

INSPECTION REPORT

**HOLY TRINITY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Chatsworth Road,

Dartford

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118859

Headteacher: Mrs Gillian Haynes

Reporting inspector: Dr Pauline Buzing OBE
15849

Dates of inspection: October 9-13 2000

Inspection number: 220342

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Chatsworth Road Dartford Kent
Postcode:	DA1 5AF
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Percy W. Hicks
Date of previous inspection:	13/10/97

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Pauline Buzing OIN 15849	Registered inspector	History, music	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Jan Zachary OIN 9339	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; Links with the community; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Margaret Barrowman OIN 30418	Team inspector	English (including literacy and English as an additional language); art and design; design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
John Cook OIN 6957	Team inspector	Science; geography; Under fives; Equal opportunities	
Graham Todd OIN 1224	Team inspector	Mathematics (including numeracy); information and communication technology; Physical Education; Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Holy Trinity is a Voluntary Aided Church of England primary school. It is above average in size, and serves the local area in which it is situated and the Holy Trinity Church community. Currently, 284 pupils, aged between 4 and 11 attend the school. The pupils' attainment on entry is broadly average. A small number of pupils are from ethnic minority families, a few of these have English as a second language, and the school has also taken in some refugees. Some 34 pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals: broadly in line with the national average. Eight pupils (some 3 per cent) have statements of special educational needs, and 43 pupils – 15 per cent - are on the school's register of special educational needs: broadly in line with the national average. After a period of time as a Grant Maintained school, Holy Trinity acquired Voluntary Aided status in September 1999.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school was judged to have serious weaknesses at the time of its previous inspection in 1997. Now, Holy Trinity is an improving school, and is effective. Standards in the core subjects improved significantly in the national tests for eleven year olds in 2000 and the school exceeded its targets, though the results are still below national averages in English and mathematics, and well below them in science. Teaching, leadership and management are satisfactory overall, now that weaknesses have been addressed. The school now provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils have good attitudes to their work.
- Attendance is good, and the pupils like coming to school.
- Behaviour is good overall.
- Relationships in the school are good. Pupils collaborate well in their work.
- The school's accommodation is very good.
- Financial planning and monitoring are good. Decision making is carefully linked to educational priorities, and focused on raising standards.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The school provides good personal support and guidance for its pupils.
- There is good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.

What could be improved

- Although the school exceeded its targets in 2000, results in the core subjects are still below national averages in English and mathematics, and well below average in science;
- There are weaknesses in the pupils' writing, so that the strategy for literacy is not fully effective;
- Statutory requirements for information and communication technology (ICT) are not met, and standards are poor.
- There is a high percentage of satisfactory, rather than good, teaching.
- The partnership with parents is not fully effective.
- Aspects of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage are not wholly in place.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The previous inspection found serious weaknesses in the school's leadership and management, and in Key Stage 2. Time allocated to the curriculum was below the required minimum, the National Curriculum was not fully covered, many subjects lacked schemes of work, and there were weaknesses in the school development plan, monitoring and assessment. The percentage of unsatisfactory teaching was high: in nearly one third of lessons in Key Stage 2. Work did not match the needs of all pupils and teachers' expectations were often low. The school has made satisfactory improvement, and has worked to a substantial action plan, consistently addressing most weaknesses. The curriculum is now satisfactory overall, although ICT does not meet statutory requirements. Standards in the core subjects show substantial improvement this year, so that the school exceeded its targets in both English and mathematics. Weaknesses in leadership, management and teaching have all been addressed, the curriculum now meets requirements, except in ICT, and the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	All schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	D	E	D	D	well above average A above average B Average C Below average D well below average E
Mathematics	E	E	D	D	
Science	E	E*	E	E	

The results show significant improvement in 2000. Some 66 per cent of the pupils attained at least Level 4 in English and mathematics in 2000, compared to 44 per cent in English and 40 per cent in mathematics in 1999. In science, 70 per cent attained at least level 4 in 2000, compared to 44 per cent in 1999. In comparison with similar schools, results have improved from being in the bottom five per cent in English and science and from well below average in mathematics. The school exceeded its targets in 2000. After a period of turbulence at the time of the previous inspection, results dropped, but the new measures put in place have had a positive impact, and results of the QCA voluntary tests, taken by pupils at the end of Year 4 and Year 5, confirm that standards are rising.

In work seen in both key stages, there are strengths in speaking and listening, and in the pupils' investigative work, but writing is a weakness, so that when pupils come to record what they know, their standards drop. Standards in English and mathematics are just below national expectations. However, in ICT, levels of attainment are poor at the end of both key stages. In science, art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, the pupils' attainments are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. These levels are appropriate for the stage the school has reached in its current drive for improvement, and higher targets have been set for 2001 and 2002.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen to come to school, and easily become involved
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Behaviour in classrooms is better than it is in the playground, where it can become over-enthusiastic.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The positive relationships throughout the school are one of its strengths and ensure that there is a good atmosphere for learning.

Attendance	Good. Unauthorised absence is below national figures, and punctuality is good.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is satisfactory in both key stages, with some good teaching. There are particular strengths in the way teachers manage their pupils, and in the good concentration, interest and independence the pupils show in their learning. The school meets the needs of all its pupils, and the quality of their learning is satisfactory overall. Higher attaining pupils are better served in Years 5 / 6 through the booster classes, and make better progress at that point than lower down the school. Some 65 lessons were observed: 95 per cent of the teaching is satisfactory or better, 29 per cent is good, 2 per cent is very good, and 5 per cent is unsatisfactory. Where lessons were not satisfactory, in two Key Stage 2 lessons, the tasks set were not matched closely to the needs of the pupils, and in an under fives lesson, the pace slowed and children did not make enough progress. One very good geography lesson was observed in a Year 3 / 4 class.

Teaching in most other subjects is satisfactory overall, and there are examples of good teaching in all year groups. No overall judgement can be made on the teaching in history or design and technology because few lessons in those subjects were observed during the inspection – though the standards in pupils' work indicates that teaching is satisfactory. No judgement is made on teaching in ICT, which was not taught during the inspection week, though the standards are poor. Literacy and numeracy are satisfactorily taught, though the impact of the National Literacy Strategy has yet to feed through fully in writing.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall, though the school does not meet statutory requirements for ICT. The Foundation Stage curriculum is weak in the creative area of learning and in knowledge and understanding of the world. There are few extra-curricular activities for pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The special needs provision is well organised and the pupils receive good support from specialists.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Though teachers are sympathetic, they do not always make special arrangements for these pupils who, nevertheless, cope well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is good. The pupils are able to reflect on issues, they have a strong sense of right and wrong and the school expects more mature responses as the pupils move through it. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school supports the pupils' personal development well. Monitoring of their academic progress is satisfactory. There is no written policy for child protection.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear vision of the school's future, shared by all staff. The school currently suffers from a lack of co-ordinators in the core subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors have played a full part in shaping the direction of the school. Statutory requirements for ICT, and some minor requirements, are not met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school considers its performance carefully and, through a detailed development plan, evaluates its progress well.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Financial planning and monitoring are now good. Decision-making is carefully linked to educational priorities, the school development plan is costed and focused on raising standards.

The school has adequate staffing. The three newly qualified teachers cannot be given co-ordinators' roles and this means that the headteacher, supported by teams of teachers, currently carries an unacceptably heavy burden in co-ordinating the three core subjects. The school's accommodation is very good, and resources are satisfactory, apart from those for ICT. The school applies the principles of best value effectively.

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 going to school. • The children behave well when they are at school. • They are pleased with the progress their children make. • The teaching in the school is good. • The school expects pupils to work hard and achieve their best. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They would like more information on their children's progress. • They think the school does not work closely with parents. • They are dissatisfied with the amount of homework their children receive. • They do not find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems. • They would like a wider range of extra-curricular activities. • They do not think the school is well managed.

The inspection team thinks the partnership between parents and the school is unsatisfactory, and the two bodies do not work closely enough. The team agrees with the parents' positive comments, though they found the majority of teaching to be satisfactory, with some good teaching. They agree with parents that pupils need to be given access to a wider range of extra-curricular activities, that they need more information on their children's progress. Their judgement is that homework is not wholly effective in moving the pupils' learning forward. It could be improved. They found the school to be satisfactorily managed.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Children's attainments on entry to the school are broadly as expected for their age, as measured by the local education authority's baseline assessment, across a relatively narrow range of capabilities. The profile of this year's children shows that they have well-developed social skills. In mathematics, language and literacy, and physical development, the children are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals laid down in the new Foundation Stage. In personal, social and emotional development, they are likely to exceed these. However, weaknesses in the curriculum, and inadequate time devoted to knowledge and understanding of the world and the creative area of learning, mean that they are unlikely to achieve the goals in these areas.
2. By the end of their time in the school, the pupils' results at the end of Year 6 in the national tests for 2000 show significant improvement over the 1999 results. Using the average National Curriculum points attained by the pupils, the figures show that in comparison with all schools, and with similar schools, the results are now just below the national average in English and mathematics. This compares favourably to the very low 1999 results in English and science – in the bottom five per cent of schools, and well below average in mathematics.
3. The percentage of pupils attaining at least Level 4 in 2000 increased from 44 to 66 per cent in English and from 40 to 66 per cent in mathematics. The percentage of pupils who attained the higher Level 5 also increased. It more than doubled in mathematics, and is above the national average, and more than quadrupled in English, to bring it broadly in line with the national average. The school exceeded its target in both subjects this year.
4. The results in science improved also, but started from a lower baseline, as the school was in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally. The results for 2000 place the school well below the national average in science – but, even so, there was a significant improvement in the science results, with 70 per cent of pupils attaining Level 4 and above, compared to 44 per cent in 1999.
5. Over the four years from 1996 to 1999, girls out-performed boys in the tests, but in 2000, the boys' results were better than those of the girls. In the Key Stage 1 results, the boys out-performed girls in the four year period overall, but this varies from year to year. No significant difference in standards was observed between the sexes during the inspection.
6. The Key Stage 1 test results for 2000 do not show significant improvement, and they are not as good as at the time of the previous inspection, where the results matched the national averages. This is mainly due to a cohort with a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs. One quarter of the year group has significant special educational needs, and inspection evidence confirms this. Not surprisingly, the results in reading, writing and mathematics, and in the teacher assessments of science, are well below the national average, and well below the average for similar schools.
7. In work seen, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are better than this, though they are still below the national expectation in English and mathematics, but in line with expectation in science. The same pattern is evident in the work of the oldest pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. One reason for the lower standards in English and mathematics is the relatively slow start to the school year: the two week induction period, following on the six week summer break has delayed focused work. Scrutiny of work during the inspection clearly showed that last year's pupils increased their rate of progress, and raised standards as the year progressed. In Year 6, this was particularly true once the booster classes began in the spring.
8. Standards in speaking and listening are above the national expectation at the end of both key stages. The pupils talk confidently and listen intently, using new vocabulary when they learn to talk, for example, about their scientific experiments. Reading standards are broadly in line with the national expectation, although some pupils struggle un-necessarily, and others find the texts too easy, when the books they

read are not well matched to their attainment levels. Writing standards are below expectation at the end of both key stages. The pupils are given relatively limited opportunities to write, and the range of tasks they undertake across the whole curriculum does not encourage them to develop as writers. In particular, the lack of ICT to support writing means that the pupils are not using word processing to aid their development as writers. The structure of the pupils' writing is secure, and work is well presented, but pupils are not confident in developing their own style. Only the higher attaining pupils include personal and imaginative touches in their work.

