

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **LENHAM COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Lenham, Maidstone

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118294

Headteacher: Mrs H Parker

Reporting inspector: R E G Cross  
15917

Dates of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2000

Inspection number: 224831

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
School address:	Ham Lane Lenham Maidstone Kent
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Telephone number:	01622 858260
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Lenham CP School
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S Nahab
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
R E G Cross, 15917	Registered inspector	Geography, physical education.	What sort of school is it? How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular or other opportunities offered to pupils? How well is the school led and managed?
A West, 9588	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
T F Elston, 20704	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, art, pupils with special educational needs, equality of opportunity.	
Mrs R L Johns, 22745	Team inspector	English, music, religious education, English as an additional language.	The school's results and achievements.
J Tate, 27644	Team inspector	Science, design and technology, history, children aged under five.	

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The Registrar, Inspection Quality Division, The Office for Standards in Education,

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Lenham Primary school educates boys and girls aged between four and 11 years. There are 192 pupils on roll altogether, which is smaller than most other schools of its type. Sixteen of the pupils attend on a part-time basis and, altogether, there are 30 pupils who are in the same class in the Foundation Stage. The school has a waiting list for pupils to enter some classes. The school has 62 pupils on its register of special educational needs which is well above the national average. Three pupils have statements of special educational need which is above the national average. The school has 16 more boys than girls on roll and this imbalance is particularly noticeable in Year 3 and 6. Fewer than one per cent of the pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds which is low compared with most schools. One of the pupils speaks English fluently as an additional language. Almost 13 per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals which is below the national average. During the last school year, 12 pupils entered the school other than at the usual time of first admission and eight left it at times which were not those of the normal leaving or transfer for most pupils. Pupils enter the school at average levels of attainment.

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

This is a good school. The leadership and management of the school are very good and the quality of the teaching is consistently good. These factors have given rise to improving standards. In 1999, the school was officially recognised by the Secretary of State for Education and Employment as having achieved significantly improved results over the previous four years. The findings of the inspection show a continued improvement in standards and standards in mathematics and science are above average in Year 6. However, there are weaknesses in writing and information and communication technology that the school has plans to address. The school gives good value for money.

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

- The very good leadership and management of the school by the headteacher, other staff with management responsibilities and the governors promote high and improving standards for the pupils.
- The consistently good quality of teaching throughout the school helps the pupils to make good progress.
- The good provision made for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development promotes the very good behaviour and relationships that they show.
- The school has very good procedures for child protection and ensuring the pupils' welfare which makes them secure and confident learners.
- The school's good relationships with parents greatly assist the progress which the pupils make.
- The good quality provision made for pupils with special educational needs helps them to reach good standards relative to their previous attainment.

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

- The standards which the pupils attain in writing which are currently below average, for example, because their skills are not used widely enough in all aspects of the curriculum.
- The standards which the pupils reach in information and communication technology which are also below average largely due to too few resources to promote adequate progress.
- The standards reached by more able pupils who are not fully challenged in every aspect of their work.

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

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

The school was last inspected in January 1997 and, since then, it has made a very good improvement. The findings of the last inspection indicated that the standards attained by the pupils required some improvement. In the end of Key Stage 2 national tests in 2000, the standards reached by the pupils were above average in mathematics and in science and below average in English when compared with all schools. In the 1997 tests, standards were below average in science and English and average in mathematics. The findings of this inspection agree with the 2000 test results but also show that in Year 6 in English, standards are average in reading, speaking and listening and that only the writing aspect of the subject is below average. In all other subjects, except geography and history where they are now average and information and communication technology where they are now below average, standards are at least as good as they were in 1997. At the time

of the last inspection, 11 per cent of the teaching was very good or better, 97 per cent at least satisfactory and three per cent unsatisfactory. The present inspection finds that none of the teaching is unsatisfactory and that 19 per cent is very good. The quality of the management and efficiency of the school was judged to be very good in 1997, which is the same judgement as that of this inspection. This strength of the leadership and management is indicated by the improvements already considered and by the way in which the key issues from the last inspection have been addressed. For example, curricular provision for children in the Foundation Stage now covers all of the required areas and standards in design and technology at Key Stage 2 have been raised. The school took a conscious decision not to address the issue relating to the development of assessment procedures for all subjects in order to concentrate on improving standards in English, mathematics and science. The school has a very good capacity to continue to improve because of its very high quality leadership and management and the effective shared commitment which it has to improvement.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	B	C	D	C
mathematics	B	B	B	A
science	C	C	B	B

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

The information shows that standards have been consistently above average in mathematics and that, in science, standards have risen since 1998. Standards in English have fallen due largely to weaknesses in writing which the school has identified and is addressing. The school comfortably exceeded its targets for the percentage of pupils expected to reach Level 4 and above in the tests in English and mathematics in 2000 but few pupils reached the higher Level 5 in writing. The pupils in the present Year 6 have had their education disrupted during their progress through the school because of behavioural difficulties experienced in the class in the past. In view of this, the school has reduced its target in English and has the same target in mathematics for the tests in 2001. The findings of the inspection are that these targets, particularly in English, are not demanding enough. In Year 6, standards are above average in mathematics, including numeracy, science, art and physical education and average in all other subjects, including literacy, except in information and communication technology where standards are below average. Pupils generally have basic word-processing skills, and change the size and appearance of text with reasonable confidence but their keyboard skills are slow for their ages, and many have to search for the shift and caps lock keys. In English, standards in writing are also below average. The pupils' writing skills are not developed sufficiently in a number of subjects and their ability to redraft their work in order to improve it is unsatisfactory. The judgements of the inspection reflect the school's national test results except in English where the difference is explained by the fact that the inspection takes the pupils' speaking and listening skills into account.

In Year 2, the findings of the inspection are that standards are above average in mathematics, science and art and average in all other subjects, including literacy and numeracy, except information and communication technology where they are below average. Children in the Foundation Stage show average levels of attainment in all aspects of their learning but are on course to reach above average levels by the time that they enter Key Stage 1. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and reach good standards relative to their previous levels of attainment.

