

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BOBBING VILLAGE SCHOOL**

Bobbing Sittingbourne

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118333

Headteacher: Mrs Katrina Ware

Reporting inspector: Mr Adrian Everix  
23079

Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> June 2002

Inspection number: 222637

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Denis Baston
Date of previous inspection:	3 <sup>rd</sup> April 2000

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23079	Adrian Everix	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Design and technology Information and communication technology Physical education Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it?  The school's results and achievements  How well are pupils taught?  How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?  What the school should do to improve further
19653	Elizabeth Dickson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes behaviour and personal development  How well does the school care for its pupils?  How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20760	Sheila Roberts	Team inspector	English Art and design Geography History Music Religious education The Foundation Stage Special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

e-Qualitas Ltd, Langshaw, Pastens Road, Limpsfield Chart, Oxted, Surrey RH6 0RE

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>5</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>24</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Bobbing Village Community School teaches pupils between the ages of four and eleven. Most pupils come from Bobbing, surrounding villages and the nearby town of Sittingbourne. There are 110 pupils on roll, which is a significant increase from 76 at the time of the 2000 inspection. Fifteen pupils have joined the school at times other than at the start of the year, which is a high number for the size of the school. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds although few are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is similar to the national average. Children's skills and knowledge when they start school are currently similar to those seen nationally. In recent times, however, the characteristics of different year groups have varied. For example, at the time of the 2000 inspection, the proportion of pupils claiming free school meals was well above the national average, and children's attainment when starting school was found to be below average. Thirty pupils currently require extra support for special educational needs, which is higher than the national average for primary schools. Two pupils have statements for their needs. The current headteacher and two teachers joined the school in 1999, shortly before the last inspection. The other two teachers have been appointed since 2000.

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

This is an effective school which is managing its improvement very well. The overall standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 6 meet those expected nationally. This is a marked improvement from the last inspection when standards by the age of eleven were low. Pupils' learning is continuing to improve as a result of good teaching. The school is led very effectively. All aspects of education, especially teaching, the quality of the curriculum, and pupils' progress, are thoroughly monitored to ensure that improvement is sustained. The school provides good value for money.

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

- The quality of teaching is good overall and of high quality in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2.
- The school is strongly led with a successful focus on raising standards and improving the quality of education.
- Relationships within the school community are very positive and staff successfully foster pupils' very good attitudes to learning.
- Pupils are encouraged to be responsible and to consider others.
- Support staff work very well in partnership with teachers and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

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

- The standard of pupils' writing is below average at the end of Year 6.

*This is the main area for improvement and will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Other smaller issues for governors to consider for inclusion in the action plan are included in the full report.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in April 2000 and found to have serious weaknesses. Improvement since that time has been very good. The action taken to resolve all the issues in the last report has been very effective. Most aspects of school life have improved since that time, including the quality of teaching and planning of the curriculum. The school is committed to sustaining the improvement in standards and quality of education. A plan of action to raise standards in writing is being successfully implemented.

## STANDARDS

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

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

**Key**

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

- *The 1999 and 2000 results have not been included as only eight pupils took the tests in these years. This number is too small to make the grades meaningful in any one subject. In addition, the above table should be interpreted with care, as only twelve pupils took the tests in 2001.*

When the results of all three subjects are taken together, they were well below the national average in 1999 and in the bottom 5 per cent nationally in 1998 and 2000. The improved performance in 2001 was better than that achieved by most schools nationally and was recognised with a government Achievement Award. Targets for the 2002 test results are realistically challenging and are based on a careful assessment of pupils' work. The standards attained by the current Year 6 are average overall. This is a significant improvement from the last inspection when they were unsatisfactory in several subjects. Attainment in English has improved from 2001, although it is below average overall. Standards are average in reading, speaking and listening but, although improving, are still below those expected in writing. Attainment in mathematics is average. In science, attainment is average and has improved dramatically over the past two years; before this very few pupils achieved nationally expected standards.

The overall improvement in standards is due to better teaching, closer monitoring of pupils' progress and the success of various initiatives to improve learning. These have had a positive impact throughout the school. The results of national test for pupils in Year 2 were below average in 2001. This was mainly because of the high proportion of pupils with special needs in that year group. Current attainment is average in writing and above average in reading, speaking, listening, mathematics and science. In all other subjects in Years 1 to 6, attainment is broadly average, apart from history where pupils achieve better than expected standards. Some good examples of work were seen in art and music. Attainment in some aspects of physical education (PE) is restricted by the facilities available at the school. Pupils in the reception class are making rapid gains in all areas of learning and standards are above average.

Overall, pupils are achieving well. The achievement of the oldest pupils has been satisfactory during their time at the school. Although they have made good progress in the past two years, the impact of weak teaching prior to this time has meant that achievement is not as high as in the rest of the school.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic about school and are very keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour is good or better in most lessons. Pupils behave responsibly and sensibly when moving around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils usually get on well with each other. Relationships between pupils and staff are very good and contribute significantly to the quality of learning. Pupils carry out responsibilities sensibly and develop a mature attitude to school life.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Broadly in line with the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Good

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

The quality of teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to very good. A very good range of stimulating activities ensures that children in the reception class make rapid progress and develop a very positive approach to learning. Teaching seen in Years 1 and 2 was always good or better. There was also some very good teaching in Years 3 to 6 but some lessons were satisfactory. Very good teaching was characterised by a rapid pace to learning, a high level of teacher expertise, and work which was particularly well matched to pupils' needs. In all classes, lessons were introduced in a lively manner and the purpose of the learning shared with pupils. This generated high levels of interest and gave pupils a clear understanding of what they were learning and why. Very effective teaching assistants made a significant contribution to pupils' learning in all parts of each lesson. All staff asked carefully framed questions to encourage pupils to think hard and give reasons for their responses. Teachers were successful in ensuring that pupils worked hard. Consequently, pupils have developed good levels of application and concentration that contribute well to their learning. The overall teaching of English and mathematics, including numeracy and literacy skills, was good. The school meets the needs of its pupils well. Work is always planned to take account of those pupils with special educational needs and, in most lessons, it offered good challenge to those who are more able. The main factor that resulted in a few lessons observed being satisfactory, rather than good, was the setting of tasks that did not extend the most able pupils for the whole of the session. Teachers' marking is satisfactory overall but there are variations in its quality. The best examples give pupils a clear idea of what they are doing well and where they need to improve. In some instances, pupils are not given sufficient guidance on how to correct their errors.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Overall, there is a good balance of subjects and approaches to learning. Personal, social and health education is very well planned and strongly contributes to pupils' development.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils' individual education plans are clear and reviewed regularly. Very effective support, provided by teaching assistants, ensures that pupils are successfully included in all activities and make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision overall. There are significant strengths in moral and social development. In and out of lessons, pupils learn to mix well together, to be considerate to others and to take responsibility for their actions. A good range of activities helps pupils to understand their own and other cultures. Spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school looks after its pupils well. Arrangements for matters related to health and safety are good. Pupils are valued as individuals and care is taken to include them all in the life of the school. They understand the clear code of behaviour and system for rewards. Information from the very good assessment of pupils in the Foundation Stage (reception), English, mathematics and science is used well to set targets for individual improvement. In other subjects, pupils' progress is monitored satisfactorily but formal systems of assessment to enhance this process are yet to be developed.

There is a good partnership with parents. They are kept well informed and are welcome in the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher's very effective leadership is providing a clear direction for the school's development. The very good contribution from senior staff has ensured that improvements have been managed very well. A strong ethos for learning has been established and there is a shared commitment to raising standards. This places the school in a strong position to sustain its improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are very supportive. Although some governors are new, they are gaining a good knowledge of the school which enables them to take a full part in shaping its direction.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Teaching quality, curriculum planning, standards and pupils' progress are very carefully monitored. Strengths are shared to aid improvement and action taken to rectify weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Finance and other resources are used very well to support learning. Educational and financial decisions are carefully considered to help the school decide whether it is providing best value.

Sufficient appropriately qualified teachers have a range of expertise well matched to the curriculum. Support staff are experienced, well qualified and very effectively deployed. Learning resources are good, apart from in PE where the building restricts the use of large apparatus. The school's accommodation is unsatisfactory because certain aspects are not adequate for the number of pupils. These include the lack of a hall which means the whole school cannot meet together and pupils have to go to the village hall for PE and to eat lunch. In addition, the restricted outdoor facilities narrow the learning opportunities in PE, especially for the oldest pupils. New buildings and extension to the grounds are planned for the near future.

#### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What some parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teaching is good and their children make good progress</li> <li>• Pupils are expected to work hard and do their best</li> <li>• Behaviour is good and most children like school</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed</li> <li>• The school has improved over the past few years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework</li> <li>• The range of extra curricular activities</li> <li>• The school's accommodation and the delay in improving it</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with all the points that please parents most. They judge the arrangements for homework to be satisfactory. The range of extra curricular activities is limited by the accommodation but, overall, it is satisfactory for the size of the school. Inspectors are not in a position to comment on the reasons for the delay in improving the building and grounds, but agree that some aspects of the accommodation are unsatisfactory.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children currently join the reception class with skills and knowledge broadly typical of those nationally. The nature of the intake has changed recently as the school's roll has increased. In the 2000 inspection, pupils' attainment on entry to school was found to be below the national average. This is reflected in the varying levels of attainment within year groups. For example, the current Year 3 performance in the 2001 tests, when they were at the end of Year 2, was below the national average.