9. In mathematics, pupils at the end of both key stages are currently working at levels below the national expectation. Some weaknesses in the pupils' knowledge of their tables leave them with problems in calculating quickly and accurately: some Year 5 pupils were seen to suffer in this way in a lesson on equivalent fractions. The brisk mental mathematics sessions that start most lessons are addressing this problem, and the National Numeracy Strategy is helping to raise standards in both key stages. However, higher attaining pupils are not fully challenged, even though the pupils are divided into sets in the top classes.
10. Standards in science – at the national expectation at the end of both key stages – benefit from a good emphasis on investigative work, though higher attaining pupils are capable of reaching higher standards by the end of Key Stage 2 than they currently do. Too often, they are set the same task as the rest of the class, and they find it easy to keep up, instead of being challenged with more demanding work.
11. Standards in ICT are poor at the end of both key stages, and remain well below expectation. There has been no improvement since the previous inspection. Currently, there are too few machines to enable all pupils to have sufficient 'hands on' experience. However, even where there are computers in classrooms, they are not currently being used to raise standards in the subject, nor is ICT making a full contribution to the raising of standards in other subjects.
12. In the foundation subjects: art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, standards in work seen are in line with expectation at the end of both key stages. This is an improvement on the previous inspection, where the standards in design and technology, geography and music were below the national expectation. The other subjects have sustained their expected levels, and there are examples of good features: such as the standards of listening in music, and the attainment of some pupils in art.
13. Pupils with special educational needs attain satisfactory standards, relative to their prior attainment, and the majority of these pupils are making satisfactory progress. Just under 10 per cent of the pupils in the school speak a language other than English as their first language. The majority of beginners are well supported by a specialist on one day a week, and by their class teachers. Three of the Key Stage 1 pupils with English as an additional language receive particularly good support from their class teacher, who models appropriate, simplified language and uses much repetition and encouragement. In a minority of classes, some beginners appear a little lost and confused, experiencing difficulties even with practical subjects, due to their limited language.
14. The more proficient speakers of English perform at a level commensurate with their peers. They enjoy singing French songs and counting in French along with everyone else and are happy to join in discussions in all subjects. Towards the end of Key Stage 2, a minority of pupils experience difficulties with inference and deduction from texts, and do not always receive help to further develop their vocabularies in order to achieve at an even higher level. Overall, pupils with English as an additional language are achieving satisfactorily.
15. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, now make satisfactory progress through their time in the school. Pupils who were in Year 6 in the summer of 2000 performed as expected, when their Key Stage 1 results from 1996 are compared to their Key Stage 2 test results in 2000, showing that they made satisfactory progress. The school saved a great deal of work from the academic year 1999-2000 to supplement the work sample from this academic year, since the inspection took place early in the term. This work confirms that pupils make satisfactory progress overall, but more rapid progress in Years 5 / 6. Frequently, many pupils are hampered by their weak writing skills, so that although they have

well developed skills in history, geography or science, for example, whenever they come to record their work or write about what they know, the written work is limited.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. Attitudes to the school, to adults and to work remain good amongst the pupils, as they were at the time of the last inspection. The great majority expect to work hard and to enjoy their lessons. They particularly enjoy their work when they can take an active part - for example playing 'hangman' in a Year 1/2 literacy lesson, or when the same year group made simple electrical circuits. They sustain responsible attitudes, even when the lessons are long - a Year 5/6 group remained well behaved and enthusiastic, for example, throughout a 90-minute literacy session about autobiography.
17. The pupils show good levels of interest, concentration and independence - valuable personal skills that make a good contribution to their learning. A Year 1/2 class, for example, concentrated particularly well in a music lesson, sitting with eyes closed to listen to the 'Summer' part of 'The Four Seasons'. Pupils also work together well. They co-operate in pairs or in groups, and also encourage each other as a class; for example, applauding each other during mental maths. Relationships are also good, and the pupils care about each other, respecting each other's feelings.
18. Behaviour is good throughout the age groups in the school, though it is better in lessons than in the playground. Here it is satisfactory, but play can be very energetic, and occasionally over-wild. The under-fives find it very difficult to cope with the boisterous playground environment during morning play, when they are with the rest of the school. Few pupils take part in structured games at playtime. Nevertheless, throughout their play, the pupils show sufficient concern for each other to keep the situation safe, despite comparatively low numbers of adult supervisors. Lunchtime is noisy, as pupils 'let off steam', but it is a civilised occasion. The pupils are sensible in assembly. Despite great excitement in the 'golden' assembly at which awards were to be given, the pupils were very well behaved and polite to each other and adults, holding doors open and saying 'thank-you' spontaneously.
19. Attendance is good. Authorised absence levels are broadly in line with the national average, and the unauthorised absence is less than half the national figure, as a direct result of the school's diligent monitoring. Punctuality is also good, and the school is well aware of individual minor problems. Ninety-four per cent of parents responding to the questionnaire agreed that their children like coming to school, and this contributes to the good picture on attendance.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. At the time of the previous inspection, 17 per cent of the lessons observed were unsatisfactory, accounting for almost a third of the lessons in Key Stage 2. There were weaknesses in planning, so that the pupils often used the same worksheets, regardless of age or ability. Teachers' expectations were frequently too low, especially of higher attaining pupils. As a result, lessons did not enable them to make adequate progress. There were mismatches between the teachers' short and medium term plans, and the pupils were not sufficiently encouraged to present their work well.
21. Teaching overall is now satisfactory throughout the school, and in each key stage. 95 per cent of the teaching observed was at least satisfactory, 29 per cent was good and 2 per cent was very good. This represents a significant improvement. Five per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory: one in the Foundation Stage where the two classes were put together for discussion, and the very large group of children meant they were not able to be involved, lost interest and made little progress. In two other lessons in Year 3 / 4, the organisation was confusing and introductions were over-long, so that the pupils achieved little during the lessons.
22. Lessons are related to the curriculum maps the school uses as schemes of work, and teachers plan in teams of three so that the pupils of similar age, in different classes, receive the same coverage of each subject. This 'team' approach means that the individual strengths of each teacher may be used for the benefit of all pupils: for example, the Year 3 / 4 teachers decide which of them has the greatest expertise

in a particular subject, and that teacher teaches the jointly-planned lesson at the start of the week, so that any problems can be ironed out, and further advice can be given to the other teachers. Basic skills are solidly taught in literacy and numeracy, and teachers often draw the attention of the pupils to key words, and to the phonics they will need to spell the words. However, ICT is not playing a full part in teaching and learning, and this is limiting the impact of the school's literacy strategy.

23. Apart from this, the teaching is resulting in steady progress as the pupils acquire skills, knowledge and understanding, extending and deepening them as they move through the school. There was a good example of this during the inspection, since the Year 1 / 2 classes and the Year 5/6 classes were studying electricity. The increased sophistication of the challenges set for the older pupils was evident, and teachers built effectively on their well-established investigative skills so that the pupils showed they really understand the purpose of prediction, taking all known factors into consideration to predict a likely outcome, rather than simply guessing. Evidence from the scrutiny of work shows that although higher attaining pupils are well catered for in the booster classes in Year 6, and in some classes, they are not fully challenged in all lessons throughout the school, even in the core subjects, particularly in mathematics and in science.
24. The pupils' willingness to be involved means that the effort they put into their work is satisfactory overall, but it is often good. Teachers use effective methods to challenge them, but the long time slots sometimes mean that the pace of working and productivity remain satisfactory, rather than good. There are some exceptions to this. In one Foundation Stage lesson in the mathematical area of learning, for example, the teacher was aware that she needed to engage the interest of her group of very young children, and did this well, handing out tasks, keeping the pace brisk and constantly challenging them with questions. The result was a good level of learning and progress by all the pupils. However, overall, the pace of working in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory: too often, the children are asked to be passive, or to sit on the carpet. Though the pace of lessons is satisfactory overall in Key Stages 1 and 2, the good teaching is carried out at a brisk pace: in a very good Year 3 / 4 geography lesson, the teacher constantly urged the pupils to do better: 'Come on, Year 3, you can try harder'. She reminded them regularly how long was left for them to accomplish the task, so that they sustained the momentum of their learning to the very end of the lesson.
25. The pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 work well with good levels of interest and concentration. Their independence is good, too. They collaborate well in their group work, and press forward with investigative tasks. This is partly a result of the good relationships in the classroom, and the effective way teachers manage their classes. Staff throughout the school use very positive approaches, which help to develop the learners' self-esteem and to make them feel secure. The school's two week delay in teaching the schemes of work at the start of the academic year ensures that the teaching rests on a foundation of good relationships. However, it also means that they make a slow start to the year and lose valuable time, when they could be focusing on the content of the curriculum.
26. As the pupils move through the school, so their knowledge of their own learning increases satisfactorily. This is due, in part, to the feedback they get from teachers, who use verbal praise judiciously, and demonstrate what is wanted by showing examples of good work. In Year 5/6, pupils have good knowledge of their learning: target cards are used in mathematics and in English, and the pupils themselves have an input into these. The cards, made during the two week induction time, sit on the desk throughout English and mathematics lessons, and the pupils discuss their targets sensibly. They are proud of showing improvements they have already made.
27. Overall, the teachers use time, resources and support staff satisfactorily – though, as has been mentioned, time is much more effectively used in the shorter lessons. In PE, for example, teachers regularly use timed targets to break up the lesson and issue challenges. The time allocated to homework is not currently being used well to further learning. Parents at the parents' meeting and in individual comments expressed concern at the lack of consistency in the setting of homework, and the inspection team agrees that homework is not fully used as an opportunity to move the learning forward. Support staff are used well in most classes, but their lack of training sometimes limits their contribution, particularly in the Foundation Stage.

28. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes is mostly satisfactory. Teaching by the special educational needs co-ordinator, for the small number of pupils who are withdrawn for literacy classes, is good and it is well structured to meet their individual needs. Learning support assistants make satisfactory contributions to the pupils' learning, so that they achieve satisfactorily overall.
29. The support for pupils for whom English is an additional language is just satisfactory. Class teachers are not always fully aware of the pupils' cultural backgrounds and of their linguistic needs. However, pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory gains in their learning.
30. Every teacher was observed teaching English and mathematics. The quality of teaching in the two subjects is satisfactory overall. Of the twelve lessons observed in English, the teaching was good in three and satisfactory in another eight. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory. All ten mathematics lessons were at least satisfactory – three of them were good. Literacy and numeracy are taught across the curriculum, and basic skills are solidly taught. However, the absence of ICT as a teaching tool in developing writing skills is a weakness in both key stages and contributes to standards that are well below expectation.

