not absolutely clear, some pupils start chatting socially to each other.

9. Behaviour has improved since the last inspection and is now good in all aspects of school life. Pupils are courteous and hold doors open for visitors as well as offering them help. The good behaviour of pupils in most lessons helps to create a calm atmosphere for learning. Occasional incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons cause pupils' learning to slow. Pupils play together well in the playground and usually move around the school in a calm and orderly manner. During the inspection there was no evidence of bullying. The Year 6 pupils, who spoke to inspectors, explained that the headteacher had reduced bullying to almost "zero" since she had joined the school. There were two exclusions last year. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and in line with the national average, as is unauthorised absence.

10. The personal development of pupils is good. They work together co-operatively in a range of activities from physical education to the literacy hour. For example, in an art lesson, pupils worked co-operatively in small groups making a collage. They discussed and decided together what effect they wanted to create, and how they would achieve it. In whole class discussions, pupils listen to each other's ideas respectfully and they show respect during prayers in assemblies. As they get older, pupils take their increasing responsibilities seriously and carry them out cheerfully. For example, Year 6 pupils give valuable support to "buddies" in Year 3, particularly when the younger pupils start school. Relationships are good amongst pupils and very good between staff and pupils. Pupils support others who have recently joined the school from different countries. They include them in their games and help them in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs respond well to adults' praise and encouragement, try hard and take justifiable pride in their success. They have high self-esteem and this helps them to make good progress.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

11. The quality of teaching observed ranged from unsatisfactory to very good. Seventeen per cent was very good, 33 per cent good, 45 per cent satisfactory and 5 per cent unsatisfactory. Effective lessons occurred in all year groups but the highest proportion of very good lessons was taught in Year 4. Although there were examples of effective lessons, the weakest teaching overall, including a few unsatisfactory lessons, was in science. Overall, the teaching of mathematics was good and in English it was satisfactory. The overall quality of teaching and learning has improved satisfactorily compared

with the judgements in the last inspection.

12. The best teaching was highly motivating and ensured that all pupils made very good progress in the time available. This was evident in a very well planned Year 4 numeracy lesson. Firm discipline mixed with humour, created a productive working atmosphere in the class. Skilful questioning enabled the teacher to assess the pupils' knowledge of fractions and correct some misunderstandings about tenths. The teacher's expectations were high. She insisted on the correct use of mathematical language and careful presentation of work, and she provided work which was challenging but ensured success. Pupils showed a very high level of interest and application to their tasks. Their learning was rapid so that by the end of the lesson most were confidently ordering decimal fractions by their value. The end of the session was used effectively to reinforce and share learning.

13. Within year groups there is inconsistency in the quality of teaching, especially in the way that lessons are planned. Overall, there is not enough joint planning of lessons to ensure that their content is of the same quality. Differences are also evident in classroom displays and pupils' past work. These inconsistencies are referred to in several of the subject paragraphs. For example, in science the same aspects are taught to different age groups in the same week but with varying content, accuracy and methods. This results in teaching ranging from good to unsatisfactory within the same year group. Learning objectives (what the teacher intends the pupils to learn) are clear on most lesson plans and in the best examples these were shared with the class. In a few lessons, teachers' plans did not clearly identify what pupils were expected to learn but merely described the activities. This is not a helpful basis for teachers and pupils to evaluate what has been learnt in a lesson. The lesson planning in one Year 5 class is of a very high quality with precisely timed activities, sharply focused learning intentions, key questions to ask pupils, and clearly identified roles of all adults in the class.

14. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum are satisfactory. When teachers display high levels of competence, pupils' acquisition of skills and knowledge is rapid. For example, in a Year 3 numeracy lesson, the teacher used correct mathematical terms such as "corresponding facts" and checked that the pupils understood them. Using replies from carefully framed questions the teacher skilfully involved pupils in making general rules about calculating odd and even numbers. There are weaknesses in teachers' knowledge of science which contribute to the unsatisfactory standards in the subject. The overall teaching of basic skills in numeracy is good and in literacy it is satisfactory.

15. Teachers' expectations of pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. In several of the good and very good lessons, there were high but achievable expectations of pupils. For example, in a Year 5 information technology lesson, the teacher challenged pupils to write their own procedures for operating computer-controlled traffic lights. Pupils responded to this with high levels of intellectual effort and were proud to display their achievements to the rest of the class. Occasionally, teachers' expectations were too low, for example in one mathematics lesson pupils found the work too easy and finished the tasks quickly. In a few other lessons, expectations were not appropriate. Either the questioning or work was set at too high a level, as occurred with some science activities.

16. Teaching methods are satisfactory. Numeracy and literacy lessons follow the recommended structures, usually with good introductions and an appropriate session at the end to share or reinforce learning. Time is used appropriately in most lessons. The strongest lessons were taught at a good pace with time to reflect. For example, a Year 4 dance lesson contained a variety of activities which engaged the pupils' minds as they thought how to express feelings with their whole body. An activity at the end enabled pupils to relax their bodies in an atmosphere of calm reflection. In a few lessons, introductions were too long and time was restricted for other parts of the lesson. House points are not used consistently amongst classes. Some teachers used them frequently in lessons whilst in others they were rarely awarded. In their discussions with inspectors both parents and pupils mentioned

differences in the use of these rewards.

17. A very good feature of most lessons was the teachers' effective management of pupils. A balanced use of praise and firmness ensured that pupils worked hard and concentrated on their tasks. This is a significant improvement on the previous inspection.

18. Teachers usually assess pupils well during lessons and correct any misunderstandings as they arise. The quality of marking is satisfactory overall. It is usually good in mathematics and English but weaker in some other subjects, although there are variations between classes. Some teachers do not pay enough attention to correcting the spelling of key subject vocabulary.