2. Children make rapid progress during their time in the reception class due to very good teaching. Nearly all are likely to meet, and the majority exceed, the required standards in all aspects of their learning by the time they start Year 1. Overall, children's attainment is above average and they are achieving very well.

3. Although national test results provide some indication of the school's performance, they should be treated with care because of the small numbers taking the tests. In 2000 and before, less than ten pupils took the tests in any one year. Twelve pupils took the Year 6 tests in 2001. This means that each pupil was worth over 8 per cent in the overall results and individual scores significantly affect the school's overall performance.

4. Results in the 2001 national tests for pupils then at the end of Year 2, were below the national average in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics. Compared with similar schools, they were above average in reading, average in writing and just below average in mathematics. In the previous two years, results were higher in all three areas, although in 1998 they were in the bottom 5 per cent nationally. Teacher assessments in 2001 indicate that attainment in science was average, with all pupils achieving national levels but few exceeding them.

5. Attainment in the current Year 2 is, overall, above average and pupils are achieving well. Standards are above average in reading, mathematics and science and average in writing. The difference between the 2001 test results and the current judgement is mainly accounted for by the different ranges of attainment in the two groups. Last year's group had a much greater proportion of pupils with special educational needs who needed support for learning difficulties.

6. Results in the 2001 national tests for pupils then in Year 6, were average in mathematics, below the national average in science and well below in English. Compared with similar schools, they were well above average in mathematics, average in science and below average in English. In previous years the number of pupils taking the tests was too small to make a meaningful analysis of individual subject results. However, when results in all three subjects are added together, they were well below average in 1999 and in the bottom 5 per cent nationally in 1998 and 2000. The results in 2001 showed a rate of improvement, which was higher than the national trend. The school received a government Achievement Award in recognition of this.

7. Attainment in the current Year 6 is average overall and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. In English, attainment is below average because standards in pupils' writing are below those expected. In reading, speaking, and listening, standards are average. In science, attainment is broadly average. However, although higher-attaining pupils are producing work above average work in the factual aspects of the subject, they are not consistently achieving higher standards in their investigative work. In mathematics, attainment is average with all pupils achieving well. A comparison of the subject's test

results when these pupils were in Year 2 in 1998, shows a significant improvement from the well below average results of that time.

8. The following additional factors help to explain the rise in standards compared with recent test results, and why good teaching in Years 3 to 6 has only led to average standards and satisfactory achievement for current 11-year olds:

- At the last inspection, just two years ago, weak teaching in Years 4 to 6 led to below average standards and unsatisfactory achievement by the time pupils left the school. New staff have been employed in Years 3 to 6 since this time and much better teaching has resulted in recent good progress. Nevertheless, slower learning in the past has had an impact on the current levels of attainment.
- The very effective monitoring and support that teachers have received from the headteacher has resulted in much better teaching than in the last inspection. This in turn has had a positive impact on standards throughout the school.
- A number of well-targeted initiatives have been successful in raising standards. In science, where very few pupils achieved national standards in Year 6 a few years ago, outside expertise and advice have been used well to improve teaching and raise attainment in all year-groups. An action plan for reading has been effective and has resulted in raised standards. The plan for writing is being implemented and is resulting in rising standards. Although still below average in Year 6, standards in writing have improved from being well-below average, as indicated in the 2001 tests.

9. In most other subjects, standards have been maintained or improved since the last inspection. In information and communication technology (ICT), much improved resources, better curriculum planning and continuing staff training, mean that the subject, which was unsatisfactory in 2000, now broadly meets expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. In the 2000 inspection, standards in religious education (RE), art and geography were all below average by the end of Year 6 and the remaining subjects were satisfactory. Standards in RE and geography are now those expected by Year 6. RE is taught particularly well in Years 1 and 2 and standards are good. Pupils achieve good standards in history throughout the school; they have studied several periods in depth and speak knowledgeably about what they have learnt. In design and technology (DT), art and design, music and physical education (PE), the range of work that could be seen during the inspection was not great enough to make valid overall judgements about standards. In those aspects seen, work in DT and PE was satisfactory. However, the lack of large equipment in the village hall and the small space available for outdoor games inhibit the development of PE skills, especially for the oldest pupils. There are examples of good quality art on display around the school. In the small amount of music seen, pupils were being taught well and achieving good standards.

10. Inspection evidence does not reveal significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress. Good quality support by teachers and learning assistants helps them to make clear, measurable gains towards the targets set for them. However, not all pupils are benefiting from this provision due to absenteeism. Higher attaining pupils are making good progress overall because they are usually set challenging work in lessons. However, there was not enough evidence to evaluate the progress of any pupils who may be gifted or talented. The school is beginning to assess pupils to identify those who may fit into these categories.

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

11. Pupils throughout the school have very good attitudes and these have a positive effect on their learning. They enjoy coming to school, are keen to learn, and respond well to their teachers. In lessons they settle quickly, listen carefully and take an active interest in all that is going on. Whether working individually or in groups, they sustain concentration well for an appropriate length of time. Children's attitudes and behaviour were good or very good in all the lessons seen in reception, Year 1 and Year 2. They were good or better in over four out of every five lessons in Years 3 to 6. These are higher proportions than are usually found. During the inspection there were many occasions when pupils showed a high level of involvement and enjoyment in lessons and were fully engaged by the teaching. For example, in a music lesson for Years 1 and 2, pupils listened carefully to instructions, and then worked well in groups to produce the musical sounds they associated with a thunderstorm. Throughout the lesson they retained interest and enthusiasm and were very pleased with their finished work.

12. Behaviour around the school and in lessons is good and often very good, despite the constraints of space. Pupils understand what is expected of them and respond accordingly. Their good behaviour is a response to, and reflection of, the good ethos and relationships established by staff and the values promoted by teachers. Occasionally, a few pupils with behavioural difficulties find it difficult to settle in class. No incidents of bullying or other oppressive behaviour were seen during the inspection, and pupils interviewed said that these are rare occurrences in the school. Three pupils were excluded for a fixed period during the last academic year, all related to the same incident. At breaktimes pupils play well together, whether outside in the playground or in the buildings at wet playtime.

13. Relationships in all classes are very good. Pupils enjoy each other's company, collaborate well in lessons and play well together. From the youngest upward, pupils have the confidence to express their opinions in front of others and all contributions are welcomed and valued. They respect other people's property and school equipment. The youngest children are taught to share and take turns and older pupils can be trusted to use computers sensibly, without direct adult supervision. Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils participate well in school life, For example, they join in extra-curricular activities, elect team captains and carry out duties around the school. The school council, whereby elected pupils consult their classmates and present their views, is a good example of the pupils sharing responsibility for their school effectively. Pupils are friendly, very polite to adults and readily engage in sensible conversation.

14. Nearly all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and attended the meeting feel that the behaviour of pupils is good and inspectors support this view. In the last inspection report, pupils' attitudes, values and personal development were identified as a strength of the school, and this continues to be the case.

15. The attendance by pupils at the school is satisfactory. The number of reported absences is in line with the national average. The attendance statistics are adversely affected by the irregular attendance of a small number of children from a few families, whose cases are being followed up by the Education Welfare Service. Most pupils arrive to school on time and there is a prompt start to the school day.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

16. The quality of teaching observed was good overall and ranged from satisfactory to excellent. About ninety per cent of lessons seen were judged to be good or better, and forty per cent very good. There was one excellent lesson. This is very good improvement since the last inspection when thirty five per cent of lessons were good, and there was only a very small amount of very good teaching. Eleven per cent of lessons at that inspection were unsatisfactory. Teaching in Years 4 to 6 was unsatisfactory overall. The improvement since the last inspection is attributable to two factors. Firstly,

there has been a change of staff in the year groups where teaching was weakest, and secondly, the rigorous monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and subsequent actions have been effective in improving lessons.

17. In the Foundation Stage, work is planned very well to ensure children are actively learning throughout the lessons. This is achieved through lively teaching of the whole class and very good opportunities for pupils to work independently and in small groups. Learning is very well supported by able classroom assistants. Further details of teaching and learning in this part of the school can be found in the Foundation Stage section of this report.

18. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching observed was often very good and never less than good. Nearly all lessons were characterised by a rapid pace to learning, very good teacher knowledge and high levels of challenge in the work. In Years 3 to 6, teaching was good overall but more variable, ranging from satisfactory to very good. Across the school, the teaching of all groups, including higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, was good overall and matched the rates of learning of other pupils in the different year groups. Higher attaining pupils are usually challenged well. Support staff and teachers work together very effectively to ensure that the special educational needs of pupils are met. Great care is taken to ensure that all pupils are fully included in activities.

19. Teachers and teaching assistants work as a very effective team in every class. They share lesson planning and are clear about their roles right through the lesson. For example, at the start of several lessons, the teaching assistant acted as 'scribe' on a flip chart to collate pupils' ideas. In whole class sessions, the assistants were often strategically positioned to provide extra support to certain pupils. When working with groups, the teaching assistants were very well prepared, had very good relationships with pupils and ensured that they were fully involved in their learning. Teachers and their assistants were good at asking questions such as 'Can you explain how you worked that out?', 'Why do you think that?' which encouraged pupils to think, and to develop confidence in asking their own questions. For example, in an ICT lesson, young pupils asked, 'What does that icon stand for?', 'What does succession mean?'.