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

31. At the time of the last inspection, there were concerns that curricular provision did not meet statutory requirements and teaching time was lower than that recommended, particularly in Key Stage 2. In addition, there was a lack of curricular balance and the brief policies and schemes of work were too general to ensure that pupils could progress satisfactorily.
32. Since that time, the school has worked hard to remedy these deficiencies. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is now based on the Early Learning Goals and is satisfactory except for the two areas of knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. This leads to lower levels of achievement in these two areas. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the National Curriculum Programmes of Study are implemented in the majority of subjects, the exception being ICT, where standards are poor as a result. There are also some problems in providing swimming for Key Stage 2 pupils, but the school is addressing this. In all subjects, apart from ICT, curriculum maps have been drawn up to make sure the pupils make progress and that learning builds securely on what has gone before, both within and between age groups.
33. The school fully implements the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies although in its quest to raise standards, these areas have been allocated large amounts of time, leaving a minority of sessions in the curriculum rather unbalanced. The impact of the school's strategy for numeracy is satisfactory, but the absence of ICT as a tool to raise standards in writing, and relatively limited opportunities for extended writing across the curriculum mean that the impact of the school's strategy for literacy is unsatisfactory. Another effect of the long periods spent on these two subjects is that pupils, especially in the Foundation Stage, become very tired towards the end of lessons and time is wasted.
34. A feature of the school is a period entitled "Teacher Choice" or "Circle Time". Some teachers use this time for modern foreign language awareness with pupils learning to sing songs and count in French. For others, this is a time for personal, social and health education or for finishing off activities. The sessions are generally used well, but the profitability of this time varies from class to class and currently lacks an agreed structure.
35. The curriculum is satisfactorily enriched by visitors to the school. These include the local librarian, fire officer and theatre groups. The pupils also make visits to places of interest such as Penshurst Place, Dartford Fire Station, Safeways and the cinema. A useful link has been established with the Leigh City Technology College to augment the school's design and technology programme.
36. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have the opportunity to join the choir, which is held, after school. Unfortunately, this takes place on the same evening as the football club so boys who want to play football cannot join the choir. In recent times, the choir has sung at the local church and at the Dartford Choral Festival. In the summer, pupils can play rounders after school, but there are currently no other extra curricular activities,

apart from a privately run dance club. Parents expressed concern about the narrow range of extra-curricular activities the pupils can take part in, and the inspection team agrees with them that this is unsatisfactory. The school is already addressing this issue.

37. The school has a comprehensive plan for Personal, Social and Health Education, although it has a small time allocation. The plan is so new that it has not yet been fully implemented. It includes drugs education and sex education, which are handled sensitively, reflecting the school's Christian ethos. An emphasis is placed on giving pupils knowledge to help them adopt a healthy lifestyle and make informed choices.
38. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They have equal access to the curriculum and the majority are making sound progress in English, mathematics and science, when measured against their prior knowledge and understanding of these subjects. In most classes the curriculum is appropriately adapted and modified to take their learning difficulties into account. The school is implementing the Code of Practice well, and all identified pupils have individual education plans. The targets on the plans written by specialist staff are well thought out and can be easily measured when reviewed. However, some of the targets on individual education plans written by teachers are of limited value in tracking progress, because they are not specific enough. Pupils with English as an additional language generally perform at a level commensurate with their peers. Boys and girls have equal access to the curriculum.
39. Links with the community make satisfactory contributions to the pupils' learning and the school has sound partnerships with other institutions. The choir often sing at Holy Trinity church and further afield, and pupils make a variety of trips out to local areas of interest - libraries, museums, parks and shops, for example. An 'Early Morning Club' allows working parents to drop off their children before the start of the school day. The school also welcomes visitors into classes - for example local pensioners, firemen and the vicar or reader. Links with other schools are limited, though there is a positive involvement in the City Technical College's Primary Link programme.
40. The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Good provision is made for the pupils' spiritual development, reflecting the Christian ethos of the school. They are encouraged to listen and reflect in many areas of the curriculum, and are particularly attentive during assemblies when spiritual themes, such as faith and the power of prayer, are discussed. The pupils' attention is drawn to the significance of lighting the candle at the start of each assembly, and they respond appropriately. Daily acts of collective worship are fully in place and meet statutory requirements.
41. Good provision is also made for pupils' moral development, and the impact of this is clear in the pupils' good attitudes to school, and their behaviour during the school day. There is a sound behaviour policy, with an emphasis on rewards. These positive aspects are highlighted in "Merit" assemblies. In lessons, the teachers' management of pupils - the discipline - is a strong feature, and this ensures that the atmosphere is conducive to learning.
42. When pupils infringe the rules, they are calmly yet firmly reminded of the way they should behave, and staff take time to explain to them what they have done wrong. As a result, the pupils have a good sense of right and wrong. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are managed positively by staff and fellow pupils alike. All adults in the school are good role models.
43. Provision for the pupils' social development is good. The older pupils have many opportunities to undertake responsibilities as gatekeepers, candle and chair monitors. Pupils throughout the school are expected to help their teachers, but Year 6 pupils are expected to be available to act as helpers to any member of staff. As a consequence of the good provision, they are well mannered, listening when others are speaking and holding the door open for the next person. The school's expectations are consistent, so that the pupils invariably volunteer to undertake anything that is requested, and the kindness and support shown by pupils to each other is a strength of the school.
44. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' cultural development. They learn about famous artists and art from a previous era and listen to a range of music from around the world. They participate in cultural events, both in and out of school, and the majority has an awareness of spoken French. There was a small display about Africa and evidence of the making of lamps for Diwali during the inspection, but

generally, the multi-cultural dimension to the pupils' education is limited. There is little acknowledgement of the many cultures represented in the school and wider community.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The school's procedures for measuring attainment and assessing the pupils' academic achievements are satisfactory. The school has good formal systems for assessing performance in English and mathematics that provide information for reporting to parents and for planning the work that pupils undertake. For example, teachers assess the levels pupils have attained in English and mathematics each term and put samples of work in the pupils' evidential books. These are used to help compare teachers' assessments and form a useful reference for teachers when assessing samples of work against National Curriculum levels. Teachers talk to pupils about their work and most marking is constructive, with useful comments in the pupils' books to help them to improve their work.
46. The school makes satisfactory use of the extensive assessment data available to them in English and mathematics. They use it to identify different groups of pupils and as a basis for setting in Years 5 and 6. However, sometimes, not enough notice is taken of what staff know about the levels pupils have attained; for example, in some classes pupils are given reading books that are either too hard or too easy. Some higher attaining pupils are working from books in a published mathematics scheme that are too easy for them.
47. Teachers use the good procedures for monitoring the pupils' academic development in English and mathematics to help them to guide pupils towards achieving higher standards. Assessment procedures in other subjects are looser and less formal, but still enable teachers to track the pupils' progress satisfactorily, except in ICT and in science, where the gap between teachers' assessments and the test results shows shortcomings. The identification and assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are good, and fully meet the requirements of the Code of Practice. The pupils' records are well kept and satisfactory help is received from outside agencies.
48. The teacher who supports the pupils who have English as an additional language at an elementary level, tracks their progress carefully, and is a helpful, caring link between school and home. Where families speak a language not known to her, she liaises effectively with the Local Authority Support Service, and occasionally visits the pupils' homes. The Special Needs Co-ordinator provides a good additional link between the support teacher and class teachers.
49. The school supports and guides pupils well. Staff show a concern for their pupils and care about their welfare. This, in turn, encourages the pupils to care about each other. The personal development of pupils with special educational needs is monitored well, and support staff are given good information about the pupils with whom they work. The monitoring of personal development is satisfactory for other pupils. The teachers are particularly concerned that their care of the pupils enables them to do well in class. They keep records of friendship groups, for example, so that the pupils' work can be supported in this way.
50. The pupils' behaviour and attendance are also carefully monitored and there are good procedures to encourage pupils to behave well and attend school regularly. As a result, pupils expect to behave well and attendance is good. Particularly positive features are the careful recording of both absence and lateness, and the well-established discipline policy. The staff make consistent and effective use of rewards, leading to the 'golden assembly', and the school tracks how much individual pupils are involved, aiming to reward all individuals for something positive at least once a year.
51. There is a sound health and safety policy, and the inspection team did not identify any significant health and safety issues. Children with minor injuries, such as scraped knees, are comforted and cared for. There are good records of special health problems and accident forms are completed diligently and effectively. However, the school's organisation of child protection procedures is not sufficiently formal. There is no written policy and not all staff are fully aware of procedures. In spite of this, record keeping, concerning individual pupils about whom there are concerns, is good - the issue is over the letter of the law, rather than the practice.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. Although parents appreciate much of what the school does, there are too many significantly negative views, and the school's partnership with parents is not satisfactory. The results of the questionnaire circulated to parents before the inspection are significantly worse than at the time of the last inspection. There is deep and justifiable dissatisfaction with homework, the level of extra curricular activities, and the way in which the school works with parents, including the information they are given. There are positive signs in that the views of the new Year R parents are significantly better than those of parents who have been in longer contact with the school. Nevertheless, over twenty per cent of parents have reservations about how well the school is managed, and links are unsatisfactory overall.
53. The inspection team judges that parents are right to be concerned about inconsistencies in setting homework, the narrow range of extra-curricular activities, and the quality of information parents receive. However, they judge that the school is satisfactorily managed.
54. Over a third of those who responded to the parents' questionnaires are dissatisfied with the school's approach to homework. Homework is not set consistently, parents are not clear about what is expected. The school has made some efforts in this area, and held a 'Numeracy Evening' at which staff explained to parents exactly what was involved in the National Numeracy Strategy, and how they could support their children's learning through homework. However, this represents only one area of the curriculum, and the inspection team also found that homework is not well followed up by teachers. This means that the school is missing a significant opportunity to develop links with parents and involve them in their children's learning, so that this involvement is not currently at a satisfactory level.
55. In addition, though diligently used by teachers, the contact books are not fully used by parents - with a low number writing comments - and few parents help in the school, apart from on trips. These low levels of involvement show an obvious link to the views of over 40 percent of those responding to the questionnaire that the school does not work closely with them. A quarter of those responding to the questionnaire do not feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or a problem. These are worrying figures. There are positive features, however, in that parents do make a useful contribution to the school's finances, raising about £500 per term through, for instance, book fairs. Some parents have helped with Christingles. A small but committed group of 'friends' sell school uniforms and support the school in a variety of ways such as at sports day. The majority of parents with pupils identified as having special educational needs are fully involved in the review of their individual education plans.
56. Overall, the quality of information provided to parents is unsatisfactory. Parents feel that the information provided for them on their children's progress is insufficient: the questionnaire returns show that over 40 per cent of parents are unhappy with this aspect of the school's work. Reports to parents do not meet statutory requirements, in that comments in some still describe briefly what pupils have done rather, than giving details of their progress. Some suggest areas for improvement, but there is no consistent approach to the setting of targets in reports. This, again, is a missed opportunity to involve parents in a dialogue about how their children can improve. However, the school does hold well attended curricular evenings, and a consultation evening part way through the year. The school also keeps careful records of attendance at parents' meetings and is trying to improve links with those parents who do not attend. Another positive feature is the curriculum information sent home at the start of each term. The prospectus, criticised at the time of the last inspection, is now more helpful, but the current Governors' annual report to parents does not give enough attention to special needs and issues of disability: for example, referring the reader to other documents. Day to day information is variable - the newsletters cover areas of interest but do not always give sufficient notice of events. There is a useful set of leaflets for parents of children entering the reception year: for example, on approaches to reading, and on health issues, such as head lice.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. The previous inspection found serious weaknesses in the leadership and management of the school. There was no school development plan, the governing body did not fulfil its statutory obligations

satisfactorily, there was no clear vision for academic improvement, and there were shortcomings in the leadership of curriculum co-ordinators, in the prospectus and annual reports to parents, and in the way the curriculum was laid out and managed.