19. Teachers make good use of the resources available. Pupils were regularly observed collecting books from the school library and using them in lessons. Good use is made of the computer suite and machines in classrooms are often used to support learning.

20. Teachers' lesson plans usually indicate precisely how pupils with special educational needs will be helped, and the role of learning support assistants. This clarity in planning is effective and helps pupils to make good progress. Teachers and assistants work together very well, setting similar expectations within each lesson and asking questions which focus on the same learning objectives. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory. The visiting staff have a sound understanding of these pupils' needs; they keep a profile of the pupils' developing language competence and work out a programme of support that is shared with class teachers.

21. Although homework was set for pupils during the inspection, there are too many inconsistencies in its use between classes. In some classes, homework diaries are regularly filled in and parents' comments responded to. In others there is very little homework recorded. Pupils told inspectors that the homework timetable was not followed when they had a change of teacher. Over one quarter of the parents responding to the questionnaire indicated dissatisfaction with homework.

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

22. The school provides a suitable range and breadth of learning opportunities. This is an improvement since the last inspection when there were shortcomings in information and communication technology, geography and music. All subjects of the National Curriculum meet statutory requirements and include a suitable emphasis on teaching literacy and numeracy. These skills are developed satisfactorily in other subjects. For example, data handling skills, learnt in mathematics, are used in geography for recording and comparing temperatures, and in history pupils write as characters from the past. The overall planning of the curriculum is satisfactory. However, teachers in the same year group do not plan lessons together with sufficient rigour to ensure that the content of the planned curriculum is the same in each class. There is suitable provision for sex education and other aspects of personal and health education, including the dangers of drug misuse. However, there is no overall scheme of work to guide teachers.

23. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn outside lessons. These include a wide range of school clubs such as football, netball, choir, gardening, Spanish, cookery and sewing. The school takes part in sporting competitions and music festivals. Visits to local places of interest enrich subjects such as geography and history. Many visitors to the school add a further dimension and include theatre groups, storytellers, and music and science workshops.

24. The school has developed strong links with the community, particularly the church. Pupils visit the village and the church of St Peter-in-Thamet as part of their work in history, geography and religious

education. They benefit from the help they receive from other members of the community, such as The Old Boys' Association and people who volunteer to come in to hear pupils read. The school works closely with a teacher training college. There are satisfactory links with the infant school and pupils have the opportunity to visit the school before they start in the autumn term.

25. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are detailed and include precise, measurable targets across a wide range of needs. Teachers draw up these plans in collaboration with learning support assistants and the special needs co-ordinator. This involvement and the awareness of all staff help teachers to work systematically and meet the needs of these pupils. The school draws on the support of external agencies to help pupils with special educational needs and this has a positive impact on their progress. Appropriate provision is made for pupils with English as an additional language. These pupils are included in all aspects of school life and the local authority support team collaborates with teachers to ensure that work is linked to the National Curriculum.

26. Since the last inspection, the school has improved its provision for spiritual development and it is now good. A very clear overall plan identifies opportunities for spirituality throughout the curriculum. This helps teachers to capitalise on situations where spirituality occurs. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils went outside to feel trees, smell new mown grass and listen to the birds. When they returned to their classrooms they wrote about their experiences and reflected on their feelings. Pupils recalled how the warmth of the sun reminded them of feeling safe in bed. Planning for religious education lessons and records of assemblies show that pupils have the opportunity to reflect on their own lives and those of other people.

27. The school's good provision for pupils' moral development is firmly based on its Christian ethos. Opportunities to think about issues affecting the lives of other people are given in lessons and assemblies. Pupils have the opportunity to consider what is right and wrong. For example, in an assembly, pupils considered how the choices they make are related to their idea of good and bad. Older pupils have discussed current issues such as those relating to drinking and driving. When staff handle incidents of inappropriate behaviour, pupils are encouraged to think how their actions will affect others.

28. The school is very effective at promoting pupils' social development. In nearly all lessons, there are opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively. During lunchtime, midday supervisors organise activities for pupils and encourage them to play together. A Friendship Club helps pupils who have difficulty coping with lunchtimes to make friends and develop social skills. Older pupils are encouraged to contribute to the school community by taking on various responsibilities. A good feature is the arrangement in Year 3 where pupils have a Year 6 "buddy" whom they are linked to before they start at the school. This link is beneficial to the social development of both age groups. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence and team spirit in the range of extra curricular activities, including clubs, school plays and a Year 6 residential visit.

29. Provision for cultural education has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. Pupils study art and music from European and other cultures. A good range of visitors, including theatre groups and musicians, has contributed to the cultural provision. Teachers plan for multicultural education and there is a good range of multicultural musical instruments. In geography, pupils study a village in Kenya and compare their lives with the villagers in that country.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30. The school looks after the pupils very well. There have been several improvements in this aspect of the school's work since the last inspection.

31. Teachers monitor pupils' personal development carefully. Their very good understanding of the pupils underpins the care they provide. This was clearly evident during lessons. For instance, when a pupil with special educational needs was behaving inappropriately, the teacher discreetly dealt with the problem without interrupting the flow of the lesson. The school provides counsellors to assist some pupils, for example in helping those with emotional or behavioural difficulties or in offering specific support, as in a family bereavement. Teachers keep useful notes about pupils' personal development.

32. The school's procedures for promoting good behaviour are very effective. There is a clear code of conduct which pupils understand. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are supported very well. Staff work together in lessons to ensure that expectations are consistent and that they are dealing with pupils in the way set out in individual education plans. The school takes all cases of alleged bullying very seriously and has a very good policy for dealing with such incidents. There are satisfactory procedures for promoting good attendance. The school administrative staff follow up all unnotified absences. However, teachers do not always classify absences in the registers and this makes it difficult to monitor the reasons for non-attendance.