20. Teachers' lesson planning is of a good quality and ensures that, in nearly all lessons, work is well matched to pupils' different levels of attainment. Clear information, including the resources needed, learning objectives (the main purposes of the lesson), timings, and the role of adults in the room ensures the smooth running of lessons. Very good use is made of small group discussions and collaborative work. These arrangements help pupils' speaking and listening skills and their social development. Overall, teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning and the amount of work they expect them to complete. The challenge for the highest attainers is usually good. For example, in a history lesson, more able Year 2 pupils responded well to the challenge of reading some information and from this completed the Royal Family Tree. On a few occasions, the tasks provided in group work for the highest attaining pupils did not enable them to maintain good progress for the whole of the session. Pupils were initially challenged, for instance in a number investigation, but their learning slowed because the task did not extend them further. Although there were good features to these lessons mainly in Years 3 and 4, this weakness meant they were only satisfactory overall.

21. Teachers are good at introducing lessons and create a high level of pupil interest. Very well prepared resources enliven the start of lessons. For example, in lessons for Years 1 and 2, visual aids mounted on cards gave an immediate focus to the lessons, as did images from the computer projector. Learning objectives are always written up for pupils and shared with them. At the end of the lesson, they are checked with the class to see if they have been achieved. This helps pupils to understand what they are learning and why. Teachers use the final part of lessons productively to review and share learning. However, on a couple of occasions, groups who were working independently of the

teacher did not have a chance to share their work. The opportunity was, therefore, lost to assess and value what these pupils had achieved.

22. Time is usually used well in lessons to keep pupils working productively. In several lessons, teachers gave helpful reminders to pupils about the time left to finish a task. This gave a sense of urgency and kept pupils concentrating on their work. On one occasion, the teaching of a religious education lesson last thing in the afternoon after PE was not helpful to pupils' learning. Their concentration was lower and the rate of learning not as good as seen in other lessons. Teachers manage their classes well with particularly effective techniques used in Years 1 and 2. Consistent use of the behaviour policy, and very good use of 'circle time' to share and discuss problems, help teachers and pupils to overcome any problems.

23. Overall, teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of subjects, including numeracy and literacy. Basic skills in reading, including phonics, are taught well throughout the school. This has led to rising standards and positive attitudes towards books and reading. In very good lessons, the teacher's knowledge resulted in rapid gains in learning. For example, in a music lesson the teacher's high level of expertise enabled pupils to learn a wide range of instrumental rhythms.

24. Teachers are good at assessing pupils during lessons and giving them support. Marking is good in Years 1 and 2 but has some weaknesses in the older year groups. Work in these years is always marked and there are often helpful comments. However, there are a few instances where errors made by pupils are not picked up and responded to. At times, teachers write requests for pupils to finish or correct work but there are no follow up comments when the pupil has failed to do so. Both these factors limit the effectiveness of teachers' marking. Homework is used satisfactorily to support learning. The school's arrangements, such as the use of pupil's homework diaries, are appropriate.

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

25. The school provides a good curriculum which meets legal requirements. In the Foundation Stage, all aspects of learning are very carefully planned. This ensures that the purpose of each activity is clear and that resources and teaching assistants are deployed to the maximum benefit of the children. The key issue from the last inspection regarding the breadth and balance of the curriculum in Years 3 to 6, and the time allocated to each subject, has been fully addressed. All subjects now have sufficient time and there is a better focus on numeracy and investigative science. Overall, pupils now have good learning opportunities in Years 1 to 6. The only weakness is in physical education where pupils' opportunities are restricted because of limited facilities in the building and grounds. At the last inspection, the curriculum was judged to be satisfactory in the reception class and Years 1 and 2, and unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Improvement since that time has been very good.

26. The curriculum is carefully organised to take account of the mixed age classes and the various levels of attainment within them. At the last inspection there were significant weaknesses in this aspect of planning for Years 4 to 6. The different stages of planning are now monitored carefully by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators to ensure the required aspects are covered and the work matches the needs of all pupils. Using the detailed yearly subject guidance, teachers plan all lessons for their classes each half term. These include clear learning objectives and useful information to help with preparation, such as the resources that will be required. Before the week of the lesson, the rest of the planning is completed by the teacher showing how activities will match the needs of each group of pupils. This system was working well during the inspection.

27. The strategies for teaching numeracy and literacy are effective and have resulted in rising standards. Although pupils' achievements in writing are not as high as they should be, a clear action plan is being successfully implemented in lessons to address this weakness. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. This was reflected in the lessons seen, when some issues concerning substance misuse and others regarding pupils' behaviour were dealt with openly and sensitively. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Individual education plans have clear, measurable targets which are used very well to guide pupils' learning. Effective extra literacy and reading sessions take place at lunchtime each day. The curriculum is planned to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met and that they are fully included in learning. Activities are fully open to both boys and girls.

28. Trips made to places of educational interest enrich the curriculum, and the expertise of visitors broadens pupils' learning. These have included trips to places of historical interest and various workshops, such as the one on percussion instruments. Extra curricular activities, which have recently included football, hockey, art and recorders, are satisfactory for the size of school although the range is limited by the facilities available. Links with the community make a sound contribution to pupils' learning. The vicar from the adjacent church is a regular visitor and local sporting clubs have helped in training pupils. A well known restaurant chain provides money, and its employees assist in the school and at events. Good, constructive relationships have been established with other schools. The sharing of staff training (and the costs incurred), is helping to develop a wider range of teaching expertise. Links with co-ordinators from other schools mean that ideas for improved learning are exchanged. A useful link with Canterbury University includes the loan of very good resources to enhance the teaching of history.

29. The school makes good overall provision for pupils' personal development. There are notable strengths in moral and social development. Staff are committed to the personal development of each pupil, and this is reflected in very good relationships amongst all members of the school community and the positive attitudes displayed by pupils.

30. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils are valued as individuals and they are encouraged to respect others and the world in which they live. Assemblies teach them the principles of right and wrong through the telling of stories, and include a prayer and brief moment of reflection. Circle Time provides good opportunities for pupils to explore their own and others' feelings within a secure setting. In religious education lessons pupils are given a sound knowledge and understanding of the values of different faiths. This is reinforced through visits to places of worship, including Canterbury Cathedral, and visitors from some faiths speaking to children. At other times in the day, there are occasional opportunities for pupils to experience a sense of awe and wonder. For example, when the teacher told the reception class how a caterpillar became a butterfly, the children showed amazement and fascination. The spiritual dimension is, however, not established in teachers' planning and there are times in lessons when teachers miss opportunities to encourage pupils to reflect on what they have learnt.

31. Pupils' moral development is promoted very well, and is underpinned by the school's strong caring ethos. Great store is placed on the teaching of moral values and on pupils understanding the behaviour expected of them. There is a positive ethos of respect which is promoted by all teachers and support staff, and the headteacher takes a clear and effective lead in this area. Opportunities are provided both within assemblies and Circle Time to remind pupils how they should behave and of the value of right and wrong. Good work and behaviour are recognised and rewarded at the weekly 'celebration assembly'. During lessons there are opportunities for pupils to develop and express moral values, for example through discussions on the themes of friendship and substance misuse. In a wider context,



pupils are encouraged to show concern for others, for example by singing to residents at local home for the elderly and raising money for charities such as Barnardos and the Red Cross.

32. The social development of pupils is also promoted very well. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to work together in groups and share equipment and resources. Whole class discussion is often used very effectively to promote pupils' social awareness within the class, for example in listening to others and discussing issues in an orderly manner. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to accept responsibility through roles as milk and register monitors, 'playground buddies' and team captains and vice-captains. The pupils on the School Council are encouraged to be responsible and to take decisions about their school, the most recent one being to install a drinking fountain. Pupils take part in elections for their class representatives and have class discussions so all views can be expressed. The school receives a wide range of visitors, including the local vicar and representatives of charities, and this helps pupils to develop their social skills. Further opportunities are provided through educational visits, a camping weekend for older pupils and an annual performance held at the village hall in which all pupils participate.

33. Pupils' cultural development is good overall. They are provided with a wide range of experiences to extend their cultural awareness. Staff, who are native speakers, teach pupils words and phrases in Czech, Zulu and Afrikaans and inform them of the culture in the Czech Republic and South Africa. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 gain an understanding of another culture through learning some French. Recent visitors to the school provided a good basis for learning about past and current cultures. These included a Viking Workshop, an author and a falconry display. Classes have recently visited London and Hever Castle as part of the work on history. Stories with multi-ethnic themes are covered in assemblies, and the values and beliefs of different cultures are explored in religious education lessons. In one assembly observed, older pupils sensitively considered the current situation in the Middle East, and how different beliefs and cultures can lead to opposing views.

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

34. The school provides good care for its pupils which has a positive impact on their learning. Since the last inspection, the positive aspects of care have been maintained and there has been good improvement in the use of assessment to help support pupils' academic progress.

35. Pupils' well-being and personal development are given high priority by the school. Staff have created a caring and secure environment where all pupils are known individually. Their personal development is monitored very carefully and they are given good support and encouragement to be self-confident, motivated and caring. Pupils know whom they should see if they are in difficulty, and are confident that staff will deal well with any concerns they may have. Very good provision for pupils with statements for special educational needs ensures that they are fully included in all activities.