58. The governing body, headteacher, deputy headteacher and all staff with management responsibilities have responded satisfactorily to the previous inspection. The school's work is based on a clear vision that focuses on raising standards. The governors drew up a detailed action plan, and have worked to it consistently over the past three years. The school day was lengthened to meet statutory requirements, and schemes of work produced to provide a stable curricular framework within which teaching now takes place. The monitoring of teaching was incorporated in the roles of the core subject co-ordinators. Some of the changes needed were so fundamental that they could not be implemented until the start of the following school year. The school's aims are fully reflected in its work, with the exception of its desire to promote an active partnership with parents, which is not yet in place.
59. A visit by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors in February 1999, some 18 months after the inspection found considerable improvement, and that standards were at the national expectation. This was not reflected in the following summer's national test results, but the impact of the changes has now started to feed through more securely, with substantial improvement in the Key Stage 2 tests last summer. The school exceeded its targets, and the school development plan is a useful document that will guide further improvement. With the exception of ICT and the full implementation of the new Foundation Stage, curricular issues are now satisfactory.
60. The quality of teaching is now satisfactory overall, and the inclusion of the monitoring of teaching as part of the role of the core co-ordinators is an important step forward. The loss of the English, mathematics and science co-ordinators at the end of the summer term 2000 has given the school a problem, in that they have been replaced by newly qualified teachers, who cannot carry a subject responsibility in their first year of teaching. The temporary measure of identifying teams to oversee these subjects is a sensible short-term solution, particularly since the school was focused on the inspection for the first five weeks of the term. However, this cannot drive the development of the subjects forward over the long term in the way that is needed to consolidate and improve on the progress made so far. It means that the management of the school overall, and the school's capacity for improvement are satisfactory, rather than good.
61. The governing body has provided solid support since the last inspection. It plays an effective role in shaping the direction of the school, and has shown understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, taking effective action on most of the relevant issues. Statutory requirements are still not met in ICT, and in reporting on progress in all subjects. Some paper work is not in place, though daily practice meets requirements: there is no written child protection policy and, although the newly qualified teachers are satisfactorily supported in a comprehensive induction programme, the required paper work is not all in place.
62. The special educational needs provision is well managed by an effective co-ordinator. The funding received by the school for identified pupils with special educational needs is well spent, the majority being used to fund staff. The special educational needs policy is a useful document for professionals, but is not a very friendly document for parents. Statutory requirements for the pupils with statements of special educational needs are fully met.
63. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory, but an increase in the percentage of pupils with a wider range of special educational needs, since the time of the last inspection, means that there is an increased need for further training for learning support assistants to help these pupils. Though the help pupils receive from assistants is often good, it sometimes needs more careful targeting in order to contribute fully to the raising of standards.
64. The school maintains strong links with one of the London teacher training institutions, and students regularly undertake training in the school. The three newly qualified teachers all came from this College, underlining the importance of such a link for recruitment purposes at a time when fields of applicants are small. The continuity created by having a full staff team is helping in the drive to raise standards.

65. The school's accommodation is very good and contributes to the good climate for learning in the school. It is clean and well maintained, with good displays of the pupils' work, which create a lively learning environment, and the fact that much of their work is displayed encourages pupils to present it well. Resources are broadly satisfactory, except in the area of ICT, where the number of computers is relatively small, and software to support all areas of the curriculum is thin, and the school's use of ICT is poor.
66. The previous report identified serious weaknesses in aspects of school efficiency, planning and controls over expenditure. These have now all been addressed, and good systems are in place for financial planning and monitoring. The governors are fully involved in the setting of the budget, and monitor it regularly using information supplied by the local authority and the school's very efficient financial officer. All of this has been achieved despite changes in administration from various funding agencies. At one point, manual systems had to be used to cope with the difficulties, but now ICT is used to good effect. Computerised systems are used to ensure that the data is up-to-date as far as is possible. All of the recommendations from the positive reports from auditors and the local authority's responsible officer have been acted upon. The school is aware that its new procedures need to be formally documented into written policy and practice.
67. The governors and headteacher have a secure understanding of best value principles and apply this to curricular development, raising standards and the award of contracts, for instance for school dinners. Decision-making is carefully linked to educational priorities, the school development plan is costed and focussed on raising standards. One priority the school has continued to fund is smaller classes in the reception year. However, with a shortfall in this year's numbers, much of the school's under-spend will now have to go towards this area of spending. This is putting more pressure on available amounts for curricular spending. Specific grants for improving standards and supporting pupils with special educational needs are used appropriately. As a result of all these factors, the school now provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

68. In order to further raise standards and to improve provision in the school, the headteacher, governors and all those with management responsibilities should give their attention to the following:

(1) **Raise attainment in English, mathematics and science by:

- developing further strategies to challenge higher attaining pupils more frequently and effectively;
- setting homework more consistently;
- making a brisker start to the academic year.

(Paragraphs 7, 9, 10, 23, 25, 27, 46, 52, 53, 54, 82, 86, 100, 105, 108)

(2) **Improve the pupils' skills in writing throughout the school by:

- creating a climate for writing through more stimulating tasks in all subjects;
- making full use of ICT to develop pupils as writers.

(Paragraphs 6, 8, 15, 30, 33, 74, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 96, 134)

(3) **Create better arrangements for and raise standards in ICT by:

- meeting statutory requirements;
- implementing the scheme of work;
- developing resources for the subject;
- training staff and embedding the subject across the curriculum.

(Paragraphs 22, 30, 32, 33, 47, 59, 65, 76, 79, 95, 105, 112, 126, 133, 134, 135, 136, 141)

(4) Increase the percentage of good teaching by:

- re-establishing the monitoring of teaching;
- appointing co-ordinators to lead the drive for improved standards in the core subjects, as soon as is practicable.

(Paragraphs 58, 60, 95, 113, 120, 133, 136, 147)

(5) Strengthen links with parents by:

- developing fully the active partnership with parents the school refers to in its aims;
- improving the quality of reports;
- reviewing all communications with parents;
- involving them more fully in the life of the school.

(Paragraphs 27, 36, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58, 62)

(6) Fully establish the Foundation Stage in the school by:

- ensuring sufficient time is given to the teaching and learning activities across all of the relevant areas of the curriculum, in accord with the Early Learning Goals;
- devising strategies to develop the children's play, both at playtimes and through planned and spontaneous play activities within the curriculum.

(Paragraphs 1, 18, 32, 70, 74, 76, 78, 79)

** Indicates that this item is already included in the school development plan.

69. The following minor weaknesses should also be addressed:

(a) Celebrate the cultures of all children represented in the school.
(Paragraphs 19, 44, 76, 78)

(b) Streamline the procedures for child protection and develop a written policy that
is shared by all staff.
(Paragraphs 51, 61)

(c) Ensure the required paper work complements the school's induction programme
for newly qualified teachers
(Paragraph 61)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

65

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
0	1.5	29.2	64.6	4.6	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

	Y R – Y 6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	284
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	34

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	43

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	27

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	27

Attendance

Authorised absence

Unauthorised absence

%

	%
School data	5.5
School data	%
National comparative data	5.4
National comparative data	0.2

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Year
Boys
Girls
Total

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year

2000
26
17
43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results

Reading

Writing

Mathematics

Boys
21
18
22

Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above

Girls
12
12
14

Total
33
30
36

Percentage of pupils

School

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	3
Indian	9
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	0
White	232
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	25.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	187

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	571,991
Total expenditure	584,817
Expenditure per pupil	1,875
Balance brought forward from previous year	42,624
Balance carried forward to next year	29,798

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

284

Number of questionnaires returned

122

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	55	2	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	23	61	10	2	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	60	3	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	15	39	21	17	9
The teaching is good.	22	60	11	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	14	38	32	12	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	36	38	18	7	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	35	48	10	2	6
The school works closely with parents.	11	39	25	18	7
The school is well led and managed.	25	42	11	11	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	22	56	14	1	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	7	18	31	25	19

Other issues raised by parents

Several comments and letters were received from parents. Some praised the school for settling their children, and commended the staff for their hard work, and for raising standards over the past two years. However, there were several examples of parents who expressed concern at the way they feel they are not encouraged to work closely with the school, and they do not feel comfortable in approaching the school with their concerns about homework and other problems. All the issues were investigated by the inspection team, and the results of their findings are included in the main body of the inspection report.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

70. In the last inspection report provision for the under fives was described in terms of a stimulating curriculum with good quality teaching and children reaching or exceeding learning expectations for the age group. It is impossible to make exact comparisons, because the new Foundation Stage has now superseded the previous requirements, and the children are now working towards the new Early Learning Goals, instead of the Desirable Learning Outcomes. However, the two newly qualified teachers who are responsible for the reception classes have made a sound start to their teaching careers and have considerable strengths in the ways in which they foster good relationships with and amongst the children. Satisfactory teaching, overall, means that most children are on course to achieving the Early Learning Goals at the levels expected of them at the end of the Foundation Stage in language and literacy, mathematics and physical development. They make satisfactory progress, overall, and are on course to exceed the goals in their personal, social and emotional development. There are, however, weaknesses in curricular planning and in the use of time and resources that limit the quality of learning opportunities in the creative area of learning, and in knowledge and understanding of the world. Children with special educational needs are well supported. They, and the children who have English as an additional language, make sound progress.
71. Children enter one of the two reception classes in the September prior to their fifth birthday. Most children enter these classes with levels of attainment judged as broadly average, though in this year's cohort the personal, social and emotional development of the children is above average.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