By the time that they leave the school, most pupils reach good standards compared with their attainment on entry to the school. However, more able pupils do not always reach the highest standards of which they are capable.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very eager to come to school and are keen to work. They work together well in pairs and in groups. The pupils' attitudes to the school support their learning very well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The pupils behave very well in class and around the school and on school visits. This means that lessons are orderly and that teachers make the best use of the time available to help the children to progress.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils and staff get on very well together and this creates a happy school where learning flourishes. There are too few opportunities for pupils to show initiative and their research skills are not fully developed. Pupils handle the opportunities that they are given to show initiative with enthusiasm.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average and unauthorised absence is below average. Lessons start promptly and few pupils are late. These factors greatly assist their learning.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

During the inspection, 19 per cent of the teaching observed was very good and all of it was at least satisfactory. Consistently good teaching was seen in the Foundation Stage where over 80 per cent was at least good and in Key Stage 2 where almost 60 per cent was at least good. The major strengths of the teaching throughout the school are the way in which the pupils are managed and controlled, the pace of lessons, the use of suitable resources to assist the pupils' learning and the effectiveness of the teaching methods used. The most significant weaknesses are a failure to stretch the most able at all times and not making sure that boys and girls are able to make a similar contribution to lessons where classes have a gender imbalance. The quality of the teaching of English, including literacy, is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching of mathematics and numeracy is good at both key stages except for numeracy at Key Stage 1 where it is satisfactory. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good and promotes a similar rate of progress for these pupils. Throughout the school, the needs of all pupils, apart from some more able, are well met.

The quality of the pupils' learning and progress mirrors the quality of the teaching and is good in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2 and satisfactory in Key Stage 1. Strengths of the pupils' learning throughout the school are the effort which they put into their work and the understanding they show of what they are expected to do. In the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 2, the pace at which the pupils work and the speed with which they extend their understanding are also strengths in their learning. These features are not as strong at Key Stage 1 as they are satisfactory. Throughout the school, the independence and research skills which pupils show are weaker than other aspects of their learning although satisfactory overall.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Curricular provision is broad and balanced except that a minor element of information and communication technology does not meet requirements at Key Stage 2. For children aged under five and those at Key Stage 1, curricular provision is good. The school has made a positive start to the National Numeracy Strategy, which has raised standards in numeracy throughout the school. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has raised standards in reading but there are still weaknesses in the pupils' attainment in writing which the school has plans to address. Links with the community and other schools enrich pupils' learning. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory although there are weaknesses, for example, girls are not always encouraged to play a full part in lessons in classes where there are more boys than girls.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Early identification of these pupils allows the school to devise clear targets for pupils to aim for. The help they receive in classes is good and pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Sometimes pupils are withdrawn from activities for additional support and miss the work covered by other children.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Pupils' spiritual awareness is fostered well by acts of worship and within the caring ethos of the school. Their behaviour is very good as they respond to the high expectations set by the school. Pupils are taught to consider the impact of their actions on others and to respect and value differences. The school enables pupils to have a good knowledge of their own heritage and of the diversity of other cultures and beliefs.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils very well. It has very good health and safety and child protection procedures. Teachers know the pupils well and take great care to ensure their welfare. This gives them confidence and security which greatly aid their learning. Assessment procedures are good and well used in English, mathematics and science but are underdeveloped in other subjects. They are being well developed in the Foundation Stage.

The school works well with parents who have positive views of the school which support the progress made by the children.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The very strong leadership and management of the headteacher, who is very well supported by other staff with management responsibilities, give the school a clear and an effective focus on improvement and raising standards. There is a strong team spirit amongst the staff of the school which ensures that its aims and values are very well implemented. The areas identified for improvement in the school improvement plan closely match those found by this inspection and effective steps are taken to achieve these targets.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors do a very good job. They are well aware of the strong points of the school and where improvement is required and how to bring this about. For example, their Finance Committee reorganised the use of funding provided for the development of information and communication technology so efficiently that the school obtained an additional computer, a digital camera and a scanner. The governors use their individual skills well to support the school, organise their activities effectively and attend suitable training. There are minor omissions in statutory information provided to parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school carefully analyses assessment data from a range of tests and successfully uses the information obtained to raise standards, for example, in mathematics and science. The quality of teaching is satisfactorily monitored and evaluated. The headteacher is well aware of strengths and weakness in performance and takes suitable action to secure improvements. There are weaknesses in the monitoring of equality of opportunity and the effectiveness of the monitoring of standards in writing.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Resources are well used to promote the pupils' progress and careful thought is given to linking expenditure to the school improvement plan. For example, after detailed consideration, a new mathematics scheme was bought in September 1999. The scheme was warmly received by teachers and pupils and work in numeracy was monitored by the headteacher and a governor. The pupils' standards in the 2000 national tests in mathematics showed a clear improvement. Additional value for money is obtained as the school is entitled to updated versions of sections of the scheme. Support staff are not always deployed to the best effect and information and communication technology is not fully developed.

The school is well staffed and its accommodation and resources are adequate to support the teaching of the curriculum. The mobile classroom inhibits the teaching of aspects of the National Curriculum particularly practical subjects because of the lack of sufficient space. There are training needs for some staff in information and communication technology and shortages of resources in this subject.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of the leadership and management of the school.</li> <li>• The fact that their children like school.</li> <li>• The way the school helps their children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The high quality of the behaviour in the school.</li> <li>• The high expectations which the school has of their children.</li> <li>• The good quality of the teaching.</li> <li>• The good progress which their children make.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of extracurricular activities offered to the pupils.</li> <li>• The amount of homework provided.</li> <li>• The information that they are given about how their children are getting on.</li> </ul>

The findings of the inspection agree with the positive views expressed by the parents. In addition, they find that provision for extracurricular activities is satisfactory overall although it is limited at Key Stage 1. The findings of the inspection also show that a suitable amount of homework is provided and that parents are given appropriate information about how their children are getting on. However, the inspection also recognises that the school has not made its provision in these three areas clear to a small but significant number of parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children enter the Foundation Stage at average levels of attainment. The quality of teaching and the quality of their learning are good and they are making good progress. As the children and their teacher have only been in the school since the start of this term there has not yet been enough time to improve the standards reached by the children. However, they are on course to reach above average levels in all areas of the curriculum by the end of the Foundation Stage although, at present, standards in all aspects of the curriculum are average. This is an improvement on the findings of the school's previous inspection particularly in personal, social and emotional development and creative development where standards were below average. This improvement indicates the early effects of better quality teaching and learning. Children are becoming more independent and are organising themselves and their activities in a responsible way. They socialise very well and listen to the contributions of others in a quietly and offer their own as appropriate. They have a keen interest in stories and can listen carefully for extended periods of time. This love of stories, and of particular books, is already evident. Children are confident and take part in discussions eagerly. In physical education, children change quickly and are aware of the need to behave well. Their listening skills in the hall are generally good and they participate fully in all the activities, including the tidying away of resources.

2. In the end of Key Stage 1 tests in 2000, standards were average compared with all schools and with similar schools in reading. In writing, they were below average compared with all schools and well below average compared with similar schools and, in mathematics, they were below average compared with all schools and with similar schools. Standards in all of these subjects have risen compared with 1997 but they have fallen in writing when 1999 and 2000 are compared. In science, the assessments made by teachers were well above average at Level 2 and above.