36. Measures to promote good behaviour are very effective. The behaviour policy is given a high profile, and was recently reviewed with the collaboration of parents. Pupils know and follow the 'golden rules' which are displayed prominently around the school. There are clear procedures for dealing with inappropriate behaviour and contacts are made with parents when necessary. Pupils with behavioural difficulties have clear targets for improvement on their education plans. The 'team' system is popular and gives an effective incentive to pupils to work hard for good-natured inter-team competition.

37. The procedures for first aid and health and safety are good and pupils are supervised well at all times.

38. The headteacher is responsible for child protection procedures. Staff are aware of their responsibilities and issues are discussed appropriately. There are good links with external support agencies. Sex education and the dangers of drug misuse are taught sensitively and effectively through the school's personal and social education programme. Attendance is monitored carefully, backed up by good support from the Education Welfare Service.

39. The school has very good procedures for assessing and monitoring the progress of pupils in the core subjects (English, mathematics and science), which are followed by all teachers. The information gained from assessment is used very well to plan work and to adapt the curriculum when appropriate. Children are assessed at entry, using 'baseline tests', and very good use is made of these to plan appropriate work. Children are assessed again at the end of the reception year and targets are set for each pupil, which are constantly reviewed through the school. The targets focus on raising the standards of each pupil. Progress is tracked in reading, writing, including spelling, and maths. This is monitored and checked formally twice a year. The school has recently begun to make use of a computerised database, to record pupils' results, which makes it easier to track their progress. Each pupil has an up to date record of achievement. There are also individual target cards in maths, reading and writing. Each teacher monitors progress carefully in other subjects. They are fully aware of the different levels in their classes and plan work to match these. However, in these subjects there are no agreed systems for formally assessing attainment and providing more precise information to help in identifying strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning. The school has identified this issue for future development; priorities have previously been correctly focused on assessment in the core subjects.

40. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is monitored very well. Termly reviews are carried out, targets reviewed and new ones set according to need. Teachers regularly monitor the pupils' progress against their targets, and plan lessons accordingly. The statements of pupils with special educational needs are reviewed at the statutory times, and some pupils, with appropriate support, have made sufficient progress to have the statement withdrawn.

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

41. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to develop its partnership with parents, which is now good. Parents' views of the school are generally positive and the school has effective links with them.

42. The overall amount and quality of information available to parents are good. There are many good documents such as the prospectus, half-termly newsletters, the homework policy and letters about what classes will be studying. These all inform and assist parents in understanding what goes on in school and how parents can continue children's learning at home. The school also provides helpful meetings for parents, such as the recently held information session on national tests. Pupils' annual reports are satisfactory. In the best examples, parents are given a clear understanding of what their child can do and understand, with indications of where they could improve. Some reports are not quite as helpful and contain more generalised information on work that has been covered during the year. There are well-attended progress meetings with parents twice a year, where targets for children are set and discussed. The school has an 'open door' policy where parents with concerns are seen by headteacher or staff as soon as possible. Parents are fully involved in the annual reviews of all children on the special educational needs register and their contributions are valued.

43. Although there is no parents' association as such, several parents assist teachers in classes and help on visits or with extra-curricular activities. Many others are willing helpers at school events, such as the annual pantomime. The school welcomes parental involvement and those interested are encouraged to attend training for parent helpers. Three parents have recently completed the course.

Good efforts are made to involve and consult parents on important issues, such as the school's behaviour policy. The majority of parents help their children learn at home. They make a good contribution towards their child's education by listening to them read and ensuring homework is completed.

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

44. The headteacher provides very effective leadership, ensuring an exceptionally clear educational direction for the school. Although there is no deputy headteacher at present, the headteacher is very well supported by the senior management team in the introduction of many initiatives aimed at higher standards. These include the tracking of pupils' progress, target setting, and the rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning. The success of the actions taken is reflected throughout the school in rising standards and good teaching. The school's aims and values are very well reflected in the daily life of the school. Staff morale and motivation are high. Professional development and training for teachers and classroom assistants have been priorities, with the result that staff feel valued and supported. There is a very positive ethos and a strong, shared commitment to school improvement.

45. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are very good. The headteacher monitors lessons several times each half-term. She gives oral, and very good quality written feedback to staff. These point out the positive points in lessons and areas for improvement which are set as individual targets. A time-scale is set for any necessary action and the date of follow-up monitoring stated. Teachers' weekly planning is monitored in the same rigorous way, with written feedback. All these actions have clearly led to improved teaching and learning since the last inspection. In accordance with the priorities of the school improvement plan, subject co-ordinators also monitor learning and have clear overviews of their subjects and the areas that need developing. The provision for special educational needs is very well managed to ensure all these pupils are fully included in learning.

46. Appraisal and performance management are firmly in place and the management of people is very good. The work done in achieving the 'Investors in People' award has contributed well to this. In-service training is provided in accordance with needs identified by the headteacher and individual teachers. Training fully includes the teaching assistants and makes a significant contribution to the high quality of support they provide. Induction for new staff, including the support given to newly qualified teachers, is very good. This is especially significant because two recent members of staff are in their first teaching post. The school improvement plan is well written and has targets which are clearly focused on raising standards and improving the quality of learning. It is based on a comprehensive self-evaluation of the school's performance and includes a thorough analysis of test results. Consequently, the school has very clearly established the correct priorities for its development and formulated effective actions to improve. For example, action plans such as those in reading and writing give a firm direction to raising standards.

47. The governing body has undergone many changes in the last two years and several governors are relatively new. Nevertheless, led by a very competent chairman, they have taken an increasingly effective role in shaping the direction of the school. This has included the appointment of new teachers, both to improve standards criticised in the last inspection, and to cater for the growing numbers on the school roll. Governors take advantage of a range of training provided by the local education authority to help them develop their effectiveness. They are well informed about school developments by the headteacher, and are committed to improvement. Governors gain an independent view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school through various monitoring activities. These include links with designated subjects and their co-ordinators, and the observation of lessons within a framework agreed with the headteacher. They are very supportive of the management team and the work of the school. They appraise the headteacher annually and set relevant performance targets.

Overall, statutory duties are met satisfactorily. However, the annual report and prospectus do not include national comparative data of the school's performance in tests for pupils at the end of Year 6.

48. Financial planning is very good and expenditure is clearly linked to priorities in the school improvement plan. Funds granted to support small schools, and for improvement following the last inspection, have been used very well to support pupils' progress. Resources have been improved significantly in the last two years from being unsatisfactory to good now. Only in PE are there significant weaknesses which cannot be improved until the new accommodation is ready. Money to support pupils with special educational needs is spent well. It ensures a good staff ratio and appropriate resources to meet the needs of those pupils within the classroom.

49. An appropriate sum has been retained from the school's budget mainly to resource the new buildings when they are completed. All necessary procedures for monitoring expenditure are in place and the principles of best value are applied. The school compares its results and costs with similar schools. Where relevant, the views of parents and pupils are considered before making decisions. Office administration is efficient and the clerical staff make an important contribution, not only to the smooth running of the school, but also to its ethos. Effective use is made of information and communication technology in the office. All records are computerised and teaching staff use ICT in their own work. Teachers and teaching assistants make creative use of the facilities to produce captions and headings for the attractive displays around the school.

50. The school has a committed and hard working staff. Teachers and teaching assistants have expertise and experience which are well matched to the demands of the curriculum.

51. Overall, the school's accommodation is unsatisfactory. The school is waiting for the commencement of a building programme, which will increase the accommodation, and provide appropriate facilities for physical education, as well as a safe outdoor play area for children in the Foundation Stage. At present, there is no school hall for physical education (PE) or assemblies. The school uses the local village hall for PE and as a dining room. There is a small grassed area and playground. As the school roll has expanded, break has been set at different times to ensure there is a reasonable space for play.

52. There has been very good improvement in leadership and management since the last inspection, when it was judged as satisfactory. At that time, the present headteacher was new to the school, and her many very good initiatives had not had time to make enough impact. Provided the rigorous monitoring of learning is sustained, and effective action to raise standards continues to be taken, the school has a very good capacity to improve further.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

53. The school should now:

A. Raise standards in writing by:

- i) Improving pupils' skills in punctuation and spelling
- ii) Encouraging pupils to widen the range of words they use in their writing
- iii) Developing pupils' ability to write in greater depth and length

(See paragraphs 7, 64-71)

(These areas for development are identified in the school's improvement plan).

Governors should also consider including these smaller issues in their action plan:

- a) In conjunction with the local education authority, continue to press for improvements to the school building and grounds so that they are completed as soon as possible. (See paragraphs 9,12,25,51,56,62,104-106)
- b) Ensure the quality of teachers' marking is consistently good. (See paragraphs 24,69,75,82)
- c) Develop assessment procedures in those subjects where there is not a common system used by all teachers. (See paragraphs 39,100,111)
- d) Extend the challenge given to the highest-attaining older pupils in investigative science. (See paragraphs 7,79,82)
- e) Ensure the governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus contain information comparing the school's test results for pupils at the end of Year 6 with those nationally. (See paragraph 47)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

33

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

22

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	13	15	4	0	0	0
Percentage	3	39	46	12	0	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	110
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	22
<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	30
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.6

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	5	7	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys*			
	Girls*			
	Total	11	9	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (100)	75 (100)	92 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys*			
	Girls*			
	Total	10	11	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (100)	92 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	6	6	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys*			
	Girls*			
	Total	8	10	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (63)	83 (25)	100 (25)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys*			
	Girls*			
	Total	7	9	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (38)	75 (25)	100 (38)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

\* These numbers have been omitted as they are too small to give overall levels of attainment of boys and girls separately.