72. Children in the reception classes have settled in well and they work and play together confidently. They know and follow class routines and respond really well to the adults around them. This is because all staff are extremely consistent in their use of praise and encouragement. This raises self-esteem and fosters the good behaviour, which is a feature of both classrooms. The children understand what is right and wrong. Arguments and disagreements are few and the children show that they can take turns and help each other when needed. They maintain good attention, work quietly and listen well, whether in group work or whole class sessions. The children also initiate their own ideas, when given the opportunities. On two occasions, a pair of children decided that they wanted to be the teachers and take their own register using a clipboard and pencil. This was when they were involved in a numeracy group activity. The class teacher allowed the moment of spontaneous play and the children spent quite a long time in drawing up and marking their register and talking about it. In PE lessons in the hall, many children show good ability in dressing and undressing independently. Overall, the children's abilities are good and they are making good progress towards achieving and exceeding what is expected of them at the end of the Foundation Stage.
73. Teachers and support staff work hard to develop the children's attitudes, in this area of learning, at all times, and are successful overall. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. In addition, there are sessions on the timetable for children to sit in a circle and discuss their concerns. The lesson seen, however, was unsatisfactory. A decision had been taken to bring the two reception classes together. This did not work, because the group size was too big and the activity of introducing each other was too repetitive. Consequently, the children lost concentration and made little progress. Story times and small group sessions, by contrast, were much more effective in developing the children's learning.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

74. Teaching in this area of the curriculum is satisfactory and most children achieve the levels that are expected. They are making steady progress towards the expected outcomes at the end of the Foundation

Stage. Children listen attentively to stories and respond well to music, songs and rhymes. Their listening skills are good and they can respond to what they have heard by taking account of others' views and use a widening range of words to express or elaborate ideas. They handle books carefully, turn pages and can retell some stories from memory. They know that print carries meaning. Short teaching sessions and group work are soundly led and focus on initial sounds and alphabet recognition. Characteristically, teachers use this time to show letters, listen to sounds, and encourage the children to join in a known repertoire of songs. They make good use of wall displays of letter characters. The children can hear and say the initial sound in words and know which letters represent some of the sounds: for instance, there was a lot of attention to the letter "g" in one of the classes. The children were very forthcoming in spotting the letter in the book the teacher was reading and creating the letter "g" in a variety of ways. In their writing, children make marks on paper, and begin to form some recognisable letters. Not enough opportunities are being provided for children to write purposefully; for example, in role play or in using the writing areas that are set out for them.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

75. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory overall, and sometimes good. The children are working at levels appropriate for their age, and are on course to achieve the expectations at the end of the Foundation Stage. Their learning is supported by the provision of a range of activities to develop skills and understanding in number, shape, space and measure. Short, whole class sessions are well led with an appropriate emphasis on counting games, number rhymes, making use of every day situations, such as taking the register or recording the days of the week, and focus on a specific theme. The children listen attentively and readily respond. Children show that they can count to five confidently and higher attaining children count to ten and beyond. They are confident with numbers and recognise the numerals nought to three, and the higher attainers know numbers at least up to five. They can use language such as "greater" and "smaller" to compare the snakes that they have made. They recognise shapes, such as circles and squares, and know that these may be the same or different in size. There are planned activities using sand and water. The classroom assistant delightfully led one of these. First of all, the children closed their eyes as she buried three objects in the sand. As they took turns to find them, she continually used questions such as "How many have we found?", "Shall we count them?" and "How many are left?". The children were absorbed. The activity helped to consolidate skills and understanding for a targeted group of children. A toyshop enabled some children to be inventive and use numbers and the language of money in a creative fashion, but this type of approach is under-used.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

76. There is not enough planning, teaching or time given to this area of learning. Planning and provision for activities based on first-hand experience to encourage exploration, observation, problem solving, critical thinking and discussion are weak. So, too, is planning to introduce children to a range of cultures and religions. Not enough use is made of the full range of ICT or the role play areas. As a result, attainment is below expectation in these aspects, despite the fact that teaching in this area is satisfactory, when it takes place. The children show a good use of vocabulary to relive past experiences in their discussions and drawings about themselves as babies. On the computers some children can access a program to help them with number recognition or in selecting colours to fill shapes. They use the mouse control and other simple functions of a keyboard. Children readily use construction to build towers and small models. In these aspects they show appropriate attainment levels and sound progress in their learning but, overall, they are not on course to reach the Early Learning Goals.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

77. Children's levels of attainment in physical development, control and mobility are in line with the levels expected of children of their age. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and it is sometimes good, so that progress towards the Early Learning Goals is secure words missing. When moving either to instruction or tape recordings children travel around the hall with a good awareness of space, and are controlled and purposeful. They make stretch and curling movements and experiment with different ways of moving. They demonstrate the control necessary to hold a shape or fixed position. Higher attaining pupils show good

poise and confidence when moving. A varied programme of activities is planned for the children. The specific features of good teaching include a good pace to the lesson and good management of the class, which uses the children to demonstrate their skills to each other. The children clearly enjoy their hall-based lessons.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

78. There was good teaching in one of the classes, where children had already learnt a number of songs and began to bring in the use of musical instruments. Expectations are high and the children make good progress in their learning. They start to explore the different sounds of instruments and show good levels of self-discipline in not playing until their turn. Children also explore the nature of colours producing neat paintings to show warm and cold colours. There is some use of other media in drawing and painting. In these aspects children show the appropriate age related abilities or higher in the case of musical development. There are, though, significant aspects of work in this area, which do not receive enough attention in planning or in time available during the week, so that overall the children are not on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals in their creative development. The aspects concerned relate to the creative and expressive areas of art and design. There are few opportunities for children to use their imaginations or work creatively on a large or a small scale. Neither are resources from different cultures used to stimulate different ways of thinking. The overall range of types of representation is too narrow. The classroom environments lack a real feeling for creativity and originality.
79. The gaps in curricular provision lead to uneven progress and lower attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world and in creative development. Creativity and expressiveness are not found in the children's artistic development, and there is insufficient time and weak coverage in the planning for children to gain knowledge and understanding of the world. Areas such as using ICT and investigating and observing different materials or the environment are insufficiently developed in the children's learning. Planning is also weak and the resources are under used for ICT and role play. One of the key reasons for this is the school's decision to implement a daily English and mathematics lesson. These lessons do use the objectives from the National Strategies. However, national guidance states that teachers may choose to cover the elements of the literacy hour and numeracy lessons across the day rather than as a single unit of time. This then gives time for children to explore other areas of learning. Daily lessons need to be in place by the end of the reception year in order to ensure a smooth transition to Key Stage 1. Assessment systems are consistent in both classes with a range of observations made about the children's progress and suggestions for further action. Not enough use is made of the classroom assistant in the assessment process.

ENGLISH

80. In the national tests for seven year olds, taken at the end of Year 2 in 2000, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 and above is well below the average for all schools, and for similar schools, in reading and writing. The results were affected by the presence of a high percentage of pupils with significant special educational needs in the group, so that they completed the required reading task, but not the test. Between 1996 and 1998, there was a drop in reading scores in the end of Key Stage 1 tests, followed by a levelling out between 1998 and 1999. Over the whole period, the combined boys' and girls' reading scores are below the national average. In writing, the scores are well below the national average during 1996-1999 and in 2000, no writers attained Level 3.
81. In the Key Stage 2 tests in 2000 there is a significant rise in the pupils' results, with 66 per cent of pupils attaining at least Level 4, compared to 44 per cent in 1999. Whereas in the previous four years, performance is well below the national average and well below the average for similar schools, the 2000 results are considerably nearer, though still below, the national average. There is also a substantial increase – more than fourfold - in the percentage of pupils reaching Level 5, and that figure is now broadly in line with the national average. In 1999, girls marginally outperformed boys but, in 2000, the boys achieved a higher percentage than the girls. Reading scores are generally higher than writing scores, with 14 pupils achieving Level 5 in reading, but only 3 in writing. The school exceeded its target in 2000, and increasingly higher targets have been set for 2001 and 2002.

82. In work seen, standards are below expectation at the end of both key stages. They are above expectation in speaking and listening, just below expectation in reading, and well below it in writing. The evidence shows that, though progress is satisfactory overall, the majority of pupils, including those with special needs and English as an additional language, make good progress in their speaking and listening, satisfactory progress in their reading, but unsatisfactory progress in their writing. In lessons, they are making progress that is at least satisfactory. However, the slow start to the academic year after the long summer break means that, at the time of the inspection, they were not as far on as expected. Scrutiny of work from last year shows that the pupils make faster progress as the year progresses. The progress is most rapid in Year 6, particularly after the introduction of booster classes. If the rate of progress follows the same pattern as it did last year, standards will be very close to the national expectation by the end of the year.
83. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Improvements made since the advent of the current headteacher, and the National Literacy Strategy have done much to improve provision in English so that pupils now have adequate time for the subject and a detailed curriculum. The National Literacy Strategy has been fully implemented and this has improved progress and continuity both across and between key stages, but it has yet to feed through fully to standards in writing. Time allocation for English is now consistent across the school, although some lessons are very long. A broader range of topics is covered, and additional books have been purchased.
84. Speaking and listening skills are near the national average in the end of Key Stage 1 assessments. However, in lessons and assemblies, they are above expectation. Pupils generally listen attentively and invariably know and understand the tasks that have been set. In science in Key Stage 1, they immediately use the new vocabulary that has been introduced, such as bulb, battery and switch. When the pupils have their Circle Time, during which they discuss matters of personal and social interest, they are very respectful of what each person has to say. They make interesting, thoughtful contributions, one child saying that sharing brought happiness. In Key Stage 2, pupils begin to explore and communicate ideas in greater depth. They listen to music and use appropriate vocabulary to reflect expression, movement and mood. They present their findings ably in geography and science and are keen to share the lines of poetry they have written about the days of the week. By the end of the key stage they answer questions enthusiastically and are keen to pose questions of their own. Rarely do teachers have to remind pupils to listen.
85. Standards in reading, by the time the pupils leave the school, are just below expectation, although the ability range in both key stages is very wide. At the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils are beginning to recognise familiar words in context and many can use effectively the relationship between sound and symbol. Higher attaining pupils are using a variety of strategies to read new words. Most of the pupils read books from the reading scheme the school has adopted, but the level of book is not always well matched to the pupils' ability level, particularly amongst the highest and lowest attainers. By the end of the key stage, pupils are demonstrating phonic awareness that is appropriate for their age, and the reading of the higher attainers is already in line with national expectations.
86. At the lower end of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils are beginning to use a full range of reading strategies to decode words and are reading with understanding. When pupils reach Years 5 and 6, most pupils have achieved satisfactorily in their reading, and some make good progress. They like reading, use a full range of strategies, including inference and deduction, effectively and express opinions about books. They enjoy a range of texts, including 'Boy' by Roald Dahl, and books by AA Milne and Jacqueline Wilson. In a few instances, the pupils do not correct themselves and, for some, the interest level of texts: for example, in the Harry Potter books, is appropriate for their age, but the text is too difficult. Many pupils read at home and are active members of the public library.
87. The pupils' attainment in writing is generally well below expectations across both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1, their work is logically ordered. Occasionally they add personal touches: for instance, suggesting how the mouse might have been persuaded out of his hole, to help pull up the turnip. The higher attaining pupils include detail in their work and use some lively vocabulary. Generally, however, the quality and quantity of writing are variable. Spelling at the end of Key Stage 1 varies from that which is barely phonetically plausible – as it is on the labels for some of their models – to that which follows

conventions. The majority is below expectation. Handwriting is generally consistent and all work is neatly presented.