3. The findings of the inspection are that, in Year 2, the pupils reach above average standards in mathematics, science and art and average standards in all other subjects, including literacy and numeracy, except in information and communication technology where standards are below average. Within English, standards in reading are average and standards in writing are below average. Compared with the findings of the school's previous inspection, standards are higher in mathematics, science and art, lower in information and communication technology, geography and history and similar in all other subjects. Improved standards in science and art are due to the school's successful efforts to raise standards in these subjects to the same level as those in Key Stage 2. Pupils at Key Stage 1 reach satisfactory standards overall.

4. In Key Stage 1, in Year 2, when pupils discussed the poem 'Wet playtime' they listened very attentively and were aware of the importance of taking turns and valuing the contributions of others. Some pupils spoke confidently and audibly with interesting vocabulary but others remained passive. In Key Stage 1, pupils handle books confidently and take them home regularly to practise their skills. Average pupils in Year 2 have a growing awareness of the structure of a story and most can write a description of a length appropriate to their age as in their work on 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory'. More able pupils use a broad vocabulary and are beginning to develop interesting ideas but the less able use a narrow range of words and their sentence structure is not always coherent. Handwriting is usually carried out carefully but size and shape are not always consistent. Accuracy in spelling and punctuation is also variable. In mathematics, pupils have a sound knowledge of the two times table, but only a few more able pupils can answer, for example, seven times two without having to work it out. They work out money problems well and find the smallest number of coins to make 12 pence. Pupils' understanding of shape and measure is above average. They measure plants accurately in centimetres, and estimate length with good skill. Too few pupils reach above average standards in

mathematics at Key Stage 1. In science, the pupils are able to predict, for example, whether a pot would hold a liquid or not and if not, then why it would not. They understand the importance of healthy eating and balanced meals and, when working with clay, they use their senses to describe the material. The pupils vary the strength of torchlight successfully to identify everyday objects placed in a large sealed box. Assessment procedures in science at this key stage are not good enough for all pupils, especially the more able, to be fully extended.

5. In information and communication technology, pupils have an average understanding of how to turn on the computer and operate the mouse but they enter their text slowly and few show confidence in amending their work. In physical education, they know how to hold a hockey stick correctly, how to pass accurately with it and how to roll a ball properly but their skills of throwing and catching are below average. In geography, pupils understand shopping, land use and the reasons to live, or not to live, on small a island in the context of the fictional island of Struay but their independent research skills, particularly for more able pupils, are not sufficiently developed. In art in Year 2, pupils produce lively work linked to their science topic on the solar system but their skill at evaluating their own and others' work is not well developed. In history in Year 2, the pupils have a sound knowledge of the two main wars of the twentieth century and Remembrance Sunday but do not fully apply their writing skills in this subject. In design and technology, they appropriately use a variety of materials to discover ways of attaching one piece of material to another but show far less understanding about the preparation of vegetables and about which fruit can be eaten cooked. In religious education, pupils in Year 2 understand why Hindus celebrate Divali but have insufficient opportunities to develop religious understanding through discussion about the wonder and mystery of the natural world. In music, the pupils enjoy playing percussion instruments and singing in assembly but their abilities to respond to and appraise music are underdeveloped.

6. In the end of Key Stage 2 national tests, standards have been consistently above average in mathematics and, in science, they have risen since 1998. Standards in English have fallen due mainly to weaknesses in writing and under achievement by girls in the tests. In the national tests in 2000, standards in English compared with all schools were below average but, compared with similar schools, they were average. In mathematics and science, compared with all schools, standards were above average. The findings of the inspection agree with these judgements except in English where the difference is explained by the fact that the inspection takes the pupils' speaking and listening skills into account. Compared with similar schools, standards in mathematics were well above average and, in science, they were above average. National data showing the pupils' progress between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 show that the pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science was well above average compared with similar schools. The school comfortably exceeded its targets for the percentage of pupils expected to reach Level 4 and above in the tests in English and mathematics in 2000 although few pupils reached the higher Level 5 in writing. In spite of this, it has reduced its target for Level 4 and above in English and has the same target in mathematics for the tests in 2001. These targets are not sufficiently demanding.

7. The findings of the inspection are that, in Year 6, the pupils reach above average standards in mathematics, including numeracy, science, art, and physical education and average standards in all other subjects, including literacy, except in information and communication technology where they are below average. Within English, standards in writing are below average. Since the school's last OFSTED inspection, standards have improved in mathematics and design and technology. Standards have fallen in information and communication technology, history and geography and are the same in all other subjects. Standards have improved in design and technology because of the school's effective response to the key issue for action from the last inspection. The pupils reach good standards at Key Stage 2. They enter the school at average standards and leave it at above average levels overall.

8. In English in Key Stage 2, pupils continue to be active and responsive listeners and show good respect for the views of others. In a Year 6 personal, social and health education lesson, the discussion was dominated by more articulate pupils whilst others, mainly girls, remained passive. In Year 6, the pupils read with fluency and accuracy and evaluate the texts that they read with growing competence. Many give a concise summary of events and discuss characters in some detail but even more able pupils cannot give a simple prediction of possible outcomes. In Year 6, pupils write in an appropriate range of forms including newspaper reports, diaries, poetry, reviews, stories and biography. Pupils in Key Stage 2 do not develop their ideas in sufficient detail or have the skills and confidence to tackle extended pieces. The analysis of work, in particular, showed the lack of emphasis placed by the school on the importance of pupils planning, drafting, editing and refining their written work. In mathematics, pupils convert decimals to fractions and use and explain their mental strategies well. Some pupils have difficulty in using approximation strategies in multiplication and division. The pupils demonstrate their good understanding of shape as they explore their angles, radius and circumference, and construct accurate three-dimensional shapes. They collect information and record it appropriately using line graphs. In science, the pupils understand the principles of fair testing and use this understanding to determine how quickly salt will dissolve in water by changing one variable in the process each time the test is repeated. However, not all pupils are able to devise, carry out and evaluate their own investigations. They know that animals and plants adapt to and suit differing environments. Pupils understand different electrical circuits and the function of a switch.

9. In information and communication technology, pupils generally have basic word-processing skills but their keyboard skills are still slow for their ages, and many still have to search for the shift and caps lock keys. In physical education, they have good throwing, catching and feinting skills when passing a bean bag but their evaluation of performance does not sufficiently extend beyond identifying what is done well. In geography, pupils understand the effect of tourism on the environment but their literacy skills are not applied well enough in this subject. In art in Year 6, pupils' drawing skills are illustrated by their excellent sketches of athletes, showing how their joints move, and the definition of their muscles but their knowledge of multicultural art is under developed. In history in Year 6, the pupils have a sound insight into the way of life, beliefs and achievements of Ancient Greece but their research skills are not fully developed. In design and technology, Year 6 pupils have successfully investigated a range of structures through building and assessing the strengths and weaknesses of several types but insufficient attention is given to developing their finishing techniques to improve the quality of their products. In religious education, pupils in Year 6 understand how religious buildings reflect beliefs and values but overuse of worksheets leads to superficial coverage of some topics. In music, pupils sing with good control of rhythm and pitch but do not use information and communication technology sufficiently in the subject.