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	79
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.8
Average class size	27

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	166

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	256527
Total expenditure	252165
Expenditure per pupil	2574
Balance brought forward from previous year	35367
Balance carried forward to next year	39729

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*



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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	108
Number of questionnaires returned	30

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	23	10	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	37	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	60	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	47	20	3	3
The teaching is good.	70	30	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	34	8	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	14	10	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	23	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	57	24	13	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	67	27	0	3	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	30	10	3	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	30	37	13	0

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Some parents expressed strong feelings about the delay in improving and extending the school buildings.

## **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**

54. Children enter the reception year in the September before their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. Their overall attainment is in line with that expected nationally. Some have received good preparation for school through pre-school provision and supportive parents. By the end of the reception year, children have achieved very well and standards in all six areas of learning are above average. Higher attaining children are constantly being challenged by work designed to extend their knowledge and understanding. Children with special educational needs do very well due to the purposeful support given by both the class teacher and the very capable teaching assistants.

55. Teaching is very good in all areas of learning. Relationships are very good between staff and between children and staff. Children are made to feel secure and valued and consequently become confident learners. The teacher and teaching assistants are knowledgeable and plan each session together. Their strong teamwork was a particularly good feature of all lessons observed and contributed very well to children's learning. This was demonstrated in a literacy lesson when one of the assistants operated 'Tiggy' the glove puppet, who claimed to have written a sequence of events about the life cycle of a butterfly. The other assistant, directed by the teacher and children, helped Tiggy, with the use of a flip chart, to re-sequence the writing in the correct order. What the children are expected to learn is set out clearly and discussed at the beginning of each lesson. Expectations of the children's behaviour and progress are high, and the children respond well to this. Children are assessed on entry to the class and are re-assessed at the end of the year. Monitoring, tracking and target setting for individual progress are very good.

56. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are excellent. Resources are very good overall and are very well used. The classroom is attractive and stimulating, with displays which are built up following each lesson so that they are relevant to current learning. Despite the delay in the building programme, which will provide a safe outdoor play area for the children in the Foundation Stage, a stimulating and well-resourced outdoor play area has been created following a weakness identified in the last inspection. There is, however, no direct access from the classroom, and the surface is very uneven. There were many good features in this part of the school reported in the last inspection in 2000. These have been developed well and the overall improvement since that time has been good.

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

57. The provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is very good, and children develop very good skills in these aspects. Circle Time is used effectively to encourage children to reflect on the effects of behaviour on others, and on themselves. During one of these sessions they stated clearly how they felt when faced with unkindness and demonstrated an understanding of right and wrong. Glove puppets were used well to begin a discussion on name-calling, and the effect it has on an individual. When one child recalled unkindness from a child in her previous school, and it was obvious she was still hurt by it, the teacher proposed to the class that they say 'sorry' on behalf of that child. They all entered well into the spirit of the gesture. Children take turns on play equipment and share very well in all activities, such as with the toy zoo animals. Children are confident and eager to participate in all activities and almost all children show good concentration. Higher attaining children work well independently, such as when they were writing captions for a story. Children demonstrate well-developed personal skills, for example when changing for physical education lessons. Staff show

a very good understanding of the emotional needs of all the children, including those with special educational needs. Their effective use of praise encourages self-esteem and higher achievement.

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

58. The development of children's language skills is a priority and literacy lessons are very well planned to ensure children achieve to the best of their abilities. During these lessons, children listen very attentively and answer questions eagerly. Most children speak clearly and confidently, to adults and to each other. Role-play is particularly well used to develop language skills, and children enjoy acting out visits to the area currently set up as a 'pet health centre'. They enjoy reading aloud from the 'Big Books', and from their reading books. Children of higher ability read confidently, accurately and with good expression for their age. They re-tell the events of the story clearly. Children of average ability also re-tell the story accurately and use basic phonic skills to help with new words. Lower ability children, although hesitant in reading, show a knowledge of letters and are beginning to sound out words.

59. Children are given very good opportunities to write and their skills are well developed in this area. The higher-attaining children write in full sentences. In religious education, they wrote sentences to describe the destruction and rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. In another lesson, they wrote captions for pictures of the life cycle of a Butterfly. Children of average ability are developing a good knowledge of word construction. For example, they compiled lists of four letter words using 'ake'.

### **Mathematical development**

60. Provision for children's mathematical development is very well planned. The staff use a good variety of successful strategies to develop numeracy. The teacher takes every opportunity to develop counting skills, such as when children counted up to 40 in the time it took older pupils to walk through to assembly. Good use is made of favourite counting songs and rhymes at beginning and end of lessons. These are enjoyed by all. The sessions at the ends of lessons are used well. On one occasion, children pretended they were getting on and off a bus with others at the bus stop. This created a constantly changing number permutation with many opportunities to practise adding. Puppets are used well to reinforce understanding. For example 'Patches' counted incorrectly, and the children corrected him. These activities all help pupils to achieve very well. Nearly all children add on up to 10, and higher attainers add beyond this. Children understand size and weight and describe things as little or large, and as heavy or light. They had good experience of this during their work on sorting and selling fruit and vegetables.

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

61. Children are provided with excellent opportunities to develop their learning in this area. They have looked at how wind makes things move, then made kites and tested them. Children planned and made paper aeroplanes, discussed the best shape for flying furthest, and made changes to improve them. In preparing for a play about Jack and the Beanstalk, children made a castle from large cartons, and modified its construction to improve stability. Children show great interest in nature, and have grown plants from seeds and cuttings. In their current work on mini-beasts, they have learnt about the life cycle of the butterfly and appreciated the wonder and beauty of it. During one lesson, children were looking at African giant snails and were using the computer to learn more about them from a web site. They have learnt about changes over time by looking at family time-lines and by comparing the toys their parents had with their own. Children know the main festivals in the Christian calendar. They know that others have different beliefs, such as Muslims, and have looked at many aspects of Judaism.

They name many Jewish artefacts correctly and have made their own Torahs. During the year, when learning about Islam, children made their own prayer mats, which they used at prayer time at the end of the day.

### **Physical development**

62. Children's skills are well developed through activities, which involve drawing, writing and cutting out. They do these very well. For example, they have made small figures of themselves, which they have decorated by sticking on fabric and beads. Overall, their physical development is very good, but the outdoor play area has disadvantages. Nonetheless, children make good use of the large play equipment, and show very good awareness of space when riding the wheeled toys. They show very good co-ordination when using the big apparatus, and in ball control.

### **Creative development**

63. The rich provision for this area enables children to develop their creative skills very well. In their art, children show very good use of colour. For example, in their pictures of daffodils, they mixed their own shades of yellow and made green from yellow and blue. The animal paintings, following their visit to the zoo, are very good, as are their portraits. There are very good examples of collage work stimulated by work in literacy, such as one depicting The Enormous Turnip. The children enjoy music and action songs. Children's imagination is very well developed. Role-play forms an important part of this, particularly in the 'Pets' Health Centre', where the children, including those with special educational needs, enjoy dressing as the vet to treat the animals. There is a playhouse outside, where children enjoy entertaining staff and each other to make believe parties. The teacher has hung a crystal in the window to catch the sun, so as to create a rainbow in different places as the sun moves around. This causes much wonderment and delight in the children. The children carry their sense of appreciation and imagination into many activities, such as the child who wriggled through the tunnel, as a caterpillar, and then came down the slide with outstretched arms as the emerging butterfly.

## **ENGLISH**

64. The school's results in the 2001 tests for pupils then at the end of Year 6 were well below the national average, and below when compared with similar schools. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in the current Year 6, although below average in writing, are now attaining in line with the national expectations in reading, speaking and listening. Effective teaching and the introduction of well-planned, daily, guided reading sessions, have supported this improvement. Building on the success of the reading initiative, the school is focusing on writing. Year 6 pupils have achieved satisfactorily during their time in the school. However, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are now making good progress due to better teaching.

65. The school's 2001 results in national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 in reading and writing, were below the national average. The year group had a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than the current Year 2. Inspection evidence shows that standards in reading are above expectations in reading, speaking and listening. Writing standards are average. Overall, all pupils are making good progress and achieving well by the end of Year 2.

66. There are many good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. This has resulted in better standards, which are still rising, and is a significant improvement since the last inspection when pupils in Years 4 to 6 were making unsatisfactory progress. Teachers actively

encourage pupils to speak out confidently and to extend their vocabulary. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are regularly given the opportunity to discuss their views in small groups then share them with the whole class. Good 'open-ended' questioning by the teacher ensures that pupils give full, well explained answers. Pupils' ability to listen attentively and offer their views is above the level expected for their ages. In Circle Time, pupils are encouraged to speak sensitively and sensibly when discussing issues regarding behaviour. For example, in a Year 3/4 lesson, pupils listened courteously to each other and spoke out clearly about the effect of behaviour. By Year 6, pupils usually answer questions thoughtfully and clearly with the confidence expected for their ages, for example when discussing the styles of various authors. They are given good opportunities for role-play and this helps them to develop confidence in discussion and listen to each other's views. A good example was a debate on the development of a coastal resort, when pupils assumed the role of a local inhabitant, and confidently put forward ideas.