33. The school pays good attention to the health and safety of pupils. There is a current health and safety policy and regular checks on the site for hazards. Governors also do a yearly risk assessment. There are satisfactory arrangements for first aid with two qualified first-aiders. Although the playground is inconveniently shaped for supervision, the school ensures that adults very carefully monitor all areas. Good play leadership by midday supervisors helps pupils to be constructively involved during the lunch break. There are good procedures for dealing with child protection concerns. Since the last inspection, staff have received training about child protection issues and there is a designated teacher for dealing with concerns.

34. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully addressed the key issue on assessment. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their progress are now good. The assessment policy contains clear guidance for teachers. The school assessment team meets frequently to review procedures and analyse test data so that areas for improvement in pupils' work are identified. The information has also been used successfully to identify groups and individual pupils in need of support. Teachers set specific targets for pupils in literacy and numeracy. These are reviewed at least half-termly and give clear indications of what each pupil needs to achieve. In most other subjects, teachers identify what they are going to assess in each unit of work. Pupils' performance is then classified into three categories. This provides useful information about pupils' progress and is helpful to teachers when planning the next stages of learning for their classes. Teachers' assessment files vary in the amount of detail included. For example, some teachers add work samples to their files to aid them with their assessment and planning.

35. The assessment of special educational needs is detailed. It enables staff to set targets and plan work that is precisely matched to pupils' needs. The involvement of pupils in helping to set their own targets is very successful. It helps build their self-esteem and they feel suitably pleased with themselves when they achieve success. Pupils with English as an additional language are assessed carefully. The visiting staff have a good understanding of their needs. They keep a profile of their developing language competence to help prepare a programme of support that is shared with class teachers.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

36. The school has worked hard at developing a good partnership with parents and has been successful in its aims.

37. Parents are supportive of the school and hold more positive views than at the time of the last inspection. They feel that the school is well led and managed and that they can bring any questions or problems to the staff who will deal with them sympathetically. Parents report that their children are happy to come to school. The inspection team supports these views. Many parents rightly feel that homework varies too much between teachers, and that homework diaries and home/school reading records are not used consistently well. Apart from this weakness, inspectors judge that the school works well with parents.

38. Overall the school provides parents with good information. Information about the curriculum is very good. Teachers send home termly letters about what the pupils will be studying. Occasional workshops or meetings are held for different aspects of the curriculum, the most recent one being about the numeracy strategy. The school communicates new developments to parents through the weekly newsletters. Parents receive good information about their children's progress through the termly consultation evenings and the annual reports. The reports are only satisfactory as many do not include the next steps the pupil needs to take to raise his/her attainment. However, they do include very good information about what the pupils can do and understand in all subjects of the curriculum. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed of their children's progress and are appropriately involved in reviews of individual education plans and statements. Inspectors do not share the view of some parents that there is not enough information about pupils' progress.

39. Support is given to parents whose children are learning English as an additional language. School letters are written in the home language, translators are available for consultations with the school, and home visits are made with an interpreter. This support contributes well to the school's inclusive approach to all pupils and their families.

40. The school actively involves parents in the life of the school and in their children's education. Parents' views are canvassed through questionnaires and the school considers the issues they raise. The policy on awarding house points is being changed in response to parents' concerns about the inconsistency of practice between classes. Parents help in classes with activities such as reading and cookery as well as helping in the library every afternoon. The Friends of St Peter-in-Thanel are very active and raise significant amounts of money for the school to improve its resources, including contributing towards computers and library books.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41. The quality of leadership and management is a strength of the school. This was the key action point following the previous inspection and the school has made very good progress in implementing the recommendations. The impact of improved leadership and management on other aspects of the school's provision has been considerable and accounts for the school no longer having serious weaknesses.

42. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is supported effectively by senior managers. Since her arrival nearly two years ago, the school has gained a new vision and a shared understanding of how to achieve it. The full involvement of staff and governors in planning for school improvement has ensured that there is a shared commitment to raise standards, which is at the heart of the new vision. Clear guidance enables staff with subject responsibilities to draw up good plans for improvement. Developments have been managed especially well in numeracy, information and communication technology and in the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Assessment has also improved considerably under the leadership of the assessment team. Governors and staff have felt the benefit of improved communication within the school, and have stated that greater delegation and a clear management structure have helped the school to move forward. These

improvements are appreciated by parents and are major factors in the growing numbers of pupils wishing to enter the school, so that it is now over-subscribed.

43. The governing body has a very good understanding of the priorities that will help the school to improve further. Governors visit the school regularly. They report their findings clearly and precisely so that their knowledge of the school is based on first-hand experience as well as the detailed reports received from the headteacher. This enables them to take a full and active part in long-term planning. Governors take the role of “critical friends” seriously and are extremely supportive, asking valuable questions and seeking ways to help the school in innovative ways. One governor, for example, is helping to set up a liaison group for governors to share information and ideas that could be of use to the co-ordinator for special educational needs. The chair of governors is very keen to see greater co-operation between the governors of the two schools on the same site, which would benefit the many pupils who transfer from one to the other. The governing body is effective in overseeing its statutory responsibilities.

44. The school rigorously evaluates its own performance through a programme of monitoring and self-review. Senior staff monitor lessons and samples of pupils' work to evaluate the quality of teaching and judge how well pupils are performing. This has helped to raise the overall standard of teaching, with particular improvements in behavioural management and the teaching of numeracy. However, some inconsistencies have not been dealt with effectively. For example, there are differences in the way that teachers use homework and plan lessons, and these affect the standards achieved by pupils. Another positive outcome of the school's self-evaluation is the setting of challenging targets and good planning to achieve them. The school development plan sets out clearly how provision will be improved, and includes, for most targets, means of measuring success. For instance, in planning to improve pupils' writing, the school sets a target for the proportion who should achieve specified levels, and is using assessment data to judge whether the plan is working. Priorities for improvement are supported by careful financial planning.