10. At both key stages, standards in mathematics have risen because of the effect of the National Numeracy Strategy. Standards in information and communication technology have fallen due to inadequate resources. Those in history and geography are lower because of the school's concentration on raising standards in English, mathematics and science in response to the suspension of the full National Curriculum requirements in history and geography. In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, more able pupils are not fully challenged in some subjects, for example, religious education and geography. Throughout the school, literacy skills are not sufficiently well used in many subjects of the curriculum, which has an adverse effect on the standards that the pupils, particularly boys, achieve in writing. Information and communication technology is well used in some subjects where resources are adequate but not in others because of lack of suitable software.

11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and reach good standards for their previous attainment. These pupils do well and all attain, or come close to, national standards by the time they take the national assessment tests in Year 6. Parents are very pleased with their children's rate of progress, and the extent to which they grow in confidence. Pupils make particularly good

progress in literacy and numeracy, where the recently introduced strategies are giving them good practice in the basic skills of reading and number.

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

12. In the previous inspection, pupils' attitudes and behaviour in the school were judged as good. In this inspection, these aspects of the school are very good and support teaching and learning very well. Throughout the school, pupils, including those with special educational needs, are keen, enthusiastic and eager to come to school. They listen attentively, follow instructions and settle quickly to the task given. Children of all abilities concentrate hard, and work independently and in differing group situations. For example, in mathematics, they worked well in pairs sharing views and valuing each other's work. In physical education, they were seen acting in a sportsmanlike way and in a Year 6 science lesson, pupils were very mature when they shared ideas and worked collaboratively.

13. Pupils of all abilities are interested in the life of the school and behave very well, complying with school and class rules. They know right from wrong and are polite and courteous to teachers, their peers and to visitors. Pupils form orderly queues, wait their turn and open doors for others. Behaviour in the dining hall, during assembly and while they move about the school is very good. Pupils form very good relationships with their peers and with adults and are also caring in their support for those with special educational needs. No examples of any oppressive behaviour, bullying, sexism or racism were seen during the inspection and the great majority of pupils understand the impact of their behaviour on others.

14. Pupils handle resources well and no examples of damage or graffiti were seen during the inspection. When on outside visits and when attending the swimming pool, pupils have been praised for their exemplary behaviour. They discuss varied topics and accept that others may have a different view or belief from their own. The inspection team found that pupils have limited opportunities to take responsibilities or to display initiative. When they are given the chance to help and assist others, they accept readily and enter into the task wholeheartedly. Pupils were seen helping those younger than themselves or with special educational needs and were also seen assisting with the administration and running of the school.

15. Children in the Foundation Stage have positive attitudes towards their work and play. They interact with each other, and with their teacher and assistant, very well indeed. Behaviour is good. Children enjoy coming to school and take full benefit from the range of activities, which is provided for them. Developing initiative and personal responsibility in learning is strongly encouraged by the teacher and, even though the children have only attended school for a short time, they organise themselves very well.

16. In the previous inspection, pupils' attendance was described as good. The school has maintained this position and attendance is again good. Authorised and unauthorised absences have been steadily reduced and are now lower than the national averages. The registration of pupils at the start of sessions is handled efficiently and pupils settle down to work promptly and with little fuss. This contributes positively to the learning process. Few pupils are late.

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

17. The quality of teaching and learning is good although there is a degree of variation between different parts of the school in that it is good at the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2 and satisfactory at Key Stage 1. This judgement is broadly the same as that made by the school's previous OFSTED inspection, which found that the quality of teaching was "generally high". However, during that inspection, 11 per cent of the teaching was very good or better, 97 per cent at least satisfactory and three per cent unsatisfactory. In this inspection, 47 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. The quality of teaching was very good in 19 per cent of these lessons, good in 57 per cent and satisfactory in 43 per cent. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. These figures represent a clear improvement compared with those of the last inspection. The quality of learning closely reflects the figures and

judgements for the quality of teaching. There is no difference between the overall judgements for teaching and learning and those for boys and girls and pupils of different ethnicity. The needs of all pupils, apart from some more able, are well met.

18. The major strengths of the teaching throughout the school are the way in which the pupils are managed and controlled, the pace of lessons, the use of suitable resources to assist the pupils' learning and the effectiveness of the teaching methods used. The most significant weaknesses are a failure to stretch the most able at all times and not making sure that boys and girls are able to make a similar contribution to lessons where classes have a gender imbalance. Strengths of the pupils' learning throughout the school are the effort which they put into their work and the understanding they show of what they are expected to do. In the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 2, the pace at which the pupils work and the speed with which they extend their understanding are also strengths in their learning. These features are only satisfactory at Key Stage 1. Throughout the school, the independence and research skills which pupils show are weaker than other aspects of their learning although satisfactory overall.

19. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils in the Foundation Stage is good in all areas of learning. This judgement is an improvement on the findings of the school's last OFSTED inspection which judged teaching to be satisfactory. During this inspection, six observations of children in the Foundation Stage were made. One lesson was very good, four good and one satisfactory. The quality of the teaching promotes good progress although, at present, the children are still at the average levels of attainment at which they entered the school. This is because they and their teacher have been in the school for less than three months and there has not been enough time to raise the standard at which the children entered the school. Teachers' planning, the way basic skills are taught, the management of the children and the use of support staff are good. Good organisational skills and clarity of learning objectives are having a positive impact upon the children. All aspects of the relevant programme of work for children in this stage are given due attention, including an emphasis on the development of personal responsibility and initiative. The use of assessment to monitor the progress and development of the children is an improving area. The existing systems are being refined to enable the teacher to plan even more effectively.

20. At Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and pupils make suitable progress and reach sound standards. No clear judgement about the quality of teaching at this key stage was made by the previous inspection. During this inspection, 13 observations were made at Key Stage 1. The teaching was very good in three, good in three and satisfactory in seven. At this key stage, the quality of teaching is good in mathematics, science and art and satisfactory in all other subjects including literacy and numeracy. The quality of learning is identical except that it is unsatisfactory in information and communication technology largely because there are too few resources to allow the pupils to develop the skills that they are taught and some training needs.