67. Standards in reading are rising throughout the school. The main reasons for this are the very effective teaching of basic reading skills, starting in the reception class, effective sessions during the literary hour, and the introduction throughout the school of a daily reading period. During these daily sessions, class teachers, and the very competent learning support assistants, provide excellent guided reading opportunities. This has raised the profile of reading and is viewed very positively by all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils have developed their own preferences in literature and many name their favourite authors. They understand the plot of the stories and can describe the characters, especially in the Harry Potter books, which are the current favourite. Older pupils compare the styles of authors including several from Victorian times. Year 3 pupils with special educational needs are given good supplementary reading sessions at lunchtime, on a daily basis. A learning support assistant leads the sessions and focuses on phonics or whichever aspects of reading meets the pupils' needs. The school has timetabled extra support for under-achievers in reading, but not all are benefiting from this opportunity because of absenteeism. Pupils use the school library regularly and understand the Dewey reference system. Pupils understand and use some technical vocabulary, such as 'alliteration', and even the youngest pupils use the words 'illustrator', 'author', 'phoneme', and 'split digraph' correctly.

68. Standards in writing are improving in Years 1 and 2. Higher attaining pupils write imaginatively and show good use of vocabulary. The plots of their stories are well developed, and punctuation, including speech marks, is generally correct. Spelling, punctuation and the structure of writing are at the standard expected for the pupils' ages although some use capital letters incorrectly. The standard of writing is improving for older pupils but spelling and grammar remain below national expectations at the end of Year 6. Content is often immature with unimaginative vocabulary. This under-achievement is mainly a result of previous poor teaching which the school has resolved by the appointment of new teachers. This, together with the implementation of the school's writing action plan, is the reason that standards are now beginning to rise. Pupils write in a variety of ways. In Years 3 and 4, pupils write both informal and formal letters, showing an awareness of how to structure the content for different purposes. Older pupils show good observational skills in their report writing as aliens about 'Earthlings'. They also produced some lively poems after the style of Ogden Nash, 'Adventures of Isabel'. Writing is well developed across the curriculum at both key stages in religious education, history and geography. There are good examples of planning and evaluation in design and technology and accurate technical writing in science. The amount of writing in other subjects is appropriate and is particularly good by the end of Year 2.

69. The teaching of English is good overall and, in the lessons seen, ranged from satisfactory to very good. All lessons were introduced very well, starting with a review of previously learnt knowledge. Learning intentions were well shared with the pupils. These factors ensured that pupils of all abilities understood the purpose of the lesson and were motivated to learn. In the best lessons seen, tasks were

very well matched to the attainment levels of the pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils. Where teaching was not so strong, a few higher attaining pupils did not have enough extension work to sustain good progress for the last part of the session in which they were working independently. Teachers and support assistants have established very good relationships in their classes. Consequently pupils feel valued, their opinions respected and they have very good attitudes to learning. Pupils listen well, work co-operatively with each other, and settle to tasks independently. Lessons are well planned to ensure resources and time are used well. The very capable teaching assistants work in a highly effective partnership with teachers for the whole of the lesson. For example, in a Year 2 lesson the assistant acted as scribe in sorting out the sounds, 'o', 'oa' and 'ow' at the start of the session, and then worked very well with groups of pupils to develop their learning. Very good use is made of the plenary session at the end of the lesson for teachers and their assistants to reinforce and assess learning. Marking is usually constructive and helps pupils understand how they are progressing. However, pupils do not always follow up comments made by teachers. Homework is set regularly and used effectively to support learning. Pupils use ICT appropriately, for example to draft writing using facilities such as a spell checker, and to present work in various ways.

70. Procedures for assessment are very good. Pupils' progress is tracked, and targets set and reviewed regularly. Targets focus on what is needed to raise the standard for each individual in both reading and writing. Older pupils have their targets stuck to the front of their workbooks, so they are constantly aware of what they need to achieve.

71. English is very well led and managed. The reading and writing action plans have been effective in establishing much improved teaching and rising standards. Resources to support the English curriculum are very good. These include a good selection of fiction, 'Big Books' and graded reading books. Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

## **MATHEMATICS**

72. Pupils' attainment is broadly in line with the national average by the end of Year 6. Data of pupils' recent progress, a comparison of their standards now compared with when they took their Year 2 tests in 1998, and evidence from completed work, show that their achievements are good. Attainment is similar to that shown in the 2001 test results. These were average when compared nationally and well above average when compared with similar schools. In Year 2, pupils' attainment is above average and pupils are achieving well. Nearly all pupils are working confidently at nationally expected levels, with over a third achieving significantly higher standards. This is better than indicated in the 2001 tests when there was a much higher percentage of pupils with special educational needs.

73. Pupils of all levels of attainment make good progress. Those with special educational needs are very well supported by teaching assistants and have work matched well to build on what they already know. Higher attaining pupils are usually challenged well.

74. By the end of Year 2, pupils understand the value of numbers up to 100, for example by showing that 72 is 7 tens and 2 units. They apply their knowledge to estimate answers to the nearest ten and work out halves of numbers such as 40 and 50. Pupils measure accurately using centimetres. Higher-attaining pupils understand the value of numbers to 1000. They reverse calculations to check their results for example,  $36 - 12 = 24$  and  $24 + 12 = 36$ . These pupils understand and recall multiplication facts at least up to the five times table; they know that, for example,  $6 \times 5 = 30$  and  $30/5 = 6$ . By the end of Year 6, most pupils have developed their understanding of numbers to beyond a thousand when multiplying and dividing numbers by 10 or 100. They recognise that proportions can be expressed in different ways, such as, 0.37, 37% and  $37/100$ . They find the perimeters of simple shapes and draw line graphs to show the rate of water cooling. Higher attaining pupils recognise ratios when working out a sequence of coloured patterns. They use simple formulae such as  $3N - 2$  to express the

relationship between one set of numbers and another. These pupils accurately convert metric into imperial measurements, for example, pints into litres and millilitres.

75. The quality of teaching and learning seen was good in all but one lesson where it was satisfactory. Teachers prepared their lessons very well. They had resources readily available so no time was wasted and teaching assistants were very well briefed about their role. Teachers planned different activities to match various levels of attainment. For the most part this was done effectively. However, on a few occasions the tasks given in group-work did not ensure that some higher attaining pupils sustained good progress throughout the session. Teachers clearly explained the purpose of lessons to pupils so that they had a clear understanding of what they were learning. The pace and structure of lessons were good with lively introductory sessions to promote mental arithmetic skills. Carefully targeted questions ensured all pupils were included. Teachers challenged pupils to explain their thinking. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, the teacher asked 'How did you do that?' and 'Can you explain how you worked that out?' The sessions at the end of lessons were used well to recap learning and to explain the next step. Although it was not always possible to share each group's learning in these sessions, priority was not always given to those pupils who had worked independently of an adult. This meant that a valuable opportunity was missed for the teacher to assess the progress of a group, and for the pupils to show what they had achieved without adult support. All work is marked and this is done very carefully in Years 1 and 2. For older pupils, marking varies in quality. It is usually accurate but in a few instances mistakes have not been corrected and teachers are not always checking to see if their comments or requests have been followed up by pupils. Targets set for individual pupils are clear and help them understand what they need to learn next.

76. The curriculum is well planned and adapted from national guidance. The criticism from the last inspection, of work being set at the same level for all older pupils irrespective of age or ability, no longer applies. Assessment is very thorough and is used very well to track pupils' progress, set targets and identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning. Suitable emphasis is given to developing pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects, for example in geography, science and design and technology. In these subjects, bar and line graphs, accurate measurements for volume, temperature, mass and capacity, and costing of design projects all support the teaching of numeracy. Satisfactory use is made of ICT to support learning, for example to practise numeracy skills, present data in various graphs and charts and, through the use of a 'roamer' and 'logo', to develop estimation skills for angles and distance.

77. The subject has been led and managed very well to ensure that the significant weaknesses at the last inspection have been rectified. Analyses of pupils' performance were undertaken and curriculum planning was adapted to ensure that areas of weakness were taught more effectively. A substantial sum was spent on improving resources, which are now good. Regular monitoring of numeracy lessons, with follow-up points for teacher action, has successfully raised the quality of pupils' learning. Appropriate plans for future development include better identification of gifted and talented pupils and the provision of work precisely matched to their needs. Good progress has been made in improving the subject since the last inspection, especially in the quality of teaching and overall attainment in Years 4 to 6.

## **SCIENCE**

78. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly in line with national expectations and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection when attainment was well below the national average, with very few pupils achieving test results at nationally expected levels. It is also better than indicated by the 2001 test results which were below the national average. Standards have improved because the school has focused on many aspects of the subject, including curriculum planning and resources. The school has worked regularly with an outside

consultant to successfully improve teaching and learning. The rise in standards is also reflected in attainment at the end of Year 2. At the last inspection, this was in line with that expected nationally and now it is above average with pupils achieving well. Nearly all pupils are attaining at least national standards, with about half working above this level.

79. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because work is adapted well for them and they receive very good support from teaching assistants. Higher attaining pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, and satisfactory progress between Years 3 and 6. In the factual aspects of the subject, their responses are in greater depth but their investigative and experimental work is not at a significantly higher level than other pupils of the same age.