45. Where aspects for improvement have been identified, either through monitoring or the good system of performance management, carefully planned professional development has taken place. Increased staff expertise in the use of computers, for example, has helped to raise standards in information and communication technology. The programme of professional development has been successful in enabling learning assistants to give good support to pupils with special educational needs. Teachers new to the school, including those who are newly qualified, receive good support and guidance. This enables them to settle in and quickly become part of the team.

46. The number of teaching staff is adequate for the needs of the school. Teachers are deployed well to enable pupils to work in relatively small classes for some lessons. The particular strengths of well-qualified support staff are appropriately matched to the needs of individual pupils. The office staff ensure that the school administration is efficient. Parents are particularly complimentary about the ways that they are made to feel welcome and that their children are cared for, for example when they are ill. The accommodation is satisfactory for the needs of the curriculum. The new building is striking in design, attractive, well maintained and clean. However, it has drawbacks. Classrooms are somewhat cramped and shared areas are often too small for the number of pupils who need to use them. The library, for instance, is too small for even half a class to use at the same time. The field, playground, garden areas and enclosed courtyard are very useful for a good range of activities. The range and quality of resources are good for information and communication technology and science, and adequate for most other subjects. However, there are insufficient resources for geography and history and too few reference books for the needs of the curriculum, especially as the school is growing.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47. The governors, headteacher and staff should now:

A. Raise the overall attainment of pupils by the end of Year 6, including their performance in national tests, by sustaining the current focus on:

- rigorously monitoring teaching and learning, sharing good practice and taking action to resolve weaknesses.
- frequently evaluating the success of initiatives to raise pupils' attainment, especially in spelling and science, and where necessary, improving strategies by changing or adapting them.

(See paragraphs 1, 3, 5, 6, 48, 50, 52, 56 and 61)

B. Improve the teaching of science and raise pupils' standards by:

- extending teachers' scientific knowledge so they can teach all aspects of the subject accurately and confidently.
- ensuring work is taught at the correct level for the pupils' ages so that it builds well on what they already know.

(See paragraphs 3, 6, 11, 13, 14, and 61-65)

C. Ensure there is greater consistency in the quality of teaching within year groups by:

- teachers planning lessons more closely together so that pupils have the same opportunities for learning.
- all teachers setting homework in line with the school's policy and using homework diaries equally well to guide pupils and inform parents; monitoring diaries and home reading records to ensure that parents' comments are always responded to.

(See paragraphs 7, 13, 18, 21, 22, 37, 44, 51, 52, 53, 61-65, 67, 70 and 80)

D. Improve the range, quality and quantity of reference books available to pupils. (See paragraphs 46, 51 and 77)

Other smaller issues the governors should consider for inclusion in their action plan:

- Ensure that all teachers carefully follow the agreed procedures when filling in registers. (See paragraph 32)
- Improve the range and quantity of resources in history and geography. (See paragraphs 46, 74 and 77).
- Make sure that all the pupils' annual reports have individual targets for improvement. (See paragraph 38)
- Devise a system for assessing pupils' skills in speaking and listening. (See paragraph 49)
- Improve curriculum planning for personal, social and health education. (See paragraph 22)
- Make sure reward systems, especially house points, are used in a similar way in each class. (See paragraph 16)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	66
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	17	33	45	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	306
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	52
Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	125
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	62
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	25	20	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	16	20
	Girls	12	8	8
	Total	25	24	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	57 (56)	55 (52)	62 (64)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	17	18
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	24	28	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	57 (60)	67 (67)	69 (57)
	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	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	303
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.3
Average class size	27.8

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	174

FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	377066
Total expenditure	382366
Expenditure per pupil	1488
Balance brought forward from previous year	-32039
Balance carried forward to next year	-37339

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	306
Number of questionnaires returned	152

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	32	3	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	42	48	5	2	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	54	5	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	40	23	5	1
The teaching is good.	45	49	4	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	46	16	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	26	2	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	39	2	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	38	48	11	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	63	33	3	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	47	3	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	53	34	12	0	1

Other issues raised by parents

Improvements in the general ethos of the school since the last inspection.
Inconsistencies regarding the use of the school's reward system.

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

ENGLISH

48. Test results in 2000 were below the national average, but average compared with similar schools. Current attainment in Year 6 reflects the test results and is below average in reading and writing. The overall standards of reading and writing are distorted by the higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs, especially in the upper school. Taking this into account, pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. Satisfactory progress has been made in raising standards since the last inspection although there remain aspects of the subject which require further improvement.

49. Good progress has been made in raising the standards of speaking and listening since the last inspection, and pupils' achievements are now satisfactory. Most pupils listen attentively to their teachers and each other. As they get older, they gain confidence in explaining their ideas. The good questioning techniques used by teachers help pupils to expand and develop their thoughts orally. Pupils are encouraged to speak clearly and audibly in class discussions. Good speaking and listening opportunities occur in different subjects. For example, in history, older pupils adopt the role of courtiers to discuss Cranmer's dilemma over Henry VIII's divorce. In other lessons, including information technology and physical education, pupils have many opportunities to discuss and plan their work in small groups. The tape recording of poetry readings and plays helps to raise the standard expected of pupils' performances. However, there is no consistent approach to assessing speaking and listening to help identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' skills.