88. Through Key Stage 2, writing does not reflect the pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills. In the lower part of Key Stage 2, the pupils undertake a variety of skills-related exercises. Opportunities for written composition are limited in number, but they are varied and include haikus, newspaper reports, biographies and book reviews. Work entitled 'Matilda – The Revenge' shows that the pupils make reasonable progress, especially regarding improved structure.
89. By the end of Key Stage 2, the highest attaining pupils use paragraphs correctly, and write with accurate use of punctuation, in joined, even handwriting. They make particularly good choices of words; for example, 'moon exploding', 'roaring like a million lions', 'silently the night is dying' and 'he was scooped in the tail of a dragon.' Occasionally, they make their writing dramatic by using unusual structures. However, most pupils do not work at this level. Their work is characterised by a lack of personal touches, and they replicate what the teacher says, rather than thinking for themselves, and use simple, rather than complex sentences. Spelling is frequently phonetically plausible, but often incorrect.
90. The school's strategy for literacy is broadly sound, but it has yet to have a satisfactory impact, particularly in writing. There is a range of writing in English, but a limited amount of extended writing in other subjects. Pupils write recipes and methods in design and technology, and describe life in a village in Northern India in their geography work. Year 6 pupils reached good standards in the leaflets they produced about the City of Rochester. The tasks set in history provide opportunities, particularly for older pupils, to develop a sense of different writing styles for different purposes. This stimulates the higher attaining pupils to produce good standards. ICT is little used to develop writing skills across the curriculum, and this is a weakness. Nevertheless, all hand-written work that is undertaken is well presented, and the books are very tidy.
91. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. Teachers conduct lessons according to the National Literacy Strategy and have good technical knowledge of the subject matter. Lessons are appropriately planned, with a balance of class and group work. Resources are usually well prepared. In a minority of instances, the pace of lessons is not brisk enough. Teachers use question and answer sessions effectively and provide positive reinforcement. Pupils are usually managed well, although in a minority of instances, more effective use could be made of learning support assistants. Work is not always matched to the pupils' ability and the range of activities is sometimes limited. There is no use of ICT.
92. In Key Stage 2, teaching is satisfactory overall. Of the twelve lessons observed, the teaching in three was good, in eight it was satisfactory and in one it was unsatisfactory. Again, teachers have sound knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy and implement lessons according to the guidelines. Pupils are given opportunities for extended writing at the upper end of the school. Teachers usually conduct lessons at a good pace. They set clear expectations and make learning fun, so that most pupils are keen to answer questions and to undertake the work set, occasionally showing sparks of excitement. Good lessons are characterised by effective questioning and tasks are matched to the needs of pupils. Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and presentation of work. There is, however, little evidence of word processing work.
93. In both key stages, teachers mark the pupils' work regularly and efficiently. Pupils are given oral and written feedback about their work and are encouraged to use this feedback. The school uses results of standardised tests to group children for support and to provide booster classes before their end of Key Stage 2 tests. There is a good system for assessing the pupils' progress and attainment, but this is not used to the same extent by all teachers. The home/school contact books show the book the pupils have taken home, but there is rarely any comment about reading ability or level of enjoyment. This form of contact between home and school is not playing a full part in promoting higher reading standards. The result of all these factors is that most pupils make satisfactory, rather than good progress, in their English work.
94. The quality of learning is satisfactory in both key stages and the pupils' attitudes to English are generally positive. Key Stage 1 pupils are keen to participate and become very excited when they get a letter in a word correct. They applauded a pupil who spelt the 'spok' part of 'spoke' correctly. In Key Stage 2, they

show great enthusiasm and their levels of concentration are high, despite some lessons being 90 minutes long. They are supportive of each other's effort and there are no examples of pupils disturbing lessons. In Key Stage 2, pupils are beginning to become independent learners and happily use dictionaries or each other as a resource. They collaborate when preparing a presentation to the rest of the class in science. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils have their own target cards and benefit from their use. Pupils generally use lesson time wisely, complete their work and can discuss what they have learned at the end of the lesson, making reference to the learning objectives.

95. The tasks associated with the post of co-ordinator are currently undertaken by a team of teachers. This is satisfactory, as it is a temporary measure only, and the team carries out no monitoring of teaching. An analysis of weaknesses, such as writing in Key Stage 1, has been undertaken, and remedial action is planned. Resources are adequate: fiction reading books for both individual and group reading are in reasonable supply, and books to interest older boys are having a positive impact. There is a good stock of non-fiction books in the library, but elsewhere, books tend not to be attractively displayed. There are no book corners in Key Stage 1 classrooms, so that reading does not have a high profile in all classes. Software for ICT, is in short supply.

MATHEMATICS

96. The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000, is well below the national average. This was mainly due to the large number of pupils with special educational needs, some recently arrived in this country, in the cohort. The results are significantly lower than in the 1999 tests, when attainment was around the national average. However, the fact that the school is working with a large number of pupils with special educational needs in this year group means that the comparisons made do not reflect the value added by the school to achieve these standards.
97. The pupils' attainment in the 2000 national tests for eleven year olds shows a significant improvement over the previous year, although the average points score the pupils achieved is still below the national average. The biggest improvement was in the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 target, which more than doubled to a level that is above the national average, and above that of similar schools. This was due to better assessment and analysis of previous test results, improved teaching with the introduction of setting, the impact of the National Numeracy Strategy and the co-ordinator's classes for higher attaining pupils. When results at the end of both key stages are compared with similar schools nationally, though they are still below average, most encouragingly, standards are now rising at a faster rate than the national figures.
98. Over the period 1996-1999 the boys' performance in mathematics was close to the national average whilst the performance of girls was well below the national average. In 2000, a cohort of eleven year olds that included some high attaining boys outperformed the girls in the class. During the inspection, however, there was no significant difference between the performance of boys and that of girls.
99. The inspection confirmed the above results and found attainment, near the beginning of the school year, to be below the national average at the end of both key stages. However, the majority of pupils at both key stages are making satisfactory progress and, if this progress is maintained, particularly if it follows the same pattern as last year, the pupils could well achieve the national expectation by the end of the academic year. The National Numeracy Strategy has helped them to sharpen their mental arithmetic skills and develop sound strategies for adding, subtracting and multiplying, although some older pupils in Key Stage 2 are not sufficiently familiar with their tables.
100. The pupils identified as having special educational needs achieve satisfactory standards in relation to their prior knowledge and understanding of mathematics and they make sound progress as they move through the school. Lessons are usually adapted and modified well to meet their specific needs. The work for higher attaining pupils varies considerably. In a few classes it is good whilst in others it is not challenging enough; for example, pupils use one textbook rigidly and work through the exercises, although the work is too easy for them.

101. By the age of seven, most pupils can count reliably and are developing a satisfactory understanding of place value relating to tens and units. Most teachers start their lessons briskly with a mental arithmetic session to sharpen the pupils' number skills such as ordering numbers by counting forwards and backwards, recognising random numbers and adding on in tens. For lower attaining pupils the teachers use number squares to help them to recognise number patterns. In the best lessons teachers' questioning develops a healthy sense of competition and gives pupils the opportunity to display their knowledge of such things as counting, ordering numbers, addition, subtraction and times tables. This aspect of their work is progressing satisfactorily. Teachers use resources well; for example, pupils learning to tell the time are each given a large cardboard clock face with hands. When asked by the teacher, they set the large and small hands to a given time, which enables the teacher to ascertain quickly who has understood and which pupils require further help. Mathematical language is taught satisfactorily; for example, in another lesson pupils were asked to estimate and measure the length of different objects. Sound questioning by the teacher ensured that pupils understood the meaning of estimate before undertaking the task.
102. By the time pupils reach the age of 11, their skills of estimating are becoming more accurate and they make sensible predictions about the height of classroom doors and length of tables. However, many find accurate measuring difficult. Accuracy improves when the teacher checks their measurements and encourages them to read the tape measure more precisely, check the readings and record their results with more care. In another lesson pupils identify shapes such as a square, rectangle and triangle. The teacher introduces the concept of perimeter and uses sound questioning to reinforce the pupils' understanding of the concept. A suggestion is made by the teacher that there might be a quicker way to work out the perimeter of a rectangle, other than adding up the measurements of each side. The majority of pupils realise that, to find the answer quickly, they can multiply opposite sides by two and then add them together or find the correct answer by using their doubling skills.
103. Tasks are usually matched to the needs of the pupils, but there are exceptions in Key Stage 2. In one class, higher attainers are learning about equivalent fractions and have a clear understanding of the work on the board; however, the tasks set for them are far too easy, which results in valuable time being wasted. Lower attaining pupils in another class are given similar work about fractions that has been modified to meet their needs. They are extended by the teacher's good use of resources and her effective deployment of the learning support assistant to give individual support; this is effective in developing their understanding and increases their confidence. In most lessons, pupils with special educational needs are satisfactorily supported but in some lessons the roles of the learning support assistants are not clearly defined.
104. Numeracy skills are applied appropriately in some other subjects, and the school's strategy for numeracy is having a satisfactory impact. Examples of this are: simple charts in science to compare how substances dissolve; the use of maps and charts in geography and in physical education pupils show their ability to divide into small groups and teams.
105. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory overall in both key stages. It is good in 30 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in all others. Most lessons are purposeful: learning objectives were imprecise at the time of the last inspection but this has improved considerably. They are written on the board at the beginning of lessons and plenary sessions at the end of lessons are used effectively to reinforce them. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour make good contributions to the working atmosphere in most lessons: the majority work well individually and when asked collaborate satisfactorily in smaller groups. This is particularly evident in lessons where the teaching is good. In these lessons, the features are teachers' thorough planning; good classroom management; high expectations; targeted questioning of pupils to reinforce learning objectives and assess what pupils have learned; challenge for higher attaining pupils and work that is well matched to the ability of pupils with special educational needs. As a result, most pupils show an interest in their work and some sustain their concentration for long periods of time. Most pupils are polite and willing to explain their work. Presentation of their written work is satisfactory overall and it improves by the time they reach Year 6. In a few lessons, when teaching is not of this quality, pupils chat too much, time is lost and pupils of higher ability are not extended. The use of ICT is poor. It was not used during the inspection and no evidence of its use was found in the pupils' books. Homework is not set on a regular basis in mathematics; this is unsatisfactory.