21. A Year 1 numeracy lesson based on working out numbers to make five showed the satisfactory manner in which the National Numeracy Strategy is being implemented by the school at Key Stage 1 and the general features of the teaching at this key stage. A good start to the lesson, with an interesting warm-up activity in which the pupils improved the speed and accuracy of their mathematical answers was made after they had settled down following a music lesson. The teacher had sound control of the pupils but some became restless after ten minutes on the carpet, which slowed down the pace of learning. The pupils quickly understood what was required in order to make numbers total five. When they were asked, "How much more do we need to make 3p into 5p?" almost all of them knew the answer. The teacher's sound knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy ensured that the skills taught were followed by activities, which promoted the pupils' understanding and helped them to develop a feel for numbers. The pace of the lesson picked up during group work and the pupils were soon working out numbers to total four, five and six. The teacher monitored the groups well except in one instance where the pupils in a particular group worked in fits

and starts until noticed by the teacher. Pupils with special educational needs received good support, completed the task set and made good progress.

22. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good and the pupils make good progress and reach above average standards in Year 6. No clear judgement about the quality of teaching at this key stage was made by the previous inspection. During this inspection, 28 lessons were seen at Key Stage 2. Five were very good, 11 were good and 12 were satisfactory. The strongest teaching occurred in Year 4 where four out of six lessons observed were very good. The quality of teaching and learning is good in mathematics, including numeracy, science, art and physical education. It is satisfactory in all other subjects except that the quality of learning in information and communication technology is unsatisfactory due to limitations in resources for the subject and some training needs.

23. The National Numeracy Strategy is well implemented at this key stage. A Year 6 numeracy lesson about equations demonstrated this and illustrated the strengths of the teaching at Key Stage 2. The initial activity was rapid and reinforced the pupils' mental agility with numbers and their abilities to think about and understand addition and subtraction. The teacher ensured that the pupils understood what they had been taught by, for example, saying "Let me go through that again for you" when there was any doubt. The teacher had high expectations of what the pupils could achieve, had very good mathematical knowledge and was well organised so that the pace of the lesson was maintained. Once a skill had been taught the pupils applied it so that, after 20 minutes, they made good progress and were able to work out the answers to the equations that they were given.

24. At Key Stage 2, the National Literacy Strategy is soundly implemented. This was shown in a Year 5 lesson in which the teacher's skilful questioning at the start of the lesson set it in the context of a series of poetry lessons and quickly gained the pupils' attention. A good sense of fun and enjoyment was created by a reading of "Cats Can....." and the pupils appreciated how elongated letters can, for example, create a sense of a cat s-t-r-e-t-c-h-i-n-g. Pupils responded positively in the supportive environment created by the teacher's enthusiastic approach and encouraging comments. The teacher drew out the difference between similes and metaphors effectively and had good expectations regarding the work, response and behaviour of the pupils. The pupils made sound progress during this lesson but there were missed opportunities to explore language and to allow pupils to contribute their own metaphors to the lesson, which limited the speed of their progress.

25. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good and promotes a similar rate of progress for these pupils. Teaching is well focused on pupils' needs, and the targets on pupils' individual education plans are clear and realistic. Teachers' lesson plans ensure that pupils with special educational needs have appropriate work, which is challenging, but achievable. As a result, pupils make good progress, both in their grasp of the basic skills, and in their confidence and attitudes to work. Learning support assistants generally provide good support in lessons, in small group work and work with individual pupils. These well-trained assistants are not, however, always used to the best advantage when class teaching is taking place. Too often, they sit apart from the pupils when the teacher is teaching, and are required to do too little by way of assessing pupils' responses, for example, or helping individual pupils to answer questions.

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

26. Overall, the school provides a satisfactory range of relevant and worthwhile learning opportunities that promotes its aims effectively. It includes all subjects of the National Curriculum, and religious education is taught according to the locally agreed syllabus. However, statutory requirements are not fully met as there are weaknesses in information and communication technology at Key Stage 2. Inadequacies in provision for the personal and social development of children under five and weaknesses in attainment in design and technology, which were identified as key issues in the previous inspection, have been addressed with sufficient rigour and have resulted in improved standards in these areas. Total weekly teaching time is adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum although time

allocations for different subjects, for example, information and communication technology, are not always appropriate. At the time of the last inspection, pupils were introduced to French and European culture but this is now more restricted due to the time needed to implement the national strategies.

27. The school places a strong emphasis on the teaching of English and mathematics. The National Literacy Strategy has been satisfactorily implemented and teachers are confident when managing it. The literacy hour has had a significant impact on raising standards in reading across the school but there are weaknesses in the development of pupils' writing skills, which the school has targeted as a main priority for improvement. The National Numeracy Strategy is well established and is having a good effect on the standards achieved by pupils in mathematics. Numeracy skills are developed well across a range of subjects, for example, time lines in history and Rangoli patterns in religious education, but pupils do not apply their literacy skills well across the curriculum mainly because of the use of undemanding work sheets in some subjects. There are policies for all subjects and the school has introduced the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority schemes of work although it considers that adjustments need to be made in art and music. The previous inspection noted the effectiveness of teachers' planning and this is still proving generally successful in promoting standards.

28. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage are good. The planning documents are full and detailed and take full account of the recommended areas of learning. There is evidence to confirm that strategies and content are modified, when necessary, to meet the changing needs of the children. A modified National Literacy Strategy session has been introduced which enables the children to prepare gradually for the National Curriculum in Year 1. The facilities, which include a secure play and work area outside, support the curriculum which is generally well resourced.

29. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There is good provision made for pupils' literacy support through the Additional Literacy Support programme and in classes where learning support assistants work with individual pupils or with small groups. Individual education plan targets are well thought out, and are reviewed regularly. Their targets include goals for literacy, numeracy and behaviour. The needs of pupils with statements of special educational need are met well, and their annual reviews provide a good focus for further improvement.

30. A small number of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire were not satisfied with the range of activities provided by the school outside lessons. The findings of the inspection are that the school offers a satisfactory range of extracurricular activities including choir, netball, football, badminton, recorders and drama although provision is limited at Key Stage 1. These clubs are run by members of staff, parents, grandparents and pupils from another school. The curriculum is also enhanced by music tuition from a visiting specialist. Educational visits to places such as Woodchurch Farm, Chatham and Rochester and visitors like the Church Army chaplain and theatre groups are important features of the curriculum although there is no residential visit.

31. The aims of the school show a commitment to equality of opportunity in education but, in practice, insufficient attention is given on a day-to-day basis to the needs of all pupils particularly the more able and those with special educational needs. More able pupils sometimes mark time in class instead of being challenged to reach their full potential and pupils with special educational needs are occasionally withdrawn from lessons and collective worship for additional support. There is insufficient awareness and monitoring of the impact of withdrawal on pupils' access to the whole curriculum. In some classes, especially where boys outnumber girls, teachers do not have effective strategies for involving all pupils in discussions.

32. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. A good emphasis is given to the teaching of health issues, drug awareness, the benefits and disadvantages of medicines and personal safety. Year 6 pupils discuss responsibly the degree of risk in different situations ranging from playing football to picking up a discarded syringe. These elements, including sex education, are treated sensitively and are taught appropriately according to the age of the pupils.

Outside speakers, such as the representative from the railways talking about safety, make useful contributions.

33. There are very good links with the local community that make a positive contribution to pupils' experience and learning. Year 6 pupils go to the village to develop a website and take photographs of the area, and local visitors are welcomed into the school and to assemblies. Pupils are involved in the Flower Festival and the Summer Fete provides local interest. Some pupils are taking part in the local drama group production at Christmas. There are links with the village church and older pupils walked the Pilgrims' Way as part of the local parish venture to celebrate the millennium. Very good relationships with partner schools help significantly when pupils transfer from one stage of education to another. There are strong links with pre school groups and with secondary schools to which pupils transfer. Pupils have visited Swadelands School to see 'Christus natus est' whilst pupils from that school help with football training and take part in work experience in the school. There is also good liaison with consortium schools and the school hosts a football tournament in the spring. Plans are also in place to establish a 'tree trail' and to invite other schools to share the facility.

34. Pupils' very good behaviour and their positive attitudes towards their work are founded on the school's good provision overall for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In the previous inspection, there was no judgement about this aspect of the school's work although comments were very positive.

35. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Acts of worship in the school are an integral part of pupils' spiritual development and follow themes such as 'welcomes', 'school rules' and 'being special'. Worship is mainly Christian but other major religions and cultural events are acknowledged and are also reinforced in religious education lessons. Statutory requirements are met. The sensitive leadership of assemblies ensures a quiet, reverent atmosphere to which pupils respond well. Biblical stories, such as Zacchaeus meeting Jesus, emphasise to pupils that even outcasts are special to God and how they too can always rely on the support of friends and school. Pupils also have the chance to experience calm, silence, reflection and prayer, often with a lighted candle as a focus, and music, such as their singing of 'Shalom', is used effectively to develop their spiritual awareness and response. A memorable feature of provision for Year 6 pupils was their participation in Pilgrimage 2000 when they carried the pilgrim's staff, which is being conveyed from Winchester to Canterbury to 'emphasise the Christian origins of the Millennium'. However, there are limited opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to develop a sense of awe, wonder and mystery and the school does not fully use possibilities in subject such as art, music, science and literature.

36. The school makes good provision for pupils' moral development. There are clear expectations of high standards of behaviour displayed in the 'golden rules' and acceptable conduct is promoted effectively through the school's well-implemented policies. The school environment is calm and good behaviour and attitudes are acknowledged positively and are given a high profile. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong at levels appropriate to their age and negotiate their class rules at the beginning of the school year. Pupils in Year 2 decided that important rules included 'try your best', 'listen carefully' and 'be friendly and kind'. A constructive system of rewards and sanctions underpin the rules of behaviour. Rewards include stickers, class awards - 'for considerate behaviour', 'a hard working day' - and the headteacher's award is the highest distinction. All staff are good role models for pupils and the consistent and caring way in which issues are dealt with promotes pupils' appreciation of tolerance and fair play very effectively. Moral aspects are taught very well and pupils show a keen awareness of their responsibility towards property and the environment.

37. There is very good provision for pupils' social development and parents agree that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. The school has a warm, welcoming ethos, relationships are very good and all adults in the school provide an open and friendly atmosphere, which encourages the development of pupils' social skills very effectively. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated very well into a happy and caring community and into all activities offered by the

school. Pupils are taught strategies for dealing with difficult situations and ‘circle time’ allows younger ones to relate to others and share their experiences and concerns. Appropriate opportunities are taken in class for pupils to work collaboratively and to share resources and equipment. They are also given responsibility for tasks suitable for their age and development both within the classroom and in the school community such as setting up sound systems and helping younger pupils. However, in lessons, the work does not always allow them to take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils are encouraged to use initiative and to develop their awareness and commitment to the poor and disadvantaged by involvement with activities such as Water for Life when they designed and made their own collecting boxes and ‘made a splash’ for Water Aid. Other charities that pupils have supported include a ‘Hilarious Hair Day’ in aid of Leukaemia research, Kent Kids ‘Miles of Smiles’ for the Footprints Respite Home, British Legion Poppy Appeal and Shoe boxes for children in Eastern Europe.

38. Cultural provision for pupils is good. Western culture is promoted appropriately through subjects such as literacy, history, art and music. Pupils are made aware of the contributions of ancient civilisations like Greece and Rome to Western culture and of the impact of the Second World War on the twentieth century. They listen to the works of composers such as Debussy and Saint Saens and during Art Week, they took part in activities like basket weaving, candle making, pottery and collage. Further opportunities are provided by visitors to the school such as Theatre ADAD and The Very Moving Theatre Company and educational visits including Dover Castle and the Painted House, Fort Amherst and the Kent Museum of Rural Life. The school also provides pupils with an environment and curriculum that reflect positive attitudes towards other languages and cultures. Posters, displays and books celebrate racial diversity and pupils have good opportunities to study other religions including Judaism, Hinduism and Sikhism as well as appreciating festivals such as Divali. Older pupils speak French at various times during the school day and at lunchtimes, pupils take part in Hindu and Sudanese prayers. Although pupils study the style of Western artists, there is little evidence of work from other cultures. In music, pupils sing songs from other countries and there is a good range of ethnic instruments. A highlight of last summer term was a lively workshop on musical instruments from around the world. This proved to be a stimulating and enjoyable experience for pupils which enabled them to recognise and celebrate cultural diversity.

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

39. The school continues to provide a very safe and caring environment for its pupils as reported in the last inspection. Members of staff know pupils well and this enables them to provide good and appropriate care and support. The quality of information kept on each pupil is detailed and comprehensive. Medical and personal needs are clearly identified and dealt with. External agencies including the educational welfare service, health professionals and social services support this aspect of the school.

40. The school identifies and deals very effectively with any hazards found on site and health and safety checks, risk assessments and inspections are regularly undertaken. The school has a detailed health and safety policy in place and administers health and safety very well. Members of staff are skilled and fully understand how to limit hazards and assess risks. Staff members are trained to administer first aid and the school’s provision for first aid and welfare support are very good. The school now has a first aid room that is very useful for the care of pupils with special educational needs.

41. The school’s policy and procedures follow the guidelines of the local committee for the protection of children. The headteacher is the designated person responsible for child protection arrangements and other members of staff understand well the school’s arrangements and procedures.

42. Children in the Foundation Stage are well cared for and very happy to come to school. They share good relationships with the teacher and other adults in the school and will quite happily to visitors about their work.