50. As they get older most pupils enjoy reading a range of fiction books and some explain their choice of favourite author. More able readers describe characters and predict what might happen next in fiction books. Those pupils who are of average and higher attainment read confidently and fluently for their age. Pupils pay good attention to punctuation for expressing the meaning of texts. They recognise a good range of vocabulary by sight and use clues such as the text surrounding a word to help them understand its meaning. However, pupils make less use of the "phonic" skills that are taught as part of the literacy strategy. Reading materials are well-chosen for their interest and cultural value, and are clearly graded to match pupils' levels of attainment. Pupils have a good understanding of the library classification system, and know how to locate information in books. For example, most of the pupils who read to inspectors in Year 4 could explain the purpose of a glossary.

51. Many parents hear their children read at home. However, the success of this activity is limited because in some classes home/school reading record books are not filled in regularly nor monitored for parental comments. Appropriate sets of "big" books and those for group reading have been acquired to support the literacy strategy. Several teachers have made good use of the limited space to display books attractively and create small book corners, but this is not consistently well done in all classes. The library is used frequently by pupils but is too small for more than a few pupils to study at one time. The number and range of reference books are inadequate for a growing school.

52. The standard of writing is slowly improving. The school assessment team is monitoring the work of those pupils not achieving national standards and strategies have been implemented to raise their attainment and performance in national tests. An increased emphasis on the use of expressive language and more opportunities to write for different purposes have been introduced since the last inspection. This range is now reflected in pupils' work. For example, Year 4 pupils write stories for younger readers that concentrate on interesting beginnings, Year 5 examine the language used in the

poem 'The Listeners' and rewrite the Little Red Riding Hood story in a different style. Year 6 pupils create interesting and dramatic settings for their modern myths and learn to express opinions when writing about local issues. However, some teachers are not ensuring that pupils are accurate when asked to use conventions of writing. For example, letters planned in draft form are not reproduced in a final version so that the addresses are correctly set out. Most pupils develop a neat style of handwriting. Strategies to improve spelling have been introduced since the last inspection. Weekly spelling lists are practised and the use of dictionaries is encouraged. However, the overall standard of spelling in pupils' work remains weak. Commonly used words such as 'battle', 'friends', 'quiet' and 'suddenly' are often spelt incorrectly by pupils in Year 6. There is still much scope for improvement in this aspect of pupils' work. This includes, in some classes, a greater emphasis on ensuring pupils' correct spelling of scientific and other technical vocabulary.

53. Taking into account past work the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In the lessons seen it ranged from satisfactory to very good. In the good and very good lessons, teachers had high expectations of behaviour and work. A brisk pace was sustained in these well-planned lessons. For example, in a very good Year 4 lesson, pupils were taught to apply their learning of "connecting words" and produced well constructed, complex sentences about holidays. Each pupil achieved well because the lesson was carefully structured and there were high expectations of work and behaviour. In a few lessons time was less well managed. For example, on occasions, pupils spent too long listening to explanations and started to lose interest. There are inconsistencies in the activities set during group-work in lessons, partly because teachers in the same year groups do not plan together closely enough. For example, work sheets are generally well used to support pupils with lower levels of attainment. In some classes, however, their overuse limits opportunities for other pupils, especially the most able, to write freely or in more depth. Teachers' marking is helpful and gives pupils a clear indication of where they have been successful and what they need to do to improve.

54. Teachers work closely with learning support assistants in planning work for pupils with special educational needs. In most lessons observed, the support these pupils received helped them to make good progress. Pupils learning English as an additional language receive appropriate specialist support and made sound gains in their learning.

55. The overall planning for literacy is satisfactory both in English and in other subjects. However, it is especially effective in history where there are good opportunities for writing. Good features of the subject's management have been the effectiveness of monitoring teaching and the improved systems for assessing pupils' progress. Support given to teachers has helped to raise the quality of teaching since the last inspection. The assessment of pupils' performance, including an analysis of test results, has been used well to identify overall weaknesses in pupils' work and to set individual targets for improvement.

MATHEMATICS

56. Results in the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000 were well below the national average and below average in comparison with similar schools. These results are similar to those at the last inspection. However, standards have risen in line with the national trend. Taking into account the work observed in lessons and previously completed work, the standards of attainment overall are below average. Nevertheless, pupils are achieving in line with their capabilities and are currently making good progress. The proportion of pupils attaining above average standards shows that the school is catering well for more able pupils, but the number of pupils with special educational needs has a significant impact on the overall standard. Throughout the school, there are encouraging signs of improvement, and the establishment of the National Numeracy Strategy, the setting arrangements and the introduction of individual targets are making a positive impact on standards. Pupils' mental mathematics

skills are improving with daily practice, such as recalling multiplication and division facts, and applying different strategies to mental calculations. During the year, pupils have completed a suitable amount of work in all areas of mathematics. This has been satisfactorily applied to other areas of the curriculum, for example, measuring in design and technology, and recording results in science.

57. By the age of eleven, pupils investigate and solve problems using the skills they have learned. They choose appropriate calculations, set out their work systematically and explain the methods they use. This shows they have a good understanding of the processes. They estimate, measure and explain patterns and relationships they see in numbers and shapes.