106. Mathematics currently lacks co-ordination. There is nobody with whole school responsibility for the subject and, although the headteacher has taken on this responsibility on a temporary basis, she does not have the time to monitor the subject effectively. The school has responded well to the National Numeracy Strategy, which has provided some much-needed structure, and teachers and pupils have taken to it enthusiastically. Whole-class teaching is having a positive effect on raising the level of attainment. Since the last inspection, the school has developed a satisfactory scheme of work and ensured that the planning and work given to pupils are closely aligned to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study or to the National Numeracy Strategy. This represents a considerable improvement. Assessment is good and the close analysis of test results, the impact of setting and the improved teaching in Key Stage 2 are helping to raise standards, particularly in the senior part of the school.

SCIENCE

107. Teacher Assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000 showed that 63 per cent of pupils in Year 2 reached Level 2, and 12 per cent attained the higher Level 3. This was below the national averages of 66 per cent at Level 2 and 22 per cent at Level 3. It represents a drop in standards from 1999, when pupils in the school attained the national averages. This was the cohort, however, with a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Inspection evidence of the current Year 2 pupils indicates a return to higher standards, with pupils attaining levels in line with national expectations.
108. The 2000 National Curriculum test results for eleven-year-olds are well below average nationally and when compared with similar schools. However, at 70 per cent of pupils reaching Level 4 and above, these are still significantly better than the previous year's results, which were very low indeed at 44 per cent. Inspection evidence shows that most pupils are working in line with national expectations at level 4 in their current work in physical processes and the scientific enquiry areas of the curriculum. As with Key Stage 1, more structured systems for planning the curriculum and greater consistency in the quality of teaching are helping to maintain an improving trend. The higher attaining pupils, though, are still underachieving at the end of Key Stage 2. This is because not enough work is being set to challenge the needs of this group in particular. The school's assessment procedures in science are not thorough or detailed enough to spot and target the needs of the different ability ranges.
109. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are developing secure understanding in their work about electricity and circuits. They know about appliances that use electricity and how bulbs light up in a simple circuit. Pupils offer reasons such as "The battery may not have enough energy," or "The children are not holding the wires steady," when the bulb does not light up. They use the batteries, bulbs and components to construct a simple circuit confidently, make sensible observations and correctly use the new vocabulary.
110. At the end of Key Stage 2 the revisiting of work on electricity and circuitry is much more sophisticated. Pupils use terms such as 'conductor', 'insulator', 'prediction' and 'variables' accurately. They use a step-by-step process to record their investigations, start to draw conclusions about their findings and suggest, at a simple level, changes they might make if they were to repeat the work. In the Year 3/4 classes, pupils at Year 3 are starting from levels of attainment that are well below expectation because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, especially in Year 3. In most cases they are making sound progress with their work about materials and their properties. They experiment carefully and use simple tables to record the observations when a range of materials such as salt, sugar, flour, oil and food colouring are mixed with water.
111. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in both key stages. Of the seven lessons observed, the teaching in three was good, in another three it was satisfactory, and in one, teaching was unsatisfactory. There is an appropriate emphasis on investigation and this interests and motivates the pupils. When the Year 1/2 classes were learning about simple circuits their teachers first of all told their pupils to make a circle and hold hands. They carefully explained, with props, how to simulate making and breaking a circuit. The pupils then went off to construct their own circuits using a range of equipment. There was real excitement as the bulbs lit up and great inventiveness as pupils tried to work out other ways using more bulbs and batteries. In this lesson the teacher's enthusiasm, subject knowledge and continual questioning on the lines of "What would happen if . . ." and "Why do you think . . ." were significant

factors in the pupils' very positive response to their learning. Similar, probing questioning in a Year 3/4 class made the pupils carefully explain the results of their investigations, and led to a very successful lesson. However, in one of the other classes in this age group, a confusing introduction and weaker organisation of the experimentation and recording led to little being learned or achieved, and the teaching was unsatisfactory.

112. Pupils have good attitudes to their work with Year 6 pupils saying that "Science is good in this school because it makes you feel like a real scientist," or "It's fun guessing and predicting and finding out answers." During all lessons, good relationships are established between pupils and teachers and this is reflected in the pupils' good behaviour. They are co-operative and respectful to one another. There is no significant variation between the progress made by boys and girls. Pupils with special needs make sound progress due to the efforts of all staff in supporting their pupils with the technical vocabulary of science and by providing suitable activities in lessons. However, there are too few examples, especially in the work of older pupils, of ICT being used to support scientific recording and findings.
113. The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the many weaknesses found at the time of the last inspection. Standards in Key Stage 2 are improving. A scheme of work is now in place, which matches the school's needs and provides sound support for teachers. The pupils' science books are neatly presented and kept. The science co-ordinator recently left the school, so a team of three teachers co-ordinates science in their respective year groups. They are being effective in their support for planning and ensuring that resources are available for the science curriculum. However, there is no monitoring of the pupils' work to gain an overview of standards throughout the school. Assessment systems have been put in place, but they are still ineffective. For instance, there is still a significant gap between test results and teachers' assessments of pupils' standards at the end of Key Stage 2. This is partly because there are insufficient systems for agreeing standards. There is an evidential "file" but this is poorly referenced and contains no work at Level 5 of the science curriculum. Resources for science are satisfactory and these are used effectively to support the pupils' learning.

ART AND DESIGN

114. At the end of both key stages, attainment in art is in line with the standards expected of pupils aged seven and eleven, with some evidence at the end of Key Stage 2 of a minority of pupils beginning to exceed those standards. This shows that standards in art have improved since the previous inspection.
115. At the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils' work shows good development of their art and design skills. They work confidently with a variety of media such as pencil, paint, pastels and chalk, and happily create pictures in the style of artists such as Arcimboldo. Their work shows an increasing awareness of a sense of proportion, although their efforts with modelling with recyclable materials are less well developed. Some pupils ably discuss their work and use words such as "profile" which their teacher has just introduced to them. Work does, however, seem to be a little too imitative of other artists, with too few opportunities for pupils to use and apply the techniques that they have learned in work on activities they have chosen themselves.
116. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils' work shows increasing skill, control and imagination. They undertake a wide variety of individual and small group work including pencil sketches, texture boards, still life, Art Deco pots and three-dimensional tableaux. They have knowledge and appreciation of the work of famous artists such as Constable, Turner, Rousseau and Clarice Cliffe and talk intelligently about colour, tone, line, shape, form and pattern. They also know about work from Ancient Greece. More evaluation and possible modification of their work would make it of an even higher standard.
117. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall. Lessons are well planned and prepared. There is sound input of technical terms, although there is little discussion of artistic composition. Teachers manage their pupils well. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall, and it is sometimes good. Teachers demonstrate good knowledge of the subject, and usually introduce pupils to appropriate technical terms, but they sometimes miss opportunities to do this. Teachers use examples from the work of famous artists to demonstrate techniques, such as foreground and background, to good effect. Sometimes they

make useful cross-references to other curricular areas; for example reminding the pupils of an earlier literacy lesson on the months of the year, when yarn pictures were being created.

118. In both key stages, teachers are enthusiastic and very encouraging towards all pupils. This enthusiasm is infectious, and is reflected in the pupils' responses. Some lessons present opportunities for co-operation and collaboration, and the pupils respond positively. They did this well in their presentation of jungle tableaux in the style of Rousseau.
119. The curriculum map is a useful document with sufficient detail to provide sound planning that ensures that the pupils make progress, and that their learning builds on what has gone before. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant, but lacks sufficient art to reflect the different cultures within the school and wider community. ICT is, however, not used in art. Despite this, art-work throughout the school is carefully executed and tastefully displayed making areas like the entrance hall visually attractive and welcoming.
120. The present co-ordinator has considerable subject expertise and enthusiasm. She has, through in-service training and support, enabled the staff to increase their own knowledge and confidence, and she has encouraged them to take pupils on educational visits to enrich their work. However she currently has no time allocated for monitoring. The accommodation for art is adequate, and resources are varied and plentiful, including a good selection of attractive, up-to-date books on art and artists in the library.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

121. At the time of the inspection, design and technology was not being taught: however, from the samples of work seen and from talking with pupils and the subject co-ordinator, standards are in line with those expected of pupils aged seven and eleven. This represents an improvement from the previous inspection, where standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were below national expectations.
122. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils make stick puppets from paper plates and different types of paper. They design and make kites which, from photographic evidence, actually fly. They also make weather vanes from resistant materials. Their knowledge of materials increases as they classify them according to various criteria and they learn how textiles can change through a tie and dye activity. There is a good variety of activities giving pupils the opportunity to develop a range of techniques, skills, processes and knowledge, but insufficient attention is paid to mechanisms and how they can be used in different ways.
123. In Key Stage 2, the pupils' skills increase as more emphasis is placed on design. They make three-dimensional shapes from constructional toys and learn how to make a picture frame from paper, demonstrating how to increase its strength by folding. They design and make biscuits and write up the recipe and method and even create pizzas with the help of the school cook. Their experiences in Key Stage 2 are enhanced by visits to the local City Technology College where they have made solitaire games. They have also entered the K'NEX Junior Engineers for Britain competition. These practical tasks have facilitated the further development of skills acquired during Key Stage 1.
124. Pupils are enthusiastic about design and technology, discussing their visit to the City Technology College in an animated way, and cheering when the prospect of design and technology lessons next half term was discussed. Boys and girls equally enjoy all aspects of the subject, which links to their learning in other subjects. The pupils' knowledge of electricity is used in making circuits for games, wall hangings are connected with a geography topic on tourism, and picture frames are associated with a history topic. Lamps made by the younger pupils at Diwali have an excellent multi-cultural focus.
125. The co-ordinator has, with the help of the head teacher, designed the curriculum map, which describes activities for the various age groups and builds skills steadily. No time is allocated for teaching to be monitored. Resources for design and technology are varied and plentiful, in good condition and well labelled. Where there are deficiencies caused by lack of space, these are remedied by the use of the school kitchen or of the facilities at the City Technology College. The co-ordinator is very aware of hygiene and health and safety issues.