43. The care and support of pupils with special educational needs are good. Teachers and learning support assistants know the pupils they work with well. The whole school ethos is well reflected in the way they ensure that pupils with special educational needs have opportunities to take part in all school activities. Their contributions are valued highly, and their achievements are well recognised. This is particularly true for those pupils who have statements of special educational need, and ensures that these pupils make good progress. There are good procedures for the identification of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' needs are quickly identified when they enter the school, and appropriate arrangements are made for the regular review of their progress. There is good liaison with outside agencies, which provide support. Good records are kept of pupils' progress in relation to their targets.

44. The school monitors attendance very well, and has made great progress in reducing unauthorised and authorised absences. The school complies fully with the statutory requirements for registration and the coding and recording of attendance.

45. The school's arrangements for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good and result in high standards of behaviour throughout the school. Members of staff praise pupils by using a variety of rewards and certificates. Pupils devise their own class rules and are very much aware of the behaviour rules and policies. Parents confirm that they and their children have a clear understanding of the school's expectations. The staff and parents confirm that there are few cases of poor behaviour, bullying or racial tension in the school.

46. Pupils' personal development is supported through 'circle time', emphasis on responsibilities for their well-being and health and safety. This is included in the school's personal, social and health education curriculum and extracurricular activities. The school does not have a school council, although one is planned, and there are no residential visits organised. The personal development of pupils is also limited by the lack of opportunities for them to use their initiative and to take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils are involved with teachers in setting their own targets for improvement.

47. Since the last inspection, the quality of assessment and analysis of data has been maintained and, in some key areas, improved. Very soon after children enter the school at the Foundation Stage, they are assessed using a procedure designed specifically for this age range. In 1999, these procedures were not administered correctly and the data and information that were gathered were unreliable. The process has now been improved and the evidence now provides a precise insight into the development of each child to enable the teacher to plan activities that meet individual need. Before starting school, the parents are also interviewed and the information from both sources enables the teacher to build up an accurate pupil profile. The previous report commented favourably on the assessment procedures in Key Stages 1 and 2, which had been recently introduced. Similar procedures did not exist in the Early Years class and this was a key issue in the report. This key issue has now been addressed. Procedures have been recently introduced which enable the teacher and assistant to monitor closely the effectiveness of the teaching and the progress made by the children. Early evidence suggests that this development is having a positive impact on the planning process.

48. Another key issue in the last report referred to the absence of assessment procedures in some subjects. Subsequent to the inspection the headteacher and governing body decided that improvements in standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science were of highest priority and that the emphasis in assessment should be directed towards these subjects first of all. This decision has been justified and the school is now translating the good assessment procedures from the core areas to the other subjects. This development is at an early stage and, in most subjects, the school does not have a consistent approach for recording information gained from on-going assessment. Teachers are mostly using a template provided within a published scheme of work. This is a weakness and subject co-ordinators are aware that the procedures do not provide a systematic method to identify strengths and weaknesses which support the next stage of pupils' learning.

49. In both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, the school makes very good use of the data from the end of key stage tests and also uses optional tests for Years 3, 4 and 5 to measure performance in reading, mathematics and English. The data are analysed methodically to provide the school with much useful information. This, in turn, helps the school, and the individual pupil, to set appropriate targets for the future. All assessments, starting with those made in the Early Years, are maintained in a record of personal achievement, which accompanies pupils throughout their time in the school. The teachers also regularly examine samples of pupils' work to determine the levels attained, for example, in English, and the assessment co-ordinator is currently taking part in a wider project to moderate samples of work produced by these pupils against similar samples from another school in the locality.

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

50. Parents have positive views of the school. Most parents feel that the school is good, however, a small but significant minority in their responses to the questionnaire was critical of the school's arrangements for homework, information provided and how the school works with them. In the previous inspection, the partnership with parents was described as satisfactory, whilst, in this inspection, despite parents' misgivings, this aspect is good. The inspection team found that the information provided for parents is good. They are provided with information on the curriculum to be taught, work that can be done at home, newsletters and day-to-day class and school information. Parents are able to visit the school to discuss issues or concerns and to contribute to, and support, the school in a variety of ways. The school operates an open door policy. Annual reports are good and the opportunities to discuss pupils' progress are appreciated by parents.

51. The impact of the parents' involvement on the work of the school is good. The parent teacher association raises large sums of money to purchase materials and resources for the school. Parents organise social events, and attend assemblies, performances, social and curriculum events, briefing meetings and parents' evenings. Shortly after the school's inspection, a Christmas Fayre was due to be held. This is an event welcomed by the village and, in previous years, it has raised large sums of money for the school.

52. Parents met during the inspection felt that the information on the pupils' annual reports is detailed and accurately described their children. These list pupils' achievements, are detailed and include information on how pupils can make further progress. The school's documentation for parents is informative and fulfils most statutory requirements, except that the governors' Annual Report to parents and the school's prospectus do not satisfy all legal requirements.

53. The school has an induction policy, which enables the teacher to meet with parents and for a full profile of a child to be created before entry to school. Many children attend the private nursery school on the same campus and, in most instances, several visits to the school are made before entry.

54. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved well in their child's support. They are informed as soon as the school has concerns and are consulted in all procedures. Parents are kept well aware of the school's targets for their child, and are encouraged to share in the setting of new goals. They have indicated their appreciation of the school's support and the encouragement of the school to be involved in their child's care.

55. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is good. Parents and carers come in to school to enrich the curriculum, help with extracurricular provision and provide fundraising social events.

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

56. The school's leadership and management are very good. This is essentially the same judgement as that of the school's last OFSTED inspection, which described the leadership of the headteacher as strong. Other staff with management responsibilities, particularly the deputy headteacher who, for example, analyses assessment data very thoroughly, support the headteacher

very well. This creates a strong team spirit amongst the staff of the school that ensures that its aims and values are very well implemented and that there is a clear and effective focus on improvement and raising standards. The areas identified for improvement in the school improvement plan closely match those found by this inspection and effective steps are being taken to achieve these targets.

57. The quality and effectiveness of the leadership and management are directly responsible for the very good improvement that the school has made since it was last inspected in 1997. In the 1997 end of Key Stage 2 tests, standards were below average in science and English and average in mathematics. In the tests in 2001, the standards reached by the pupils were above average in mathematics and in science and below average in English when compared with all schools. This clearly indicates improvement in mathematics and science. In addition, however, the findings of this inspection show that, in Year 6 in English, standards are average in reading, speaking and listening and that only the writing aspect of the subject is below average. In all other subjects, except geography and history where standards are now average and information and communication technology where standards are now below average, standards are at least as good as they were in 1997. The quality of teaching has also improved since 1997. At the time of the last inspection, 11 per cent of the teaching was very good or better, 97 per cent at least satisfactory and three per cent unsatisfactory. The present inspection finds that none of the teaching is unsatisfactory and that 19 per cent is very good.