58. The quality of teaching seen was good overall and has improved since the last inspection. It ranged from unsatisfactory to very good. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. Most lessons are well planned and organised, and teachers use resources well. For example, the overhead projector was used particularly effectively in one lesson where pupils explained to the class how they had worked out an answer. Teachers' introductions to lessons are usually lively and motivate pupils who, in turn, are keen to learn. Teachers often asked carefully worded questions which encouraged pupils to think for themselves. Consequently, pupils were attentive and eager to answer questions. In the best lessons observed, the challenge and pace of learning were good because teachers used different activities and frequent reinforcement to ensure pupils' understanding of the work. Explanations were clear and related well to what the pupils had learned in previous lessons. In lessons where teaching and learning were less successful, the initial explanations were unclear and, as a result, not all pupils understood the work they were given. In some lessons, worksheets did not make adequate provision for pupils to record what they had learned. Consequently, pupils lost interest in their work and, in one lesson, started playing with the equipment. Where worksheets were used well, teachers had ensured that they were carefully matched to the different abilities of the pupils. In lessons where pupils made the most progress, activities were clearly explained, opportunities were given for pupils to extend their thinking and apply their knowledge to new problems. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils were asked to interpret the line graphs of different journeys that they had created in a previous information and communication technology lesson. The more able pupils calculated the kilometres per hour of each section.

59. Marking is good, and comments to the pupils are both positive and encouraging. As a result, the work in books is well organised, clearly set out and shows that pupils have understood what has been taught. Pupils know how they are progressing because they mark off their individual targets as they achieve them. Pupils enjoy mathematics lessons. Generally they are very well behaved and are keen to answer questions and demonstrate new learning. All pupils with special educational needs benefit from the help given by experienced support staff during every lesson and make good progress. Teachers and support staff help pupils with English as an additional language by giving them work that develops their vocabulary and mathematical understanding.

60. The subject is well managed. Teaching is effectively monitored and all teachers given support to help them improve. The school's analysis of test results highlight areas for development which are used to plan improvements in teaching and the curriculum.. For example, as a result of identifying a weakness in data handling, there has been an emphasis on teaching this in mathematics, information and communication technology and in geography. Progress is tracked as pupils move through the school. Overall, this information is used well to match the level of pupils' work to their needs.

SCIENCE

61. Results in the 2000 national assessments were well below the national average and below the average for similar schools. In the work seen, standards are similar to those indicated in the test

results. However, pupils have a good knowledge about some aspects of the work. When talking about forces, for example, they accurately use vocabulary such as gravity and air resistance and some are starting to understand how forces act against each other. On the other hand, many also think that the earth's gravity varies, even though they have been studying the subject for some time. A significant number of pupils throughout the school are achieving less well than they could because of weaknesses in teaching. Standards have not risen sufficiently since the previous inspection.

62. In the lessons seen, the overall quality of teaching was unsatisfactory and scrutiny of previously completed work supports this judgement. Nevertheless, some very good teaching was seen and, even in less successful lessons, there were some considerable strengths. Every lesson seen was tightly organised and this, together with teachers' firm control, ensured that pupils were well behaved and able to carry out practical activities without disruption. When a room had to be in darkness so that pupils could investigate light-reflective surfaces, the teacher's humour and clear instructions ensured a friendly, co-operative atmosphere and pupils made good progress. Pupils of all ages are enthusiastic about science and especially enjoy practical work. Teachers often make learning fun and this helps pupils to concentrate and work well together. One class tested different sized parachutes to discover which would be best to enable a spy to land safely in enemy territory. They successfully discovered that the spy, represented by a plastic cube, landed best with the largest of three canopies because this offered the greatest air resistance.

63. Lessons were particularly successful when lesson planning took account of the pupils' previous knowledge. Young pupils studied plant growth and the structure of plants through first-hand observation and investigations. In one class, they made very good progress because the teacher had recognised weaknesses in their knowledge and took steps to correct these before going to the next step in learning. The result was that they learned that plants need water, light and nutrients in order to live and explained that, though not necessary, soil is useful because it is a source of nutrients. They named the main parts of the plant accurately and explained that plants can grow new leaves if some are removed. In another class, pupils studied roots at a level more suited to much older pupils but remained confused about simpler aspects of plants. Several teachers have insufficient subject knowledge and so find it hard to interpret the good scheme of work when planning lessons. In particular, the level of investigative skills is often set too high. The result is that pupils often spend too long discussing scientific processes and not enough time carrying out the investigations that would teach them the skills more effectively. In some lessons, so long was spent in class discussions and preparatory writing that pupils had insufficient time to record, interpret and communicate their findings. Some wall displays include factually incorrect elements, or labels that demonstrate ideas more suited to much older pupils.

64. Teachers made good opportunities for pupils to work in groups in some lessons. This helped pupils to develop social skills as well as scientific ones. In some lessons, it also increased the pace of learning because all pupils were involved, actively making decisions and thinking about the reasons for what was happening. In a few lessons, the groups were too large for all pupils to be involved or the emphasis was rather too much on whole-class teaching. The control was too restrictive, with all pupils carrying out the same task at the same time. This prevented the most able pupils from working at a faster pace and extending their investigations to a higher level, while some others found the work too difficult. Pupils use literacy skills well in many lessons, recording their findings in a systematic way. Numeracy skills are also used, although not consistently well. Good use was made of computers in some work to enter data and create graphs. Resources for science are good and are usually used well.

65. The co-ordination of science has been effective in giving the subject a high profile and encouraging an approach that motivates pupils. The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection and a new system for assessing pupils' attainment has been introduced recently. Interesting events, visits and visitors enrich the curriculum. The monitoring of learning has not yet had a significant impact on standards. Inconsistencies in lesson planning within year groups and weaknesses in teaching have not

been identified and dealt with appropriately, for example through further training. Analysis of assessment information has been useful in identifying some aspects for improvement.

Information regarding the subjects which follow

In most of the following subjects not enough lessons were observed to make a judgement about the overall quality of teaching, instead the range in the quality of teaching is given. Judgements about pupils' standards are based on past work. In some subjects, where there was evidence of only certain aspects of a subject, inspectors make judgements about the work seen.

ART AND DESIGN

66. Evidence from the narrow range of work seen indicates that standards are those expected for the pupils' ages. This is similar to the judgement in the last inspection.