GEOGRAPHY

126. The last inspection found weaknesses in both the quality of the curriculum and standards at the end of Key Stage 2. In particular, there was a lack of the systematic development of mapping skills and understanding of other localities. The school has taken appropriate measures to address the situation. The current standards are in line with what might be expected for pupils aged seven and eleven, and pupils are making satisfactory progress in the subject throughout the school.
127. Geography was not the focus for teaching in the Year 5/6 classes during the inspection, and it was possible to observe only four lessons across the other year groups. However, the analysis of the pupils' work, some kept from the previous year, discussions with teachers and an analysis of the curricular planning, supplement the information needed to make judgements. The development of map work skills and locational knowledge is now far more secure. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 successfully use large-scale maps of the local area and plans of their classroom. They have a sound knowledge of the immediate locality. In Years 3 / 4 pupils annotate and use the local maps and those from a village study nearby to make sensible comparisons between the two settlements. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils make neatly presented freehand, imaginary maps using keys. These pupils also study a village in Northern India, writing about services, jobs and village life.
128. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Pupils in Years 3/4 recently visited Horton Kirby, a village in the Darent valley. Their fieldwork included observation and map work tasks. Lessons following this up were well planned and prepared. Plenty of use was made of maps and photographs to help the pupils draw comparisons between town and village life. In most cases, good questioning by teachers drew out the pupils' knowledge and understanding, and fostered a spirit of geographical enquiry. In one of the classes, the really good management of group work enhanced the quality of the lesson even further. Pupils organised themselves well into groups, with a scribe and presenter, to research the materials, looking for similarities and differences. They successfully reported their findings back to the class. This activity not only developed geographical knowledge and understanding, but also supported key literacy skills. However, group work in some of the other classes in the school had weaknesses, either because the children were too noisy, or because the task had not been structured well enough. This meant that progress was somewhat slower than it might have been. Overall, pupils show a keen interest and enjoyment of the subject.
129. Good improvements have been made to curricular planning since the last inspection. A scheme of work, based on the national guidelines, has been matched to the needs of the school. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has developed resources to a satisfactory level, introduced the planning systems, and last year monitored teachers' work and collected together samples of the pupils' work to establish better understanding of the levels at which the pupils are working.

HISTORY

130. The pupils' attainments in history are in line with the standards expected for their age, and the school has maintained the levels described in the previous report. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have developed an understanding of events in the past, and show some knowledge of how people lived. Their descriptive writing on Tudor England depicts houses, markets and merchants, and their comments on health issues of the time shows that they make comparisons between the 16th century and their own experience. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils use their writing skills, when they produce leaflets on Rochester, and some of the tasks in this project provide scope for higher attaining pupils to develop a sense of style, writing for different purposes. Their leaflets on the city use exactly the right sort of language and show keen observation in developing and using phraseology to encourage visitors. In contrast, the class books on Saxons show awareness of different written styles: 'newspaper' articles on 'Did Arthur Exist?' adopt a good use of sensational language and rhetorical questions.
131. Attitudes to history are good. Pupils recount enthusiastically their work on myths and legends, and compare the ancient civilisations they have studied with more modern periods. Year 5/6 were at an early stage in their study of the Ancient Greeks, during the inspection, but were keen to explain the differences between the ancient Olympic Games and their modern counterparts. The pupils' good attitudes contributes to the satisfactory achievement of the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, and with English as an additional language, make as they move through the school.

132. Very little history teaching was observed during the inspection, so no overall judgement may be made on teaching. However, scrutiny of work from the previous and current year shows that a satisfactory range of topics is covered. The volume of writing overall is not great, but the curriculum includes practical work, such as investigations into food, and visits to Penshurst Place and to Horton Kirby. Although this last predominantly had a geography focus, the historical dimension was evident, and the contrast between that village and the modern area around the school was evident in the photographs the pupils handled, and in their comments. The Penshurst Place visit is designed to be investigative and results in excitement among pupils, who say they enjoyed finding out.
133. The co-ordinator of the subject provides satisfactory leadership. He acts as an adviser to the rest of the staff, and looks through teachers' plans for history. Resources are satisfactory, and include some CD Roms, and collections of artefacts are currently being built up, but ICT resources for the subject are thin. No monitoring of teaching is built into the co-ordinator's role, but he has used visits effectively to monitor, stimulate and inform. Good banks of evidence of the pupils' work are being collected, and displays on historical topics are regularly photographed to keep as a record to provide samples of work at different levels, and help teachers with their assessment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

134. The pupils' attainment in ICT at the end of both key stages is poor. Computers were rarely used during the inspection. The scrutiny of the pupils' work and conversations with the headteacher indicated that this is not a current priority for the school.
135. There are insufficient computers for pupils to get enough 'hands on' experience to develop their skills. Attainment at the end of both key stages, by the substantial majority of pupils, is well below the national expectation, and progress is unsatisfactory. The best work is in reception, where pupils gain familiarity with the mouse and keyboard by using paint programs and the word processor. This sound start is not built upon as pupils move through the school. At school, pupils have little experience of using CD-ROMs, data handling, control technology, digital cameras, electronic mail and the Internet. The school is not meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum. When pupils leave for secondary school at the end of Key Stage 2 the majority will not be competent users of ICT.
136. The subject is not established as an integral part of the school's curriculum. There is little evidence of it being used across the curriculum. The school acknowledges that training for teachers is needed in a number of key areas. Currently, insufficient time is allocated for the development and monitoring of this subject; the assessment and evaluation of the pupils' progress, and development of their skills. At the time of the last inspection, attainment was in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and below expectations at the end of Key Stage 2, so that no improvement has been made.

MUSIC

137. Overall, the pupils' attainments in music are broadly in line with those expected for pupils aged seven and eleven. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were below expectation, too little time was allocated to music, few class teachers took lessons themselves, and there was no systematic development of musical skills. Since that time, there has been satisfactory improvement, and class teachers now take a full part in teaching music. A useful curriculum map has been developed, so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school.
138. Pupils sing with satisfactory tone and good diction. By the end of Key Stage 1, they show great self-discipline when they play instruments and watch the teacher closely to see when to come in. They clap rhythmically and copy patterns. The quality of the pupils' listening is good. In a Year 1/2 lesson, they recognised a movement from 'The Four Seasons' by Vivaldi. They named the composer, and worked out that it must be 'Summer' as they remembered they had heard all the other seasons. They were also able to name the members of the string family of the orchestra, and knew that these were the instruments that were playing in the piece.

139. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils enjoy experimenting with sounds. They are quick to imitate their teachers and learn songs by rote. In one lesson, a Year 5/6 class produced a creditable performance of a three part sound-sequence depicting cowboys, native Americans and the cavalry, holding their parts reasonably well, even when the teacher stopped singing with them.
140. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Lessons are adequately planned, and resources are prepared so that musical examples are found quickly on tapes. Teachers encourage good concentration by preparing the pupils well for their listening, and by directing singing and playing so that pupils watch and listen carefully. Some teachers feel that they struggle because of their own lack of expertise, and they occasionally fall back on longer periods of listening than the pupils need, or explain too much, rather than encouraging practice through repetition. They do not always use the music pupils listen to in order to enable them to compose their own sequences. The key stage hymn practices provide opportunities for the pupils to experience singing in large groups, and there is further daily experience in assemblies. On the whole, these sessions reinforce what happens in lessons, but sometimes, they are encouraged to sing without good posture, and this affects the volume they produce in the hall.
141. The music co-ordinator is not a specialist, but enthuses about the subject, and encourages other teachers to experiment, to good effect. Teachers try hard to link the music they teach to the pupils' other lessons, so that the pupils were developing some interesting work on the big bands, popular in this country in the last century, linking with the history work on Britain since the 1930s. ICT is little used. Music makes a sound contribution to cultural development, and introduces music from a range of cultures. The subject's contribution to spiritual development is good: opportunities to listen, to develop reflective skills and to concentrate are presented well.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

142. In physical education, the pupils' attainments at the end of both key stages are in line with those expected of pupils of similar ages. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils make sound progress with their learning as they move through the school, with a few pupils achieving standards that are high for their age. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated. Most make sound progress and they are satisfactorily supported.
143. By the age of seven, pupils are beginning to develop their co-ordination and understand the effect that exercise has on their bodies. The warm-up sessions at the beginning of lessons are mostly well led by teachers; for example, the specialist teacher improves the quality of the pupils' standing jumps by giving a good demonstration of flexing the knees before springing up to get more height into the jump. However, occasionally teachers warm pupils up well and then talk for too long, this negates the purpose of the warm-up and wastes time. Pupils are taught to work safely and use space effectively. The postponement of an outdoor games lesson, due to wet weather, demonstrates how a large number of pupils doing aerobics can work sensibly together in the hall. They listen carefully to the instructions of the teacher, about moving to the rhythm of the music. Higher attainers think carefully about their actions before displaying a good sense of rhythm and fluidity of movement. Other pupils are encouraged to reflect their moods and feelings through their facial expressions and bodily movements. The majority of teachers use pupils well for demonstration purposes, which helps others in the class to evaluate and improve their own performance. In gymnastics, pupils demonstrate control over their bodily movements by performing satisfactory jumps, turns, balances and landings. The higher attainers are capable of performing good quality sequences incorporating a variety of different movements. All pupils have equal opportunities within the curriculum and there are no apparent differences in the performances of boys and girls.
144. By the time pupils reach the age of 11 they are refining their skills. In games a few pupils demonstrate highly developed football skills and control and pass the ball with the inside and outside of the foot. The teacher selects the pupils with good skills to demonstrate close control to the group. This is effective in helping pupils of average and lower ability to raise their awareness of how practice can improve performance. The majority use these skills satisfactorily to receive and pass the ball in a short five-a-side game of football. In another lesson pupils are developing their stamina through circuit training with different timed activities, such as running, skipping, squat thrusts and throwing and catching. Good questioning by the teacher, about the importance of exercise on different parts of the body, helps the pupils to

understand how they are developing eye hand co-ordination and how their cardio-vascular muscles are being exercised.

145. Pupils dress appropriately and most change quickly for their lessons. They enjoy physical education and listen and respond well to instructions. Pupils are learning to work co-operatively. They use the space in the hall and on the field safely and well. The majority are keen and eager to participate in lessons and their behaviour is mostly good. On a few occasions, too much chattering means that time is wasted by having to stop lessons and remind pupils how to behave.
146. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in over 40 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in all others. Features of the good teaching are the planning, high expectations of teachers, the use of pupils for demonstration purposes and the teachers' good knowledge of the subject, which enable them to teach skills well. All teachers take care to ensure the safety of pupils.
147. Physical education is well led. The co-ordinator is a specialist teacher and although she has only been in post for a short time has developed a good scheme of work. It is being used effectively by teachers to plan their lessons. This is an improvement since the last inspection when there was no scheme of work in place. Currently no time is allocated to the co-ordinator for monitoring and the school is aware that the use of assessment needs further development. Facilities and resources for physical education are good with a field and indoor and outdoor play areas. At present swimming is not timetabled because of the difficulty in obtaining the use of a swimming pool close to the school, but the school is addressing this issue.
148. Last year the school participated in inter-school football and rounders, but the range of extra-curricular activities in physical education is narrow.