80. During Year 2, pupils learn the basic elements of a fair test. They make predictions about what will happen to different substances, such as cake mixes and salt dough, when they are heated. The higher attaining pupils independently draw simple conclusions about their work and present their results in bar charts. For example, when testing different makes of paper towels for water absorbency, they explain why they should recommend them to their parents. These pupils use grams accurately to measure changes in the weight of plants. All pupils recognise that different plants and creatures are found in different places. Higher attaining pupils explain why various creatures are suited to life in different habitats. They give such reasons as camouflaged skin as protection from predators and the necessity of moisture for certain creatures which live near a pond. By the end of Year 6, pupils know how to approach a scientific investigation and carry out a fair test. For example, pupils know that all factors need to be kept the same, apart from one, when comparing the rate at which different solids dissolve. Higher attaining pupils show a good understanding of changes in substances, including how weight loss is attributable to evaporation in many foods. They use different ways of presenting their results, such as tables and line graphs. Pupils use correct scientific vocabulary when describing the life cycle of a plant and higher attainers clearly explain the main functions of such organs as the heart. Pupils know about different types of electrical circuits and some explain how altering the wiring changes the current and brightness of a bulb.

81. The quality of teaching and learning seen was good. It was very good in Years 1 and 2. Teachers are very good at making learning interesting. This is achieved by lively introductions to lessons, often with good use of visual aids, and the setting of tasks which encourage pupils to think hard. In a Year 1/2 lesson the teacher produced animal pictures and asked children to speculate why the animal was well suited to its environment. Probing questions about such factors as the ice habitat of a polar bear and the colour of its coat, generated well thought out answers from pupils. In a Year 5/6 lesson, pupils were asked to classify substances in different ways and this led to much valuable group discussion. Teaching assistants were fully involved in asking challenging questions. For example, when pupils agreed that water was completely harmless, the assistant asked them to think if this was always so and this led to a discussion about the effects of polluted water. Resources were always well prepared in lessons and this ensured no time was wasted. In the very good lesson, pupils learnt at a rapid pace. Pupils were set timed targets to discuss questions and gave their responses to the whole class. They were clearly used to this approach, which was particularly valuable in promoting good speaking and listening skills. High expectations were evident in the very well prepared tasks set for different groups. For example, higher attaining pupils were asked to choose an animal and write reasons why it would be well adapted to a particular habitat. Occasionally, in lessons for older pupils, some groups were not given sufficient opportunity to share their learning with others during the final session of the lesson.

82. Past work for older pupils shows that investigative tasks sometimes lack the extra challenge to extend the highest attaining groups. Marking is of a good quality in Years 1 and 2 but is inconsistent in the older age groups. At its best, it gives helpful information to pupils on what they have or have not done well, and how they can improve. However, on some occasions it does not identify pupils' misconceptions in order for them to learn from their mistakes.



83. The subject is very well led and managed. This is reflected in the successful drive to raise standards in a short time. A current aim is to develop target setting as part of the ongoing process of raising attainment. Resources are now good and assessment is very effective in tracking progress and identifying areas for improvement in the curriculum. Moral issues, such as those concerned with substance abuse and care for the environment, feature well in the science curriculum. ICT is used appropriately to support learning and includes the use of an electronic microscope, data handling, and research using CD ROMS and the Internet.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

84. No overall judgement about achievement in art is made as it was not possible to evaluate a large enough range of work from pupils of different abilities. However, in those aspects of the work seen, standards meet national expectations, with some examples of work displayed around the school of a good or very good quality. There has been good improvement since the last inspection when standards by the end of Year 6 were unsatisfactory. At that time there were no schemes of work, resources were unsatisfactory and teachers were not confident in teaching art. The subject has been well led to ensure effective training has been provided for staff and schemes of work introduced so that teachers have the knowledge and guidance needed to teach art well. Resources are now very good.

85. By the end of Year 2, pupils have produced some very good examples of textile work in their 'seasons' wall hangings. These are in the appropriate colours to show the four seasons of the year. Pupils have experimented, and used digital cameras, to produce some good examples of still life through pictures of bowls of fruit. Some very good under-water pictures have been completed using wax crayons and a colour wash over. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have been looking at the work of famous artists, such as Kandinsky. Inspired by the idea, they used their own hands as a starting point, then enlarged sections, to create some very colourful examples of abstract art. The standard of work produced was very good. Older pupils have made some good sketches of the human body and there are good examples of still life paintings linked to their topic on Sikhism in religious education.

86. The quality of teaching and learning in the two lessons observed was good. In a lesson for Years 3 and 4, the teacher used her own work and that of Cezanne to inspire pupils. They then drew shoes, and using only black and white paint, showed the reflection of light very effectively at different points. In a Year 5 lesson, the teacher introduced a painting by Michelangelo and, through good questioning, focused the pupils on the way it was created. This generated interest amongst the pupils who were then well prepared to start creating a three dimensional model in clay. Pupils enjoyed their work and made a good effort in both lessons.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

87. No design and technology lessons were seen during the three days of the inspection. Photographic evidence, design books and a sample of finished work from Years 3 and 4 show that the subject is being taught at the correct level. However, the amount of finished practical work available was insufficient to make overall judgements about standards, teaching or improvement since the last inspection.

88. Designs from Year 2 pupils show how they had looked at the different shapes of buildings, and investigated different ways of joining to help them make their own models. They listed the materials they would require and produced simple labelled diagrams of their models. Written evaluations showed that pupils considered how they could improve them. In food technology, pupils experimented with different tools such as squeezers, peelers and graters to see how they suited different purposes. When preparing fruit salads, they described how they would make them attractive and how the fruits looked

after preparation. The writing shows that good attention had been paid to developing pupils' descriptive vocabulary by the use of a range of words such as crisp, soggy and tangy. In Year 4, pupils designed and made purses and wallets of a satisfactory standard. A good range of materials and ideas for opening and closing them were evident. Year 6 pupils have made controllable vehicles by applying their knowledge of simple electrical circuits. Step-by-step designs which identified tools, materials and fixings, were at the standard expected for this age. Photographs of the models showed a variety of ideas and designs. In discussion, pupils showed an understanding of how they could further adapt their models by using computer control.

89. Learning is planned well using national guidance. Teaching in two-week blocks overcomes storage problems and enables pupils to remain interested in their projects.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

90. Pupils standards are in line with that expected nationally and achievement in geography is satisfactory throughout the school. As only one lesson was seen during the inspection, judgements are largely based on an analysis of pupils' work. The subject has been managed well to ensure good improvement since the last inspection. At that time, standards in geography were unsatisfactory at the end of Year 6, and resources were judged to be poor.

91. Year 2 pupils have a sound knowledge of the locality and of places further afield. They have completed a mode of transport survey and produced a graph to show the results. Pupils have also drawn maps which show their journeys to school. Very good use is made of Bobby and Betty, the two class teddy bears, who have accompanied pupils and staff on holidays to various destinations around the world. This has led to a sound understanding of locations on the world map and much research into life in the different countries. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have successfully compared life in their locality with that in an Indian village. This study included the types of food and clothes to suit the different climates. By the end of Year 6, pupils show a good understanding of environmental factors that affect daily life. They have analysed a proposed development on the coast and its effect on different people in the community. Pupils understand the water cycle, river profiles and how rivers shape the land. They place the main rivers of Britain on a map and understand many aspects of the physical environment, including mountain areas and changing coastlines. Pupils have compared climates around the world.

92. Teaching in the lesson seen was very good. It was very well planned with challenging tasks. Pupils played roles such as residents, holiday makers and members of local government in order to understand how coastal erosion and developments would have different effects on people. The teacher was knowledgeable, and very good teamwork with the learning support assistant ensured all groups were included well in the debate. This lesson was very effective for developing speaking and listening skills and pupils showed a mature attitude to the issues raised.

93. Resources are good. There are good aerial pictures of the locality and a good supply of maps. Every class has a globe. Good use is made of visits and the local environment to enhance the geography curriculum. ICT is used appropriately, for example to present information charts on work and leisure activities, or as a learning aid using the 'data projector' and screen.

## **HISTORY**

94. Pupils attain good standards and they achieve well in all year groups. This is good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be satisfactory.

95. By the end of Year 2, pupils know about several famous people from the recent and more distant past such as Elvis Presley and Guy Fawkes. They understand the circumstances which led up to the Gunpowder Plot and the some of the reasons why people are famous. They have good knowledge of how the present Queen became monarch and, from this, understand a simple family tree. In Years 3 to 6, pupils know about the Saxons and the Vikings and understand the difference between settlers and invaders. They re-tell the story of Beowulf and discuss the reason why Vikings attacked monasteries. Pupils have compared the Viking alphabet with our modern one. In their study of life in Tudor times, pupils in Years 3 and 4 describe the types of homes people lived in, the clothes they wore and the food they ate. They knowledgeably describe how people lived, for example how life in a rich household compared with that in a poor one, or the occupations of such people as yeomen. Older pupils know about daily life in Victorian times, and the influence of famous characters such as Lord Shaftesbury and Dr Barnardo. They have a good understanding of many aspects of life at that time. For example, they have made a time line relating to work laws and compared a day in the life of a Victorian school with their own day. Their study of the Victorian era is extended in literacy lessons where pupils are reading and comparing the works of Victorian authors. Work completed on life since the 1930s shows that pupils have a good understanding of such issues as the causes and effects of World War 2.