67. In their portraits, Year 3 pupils show that they have considered the proportions of a human face and applied these to their drawings. In Year 4, pupils have designed various patterns after looking at famous artists' work, including that of Matisse. Their work shows how they have considered rotations, reflections and repeats, and how they have used computers to generate symmetrical and other patterns. Year 5 pupils have painted attractive willow pattern plates with good attention to the different shades of blue. The quality of these is higher in one class than the others. In Year 6, pupils have used "scraper boards" for art work. Among some good examples seen, was a pupil's detailed representation of a polar bear. Work in sketchbooks varies in quality. For example, in one Year 5 class, the regular use of the books, with a variety of carefully observed sketches, contrasts with the lower quality of work in some other classes.

68. In the few lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory. One Year 4 lesson started with a good ten minute introduction where pupils sketched their hands. The teacher encouraged pupils to study their skin carefully, consequently some of the sketches were of a high quality. Year 5 pupils were encouraged to work in pairs to produce a collage. This was good for their social development as they discussed their work and made choices. Pupils were interested in their work in both lessons but a few found it difficult to settle to their tasks.

69. Planning shows that the full art curriculum is taught over the year. This includes good attention to art from other countries, for example the Aboriginal, Japanese and Indian cultures. A greater focus on three-dimensional work is planned for next term. Useful written guidance helps teachers to identify opportunities for spiritual development in the subject. The school has recently won first prize for art work entered into a competition for Broadstairs schools.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

70. In the work seen, standards were in line with expectations for the ages of the pupils and at a similar level to those reported following the previous inspection. The degree of complexity in both designing and making increases appropriately as pupils get older. For example, younger pupils make cards that include simple pop-up features, while older pupils make wood-framed buggies that have cams to create vertical movement as the axle turns. The finish of these products varies from very good in some classes to unsatisfactory in others, though the mechanical aspects of making are sound in all classes. Teachers often plan good links with other subjects. Pupils studying micro-organisms in science, for example, made a range of breads. Good emphasis was placed on the need for hygiene in food technology, which, together with the practical use of yeast, reinforced their scientific knowledge. Another class used information and communication technology to control the movement of jointed puppets, which was a very effective use of different technological skills.

71. The scheme of work for design and technology provides a systematic approach to the subject and helps teachers to plan lessons that build on previous learning. Pupils are encouraged to develop their design skills thoughtfully. Some younger pupils drew good designs for monsters that would include moving parts powered by pneumatics. They labelled their drawings and discussed the fact that they would probably have to adapt them during the making stage of the process. Throughout the school, the aspects of the subject which are under-developed are pupils' evaluation of their finished products, and the use of research to help them with their designs, both factual and through the use of surveys.

GEOGRAPHY

72. At the time of the last inspection standards were below average. Standards are now in line with national expectations. The work seen shows pupils have developed a sound geographical knowledge and understanding through their studies of maps and places, climate and land use.

73. Year 6 pupils find out about their uses of water and compare it with how water is used in India. They locate relevant places on maps and study the differences in weather and climate. Information technology is used well to record the data they collect. Pupils have discussed water pollution and experimented to find out how water can be cleaned. Throughout the school, pupils learn about other countries, such as Kenya and St Lucia, and locate places on both world and local maps. They compare ways of life in these countries with their own.

74. Since the last inspection, a new scheme of work has been introduced which follows national guidance, and pupils are assessed as recommended in the scheme. The school makes good use of the locality and the residential visit to the Isle of Wight to enrich the geography curriculum. However, resources for the subject are unsatisfactory and restrict pupils' learning. For example, there are insufficient atlases and maps. Where maps have to be photocopied, as occurred in the one lesson observed, pupils cannot use the coloured keys to identify features

HISTORY

75. By the age of eleven, pupils' achievements in history are in line with that expected for their age. Standards are similar to those found at the last inspection.

76. Pupils' understanding of the order of past events is supported well by the use of time lines. In Year 3, good foundations for historical investigation are being established in the study of Ancient Egypt. Using the headings "what the evidence tells me", "it suggests that" and "I need to find out", pupils learn methods to find how people lived at that time. For example, they discuss the work of archaeologists and the importance of artefacts. Pupils are taught to consider the reasons behind historical events. They explore why the Romans invaded Britain and discuss the different viewpoints about Henry VIII's decision to divorce Catherine of Aragon. The subject makes a good contribution to developing pupils' literacy skills. Pupils write as characters from the past which helps them to understand life at the time. For example, after learning about medical cures in the past, one pupil wrote an imaginary apothecary's diary recommending that crushed garlic should be washed in the hair with vinegar. A study of evacuation in the Second World War, and the writing of imaginary letters home, helped pupils to understand how children of that time felt.

77. In the lessons seen, the standards of teaching ranged from satisfactory to good. Much of the good teaching was lively and captured pupils' interest. In these lessons teachers brought the subject to life. For example in a lesson on Ancient Greece, pupils made masks to wear ready for when they perform their own plays. Teachers make good use of their own sources to acquire books and historical objects. However, the school has insufficient resources of its own and, in one lesson, the school's lack of

reference books restricted some older pupils' ability to independently research life in the past.

78. The curriculum is appropriately based on national guidelines. However, good practice is not always shared when teachers plan lessons, especially where they have good local knowledge. For example, only one of the three classes in a year group wrote about the effects of the war in the local area. Clear systems for assessment help teachers to plan work for different levels of attainment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

79. Pupils' attainment is similar to that expected nationally by the end of Year 6. The rate of pupils' learning has improved during the past year due to the successful use of a well-equipped technology room. This is a significant improvement from the last inspection when the subject was not meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum.