96. In the lessons seen, the teaching was good. Evidence from completed work shows that the rate of learning has been good over the year. Teachers are knowledgeable and plan their lessons well. They make very good use of available resources from museum loan services. This was particularly effective in a lesson on Tudors, in which excellent artefacts fascinated the pupils. Well-prepared tasks enabled the pupils to use these as evidence for life in the past. ICT is used well for research and for presentation. Year 5/6 pupils prepared a computer controlled slide show about leisure pursuits since the 1930s. In a lesson for Years 1 and 2, ICT was also used effectively to help pupils locate and learn about the Royal line of succession from a website on the Internet. Visits are well used to enhance the curriculum, as in a recent visit to Hever Castle. Pupils have a very positive attitude to history and show great interest during lessons. Although there is no formal assessment system for evaluating and recording progress, teachers make good use of the plenary sessions at the end of each lesson to assess pupils' learning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

97. Attainment in ICT is broadly in line with that expected nationally at the end of Years 2 and 6, and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. This represents good improvement from the last inspection, when standards were unsatisfactory and there were inadequacies in the resources available. Equipment and software have been significantly improved and are now good.

98. By the end of Year 2, pupils search for information stored on a CDROM and on an Internet site. With support, they use 'key' words when making a search, for example when investigating the Royal Family tree on a Jubilee site. Pupils combine images stored on the computer with their writing and use 'paint' tools to create their own pictures. They type in commands to move a 'roamer' (controllable floor robot) and present information in different ways, for example by entering information about different coloured eyes in their class and printing out a pictogram. At the end of Year 6 pupils use additional equipment which includes an electronic microscope, a scanner and a digital camera. They use the computer to present information, such as that on leisure since the 1930s, in the form of a computer generated slide show. Pupils select different graphics and text styles, and use techniques such as 'hyperlinks' to move from one slide to the next. Pupils use the Internet to support their learning, for example when investigating coastal erosion and E-mailing pen pals in Wales. They know how to enter data into the computer, and frame questions to gain information, for example from a database about birds. By the end of Year 6, pupils have used ICT to support their learning in all subjects.

99. The quality of teaching is good overall and this is directly linked to pupils' improved learning and the general rise in standards. In the lessons seen, teachers made very good use of a computer-linked 'data projector' which enabled them to explain processes, and to display information on a large screen. In a very good lesson for Years 1 and 2, the teacher constantly reinforced pupils' learning. For example, she asked pupils to explain what 'www' means and explained the importance of 'key words' when looking for information. The use of correct subject vocabulary such as 'icon', 'caption' and 'search' was encouraged throughout the session. Very well prepared work-cards with highlighted key words enabled each group to successfully search for different information on CD ROMS. Teachers displayed good subject knowledge in the aspects of ICT that they taught. For example, in a control technology lesson in Years 5 and 6, pupils were taught how to write sequences of commands for controlling a set of traffic lights connected to the computer. Pupils enthusiastically completed their own sequences and some took pride in demonstrating them to the rest of the class. In some lessons ICT was used well as another learning resource. For example, in science, one group used a computer to classify the harmfulness of various substances. However, this was not always the case and during the inspection a few opportunities were missed to use ICT in this positive way.

100. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. There is a clear focus on raising standards, improving resources and continuing the training of all staff, including teaching assistants. Much has been successfully achieved in a short time through careful planning and the shared ambition of staff to succeed. Plans for the future include the provision of a set of laptops that can be moved around the school. This would enable whole classes to work on ICT at the same time and further improve the rate of learning. All staff have been involved in assessment activities where work is evaluated to see if it matches the level expected in the National Curriculum. Teachers have a clear understanding of pupils' learning and adapt lesson planning to meet their classes' needs. Individual pupil records have been introduced for the oldest class but there is no systematically recorded information to track pupils' progress in other year groups. This limits the school's ability to evaluate the success of learning and make any necessary changes to the ICT curriculum.

## **MUSIC**

101. There was insufficient music seen to make an overall judgement on pupils' attainment. In the lessons seen, teaching and learning were very good and pupils were achieving well. In Years 5 and 6, pupils show a good knowledge of rhythm and beat. They kept a steady beat, whilst incorporating other beats. They worked well in pairs and as a whole class, when clapping to keep a beat or when confidently using instruments. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 discussed how to change sounds on instruments by playing long or short, high or low, quiet or loud. In groups, they demonstrated good creativity when they composed pieces of music to represent different parts of a storm. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed these lessons. Pupils' singing was of a satisfactory standard in hymn practice.

102. In the lessons seen, teachers showed good subject knowledge which enabled them to teach with confidence using correct musical vocabulary and improving the quality of work. For example, they selectively used pupils' own ideas on how to improve beat and rhythm. The lessons were very well structured and imaginatively presented which kept pupils interested for the whole session.

103. The subject is well led to ensure there is a balanced curriculum and that opportunities are given for performance. At Christmas, the choir performs at several retirement homes and, at the end of the school year, there is a musical presentation in which both staff and pupils participate. Pupils have also performed in Zulu, French and Czech at music festivals. Resources are very good and give pupils a range of experience, including practice with instruments from other cultures. There is a weekly

recorder group to extend learning for older pupils. Overall, the strengths of musical provision have been maintained since the last inspection.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)**

104. Too few lessons were observed to make valid judgements about overall standards and the quality of teaching in the subject. In those aspects of the subject seen, standards were similar to those of the last inspection. However, overall improvement in the subject has been restricted because the planned development of the accommodation and facilities has yet to take place.

105. In both the Year1/2 and Years 5/6 lessons seen, pupils practised a variety of small ball skills in the village hall. Their skills in close throwing and catching, dribbling and aiming were similar to those expected for their ages. The teachers had organised the groups and activities well and this kept the pupils active for the whole of the session. There was a good focus on the teaching of skills. Higher attaining pupils were given extra challenge, for example when in the younger class they were asked to change angles and move around when bounce passing a ball in a hoop. Teaching assistants provided good support, giving guidance where necessary and ensuring all pupils were fully included in activities. In both lessons pupils were asked to co-operate in small-group tasks which supported their social development well. ICT has been suitably used by older pupils to record performance data in various athletic activities.

106. Teachers are resourceful and make the best use of the areas available to them for PE. However, the lack of an equipped school hall and inadequate outdoor facilities restrict the range of learning opportunities. Pupils use the village hall for indoor PE. This provides adequate space but has no large equipment so pupils can develop a full range of physical skills, for example by developing their gymnastic capabilities at different levels. The field at the rear of the school is very small and unsuitable for team games with the older pupils. The playground at the front of the school provides some extra space but is too near the main road and school building, and inhibits the development of some games skills. For example, older pupils cannot develop a good awareness of space in team games nor can they practise hitting balls (other than light or foam ones) with any force.

107. The subject is well led with a clear plan for development. Finance has been reserved and appropriate new resources identified for the improved accommodation. Pupils of all ages have been interviewed about PE and their responses have provided useful information to the co-ordinator for monitoring the success of learning. Clubs, and competitions with other schools in hockey, athletics, football and swimming make a good contribution to pupils' learning. A wider range is planned when the school's facilities are improved. Good links with other organisations have widened learning opportunities for pupils. For example, the local football and hockey clubs have provided training and the school has participated in Commonwealth Athletics and Dance Days.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)**

108. By the end of Year 6, evidence from pupils' work and the lessons observed shows that pupils attain standards which are in line with those set out in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory. At the end of Year 2, standards are above the expected level and pupils achieve well because of high quality teaching. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Standards were then below expectations by Year 6; not enough time was given to teaching the subject, there was insufficient emphasis on different faiths, and resources were unsatisfactory. All these weaknesses have been rectified successfully.

109. Throughout the school, pupils learn about, and from, different religions, and know the similarities in them. This contributes well to pupils' tolerance and understanding of other faiths within our society. Building on the good knowledge children acquire in the reception class, pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about Christianity and the teachings and parables of Jesus. They understand that Baptism is the initiation ceremony for membership of the Christian Church. Pupils understand the main feasts of Christianity and Judaism. They know many of the signs and symbols of Christianity, and explain clearly the meaning of the cross. Pupils also explain the symbols used in Judaism, such as the Seder plate, and the Torah. Pupils have a good knowledge of the main events in Judaism, such as the Exodus and Moses and the Ten Commandments. By the end of Year 6, pupils explain various religious symbols and know that major events in life are celebrated in different faiths. For example, they understand the origins, beliefs and customs of Sikhism and how they affect the daily lives of Sikhs. Pupils know the main teachings of Jesus and celebrations in the Christian Church, and relate them to their own lives.

110. The quality of teaching and learning observed was good overall, with some excellent teaching observed in Years 1 and 2. Teachers are knowledgeable and confident in teaching religious education. In an excellent lesson in Years 1 and 2, very well planned activities, using religious artefacts from Judaism and Christianity, generated very high levels of pupil interest. Pupils also listened with rapt attention as the teacher explained her personal experience in South Africa when, during the troubles, the dove was used as a symbol of peace between schools. In another lesson, older pupils found it difficult to settle because the session was at the end of the afternoon, following a PE lesson.

111. During the year, younger pupils acted out a baptism in the local church with the vicar 'baptising' a doll. This was very good reinforcement of the knowledge gained in the classroom. Pupils develop their writing skills well in religious education, especially when explaining various beliefs and teachings. Speaking skills and drama are used well to support learning, such as during the role-play of a wedding ceremony in Years 3 and 4. Assemblies reinforce learning. During the inspection, they were focused on developing caring attitudes and respect for others and their beliefs. The subject is led well to ensure the improvements made since the last inspection are maintained. A new scheme of work, linked to the locally agreed syllabus, gives helpful guidance to teachers. Resources are very good, with many artefacts to support the teaching of world religions. There is no formal assessment of pupils' progress in religious education. However, the plenary sessions at the end of each lesson are used well to assess learning.