80. Pupils transfer pictures and text from a library of pictures stored on the computer. They confidently use a range of facilities, such as adapting sizes, print style and "text boxes" to produce "Wanted" posters or booklets about Broadstairs. E-mails are sent to a newspaper reporter and an actor, and pupils download replies to their questions. Some very good use of computer graphics to produce amusing cartoons enhances pupils' word-processed stories. These activities support the development of pupils' literacy skills. Pupils write procedures for the computer to control their own models such as roundabouts made in design and technology lessons. Mathematical skills, including measurement of angles and estimation, are applied when pupils write sequences of instructions to produce complex geometrical shapes. Pupils enter science results on spreadsheets and produce helpful charts, for example to compare forces. Pupils widen their knowledge of history using information stored on CD ROMS. However, there are variations in pupils' learning depending on which classes they were in previously. For example, some pupils used the Internet for information, whilst others had much more experience of data handling.

81. The quality of teaching and learning ranged from satisfactory to very good and was good overall. Teachers gave clear instructions and provided effective support when pupils encountered problems. In the best lessons they used a good variety of methods for developing skills. For example, the good use of a flip chart to display advertisements with bullet points, provided pupils with a useful reminder when producing their own versions. The teacher provided systematic support to each group and used whole-class teaching well to make general teaching points, for instance when discussing how one group made their advertisement more eye catching. In a few lessons, classes were not brought together often enough to make general teaching points, or to resolve problems experienced by several groups. This slowed the pace of these lessons as pupils waited for the teacher's help. Occasionally, there was not enough time at the end of lessons for pupils to share their experiences and learn from each other. Technical problems, beyond the teacher's control, limited learning in one lesson. The learning of pupils with English as an additional language was satisfactory. Those at an early stage of learning English found some of the terms difficult to understand. However, teachers ensured that these pupils were fully included in the lesson and benefited from working with an English speaking partner. Pupils with special educational needs made good gains in learning especially when supported by learning assistants.

82. The improvements since the last inspection have been well managed. Weaknesses in teachers' understanding were identified and clearly targeted training was provided. Further training has been arranged to ensure that teachers build on their knowledge. The involvement of a governor in monitoring the development of the computer suite has been particularly effective. Recently introduced assessment systems will be helpful in planning work for pupils of different levels of attainment. The school has a good number of computers in the suite and in classrooms. The planned purchase of a

large display screen will enhance the teaching of skills and knowledge to a whole class.

MUSIC

83. At the last inspection, standards in music were unsatisfactory. They have shown good improvement and, in the aspects of the subject seen, pupils now reach the standards expected for their age. They learn to sing tunefully, both in assemblies and in class lessons, although pupils still lack confidence where there is no firm accompaniment.

84. Class teachers are responsible for the music teaching in their own classes. In the lessons seen, teaching was mostly satisfactory with one very good lesson. Teachers used questioning effectively to extend the pupils' knowledge and understanding. Younger pupils sang enthusiastically and altered the speed and dynamics (varying degrees of loudness and intensity) according to the conductor's directions. Older pupils know how to use their voices to create effect. In a very good lesson, the teacher introduced a rap which the pupils enjoyed and joined in, both following the words and clapping the beat. This lesson was very well planned to ensure that pupils learnt at a rapid pace, and the teacher was particularly skilful in involving those who were reluctant to participate. The lower school hymn practice showed pupils making satisfactory progress with singing which is mostly in tune, but which sometimes lacks enthusiasm. A good number of pupils learn the recorder, and one group has just won a cup for the best ensemble playing in a local competition. Specialist instrumental teaching is available, for which pupils are charged. This has enabled several more able pupils to reach a good standard for their age.

85. A good scheme of work has been implemented to help non-specialist teachers. Where possible, it incorporates the nationally recommended scheme and it is helping to raise standards of music. The school has good resources, including sufficient instruments for class lessons, instruments from different parts of the world and CDs of a wide range of music. Visits from specialist groups enrich the music curriculum. For example, during a music workshop, every pupil had the opportunity to learn to play the auto-harp and perform in a final concert. Pupils use a music program for composing on the computer, which supports their learning in both music and information and communication technology.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

86. Pupils' standards in the dance, games skills and swimming lessons seen are those expected for their ages. This is similar to the judgement made in the last inspection.

87. In Year 3, pupils learnt to control their bodies creatively in dance lessons. For example, they produced a series of movements expressing fear when approaching an imaginary mystery house. In games lessons pupils rolled a ball accurately and bounced it up and down on a racquet when moving around. Year 4 pupils showed how they have developed their creative dance skills by using their whole bodies to express and link "angry" movements. Year 6 pupils, working with partners, refined and performed a sequence of jumps which they and other members of the class evaluated.

88. The quality of teaching seen ranged from satisfactory to very good. Teachers ensured that pupils were kept active during lessons and all led by example, by being appropriately dressed and taking part in the exercise. Most lessons involved pupils discussing their actions in pairs. This helped to develop their speaking, listening and social skills. The swimming lesson for Year 4 was well organised to ensure all pupils were kept active and learning at their own level. In a very good dance lesson, pupils were motivated by the story of "Angry Arthur" and learnt to express their feelings in a series of sharp, fixed movements at different heights. The teacher evaluated samples of pupils' work and skilfully used these to help others to improve their performance. The final part of the lesson was very well used to

help pupils reflect and relax their bodies. In a few lessons, there was no activity to help pupils relax or “warm down” at the end. Occasionally, the opportunity to develop individual skills was missed, for example to correct a poor technique of throwing a ball.

89. Pupils have suitable opportunities to participate and compete in sporting activities after school. These include gymnastics, cricket, netball and football. The curriculum includes all aspects of physical education including, in Year 6, the opportunity to take part in outdoor pursuits during a residential visit.