58. The key issues for action from the school's last inspection have been well dealt with. Curricular provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and now covers all the required areas of learning and the management and teaching of children in this stage of learning are now good. Standards in design and technology at Key Stage 2 have been raised to average from below average and the school's partnership with parents is now good and helps to raise the standards reached by the pupils. The monitoring of teaching and learning has played an important part in improving standards but the monitoring of standards, for example, in writing, religious education and those reached by more able pupils is still not rigorous enough. The school decided not to address the key issue related to the development of assessment procedures for all subjects in order to ensure a successful concentration on improving standards in English, mathematics and science. This school has a very good capacity to continue to improve because of its very high quality leadership and management and its effective shared commitment to improvement.

59. The governors work closely with the headteacher and assist the school to improve very well. The governors use their individual skills well to support the school, organise their activities effectively and attend suitable training. Governors visit the school, receive reports from subject co-ordinators and have a comprehensive report from the headteacher at their regular meetings. This means that they are well aware of the strong points of the school and where improvement is required and how to bring this about. For example, their Finance Committee reorganised the use of funding provided for the development of information and communication technology so efficiently that the school obtained an additional computer, a digital camera and a scanner. The governors have a significant involvement in the production and monitoring of the school's very good school improvement plan which also contributes to the way they are able influence its direction.

60. The school's finances are very well monitored. Financial reserves of around four per cent of the total budget are appropriate. Resources are well used to promote the children's progress. Budgetary procedures are very good and careful thought is given to linking expenditure to the school improvement plan. The governors are very concerned to ensure that they get good value for money. For example, after a great deal of consideration, a new mathematics scheme was bought in September 1999. The scheme was warmly received by teachers and pupils and work in numeracy was monitored by the headteacher and a governor. The pupils' standards in the 2000 national tests in mathematics showed a clear improvement. Additional value for money is obtained as the school is entitled to updated versions of sections of the scheme. The school's use of information and communication technology is not fully developed.

61. The school has a good equality of opportunity policy and most pupils receive equality of opportunity. However, more able pupils do not always reach their full potential and some pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn for lessons for extra support. In addition, pupils in classes where there are unbalanced numbers of boys and girls are not always given similar opportunities to respond to lessons. The findings of the school's last inspection were that all pupils had equal access to the curriculum.

62. The co-ordinator for special educational needs carries out her responsibilities effectively and efficiently. This co-ordinator tracks pupils' progress carefully, and maintains careful records of all dealings with agencies outside the school. The school has especially good arrangements for liaising with the local secondary school. The co-ordinator meets teachers there to discuss any aspects of pupils' special educational needs before they transfer. The school fully meets the requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs. There is a designated governor, who has a good involvement in the work of the school. Funds allocated for pupils with special educational needs are used to good effect.

63. The match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum is good. The teachers are motivated and work together as a strong team. The enthusiastic support staff work well with teaching staff and this contributes significantly to the quality of teaching and learning. The school has a good number of teachers who are well qualified, particularly in mathematics where levels of skill are high. All subject co-ordinators are well suited for their roles. As in the previous inspection, the training programme is well linked to the school's improvement plan. Appraisal arrangements are appropriate for all staff. New members of teaching staff are introduced to the school sensitively and are given strong support from established members of staff. Training needs are addressed well although there are still some training needs in information and communication technology. New members of staff confirm that they have been monitored in the classroom. Learning support assistants are well qualified and highly motivated, although inspectors observed that during "teachers' talk activity" parts of lessons, assistants were not always used to their full potential. Members of the support staff are encouraged to attend training courses and are involved with in-school training.

64. The school's accommodation for the Foundation Stage, pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3, the hall and offices is satisfactory. However, those classrooms used by Years 4 and 6 are unsatisfactory. These rooms are too small for the class sizes as, for example, they do not allow the use of a second computer. The school is seeking to remedy this by obtaining funding for an information and communication technology suite. Until that is available, the lack of space and resources results in more than 30 pupils gathering around one machine for instruction.

65. The hatted classroom used by Year 5 pupils is poor and restricts curricular provision in the practical aspects of subjects such as science. This classroom has no running water, the outside fabric of the building is in a dire condition, there is insufficient space for the pupils who are forced to leave their coats and bags in the main school building. Access to the main building by staff and pupils is open to the elements. There is only one fire exit in this room, and the building does not have wheel-chair access. The governors are well aware of these failings and are seeking to have them addressed. The school maintains the buildings well and all areas are kept immaculately clean by very committed and competent staff. The school hall is let out to several village organisations outside school hours although this is not easily managed due to the open layout of the building. The school library area, which adjoins the hall and is bright and welcoming and provides a pleasant place in which pupils can sit quietly to read.

66. Resources are satisfactory in all subjects and stages, except for information and communication technology where they are unsatisfactory. There is a shortage of these particular resources as the school is equipped with only 50 per cent of a normal stock. Also, there is shortage of programs to support other areas of curriculum and a lack of sensors or equipment that pupils could use to measure changes in materials. During the inspection, when computers were used well in art, history

and science, they made a significant contribution to pupils' learning. At the time of the school's last inspection, resources in information and communication technology were also unsatisfactory as were resources for children in the Foundation Stage. Resources for children in the Foundation Stage are now satisfactory. There are some shortages in geography but, overall, resources are satisfactory in this subject.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. In order to continue to improve the quality of education provided by the school the governors, headteacher and staff should:

**1. Raise the standards of the pupils' work in writing by: (already in school improvement plan) (Paragraphs 3,4,7,8,10,27,58,79-92,115,118,136)**

- developing the extent and effective use of the pupils' spoken vocabulary;
- ensuring that the pupils develop their writing skills more fully in all subjects of the curriculum;
- improving the pupils' ability to draft and redraft their work in order to make it better;
- making sure that all teachers expect the pupils to produce written work of high quality;
- being certain that the pupils' work is marked in ways which help them to improve;
- checking that sufficient time is devoted to extending pupils' competence and skills in written work;
- increasing the rigour with which the pupils' written work is monitored.

**2. Improving standards in information and communication technology through: (already in school improvement plan) (Paragraphs 3,5,7,9,10,26,60,66,97,115,118,120-123,126)**

- providing more resources for the teaching of this subject;
- fully meeting National Curriculum requirements at Key Stage 2;
- providing additional training for staff where this is necessary;
- making more effective use of information and communication technology in other subjects;
- implementing plans for the effective provision of an information and communication technology suite.

**3. Helping more able pupils to reach their full potential every aspect of their work by: (Paragraphs 4,8,10,18,48,58,88,93,94,101,107,111,113,114,115,119,123,131,136)**

- developing assessment procedures, where these do not already exist, and using the information obtained to promote higher standards as noted in one of the key issues for action of the school's last OFSTED inspection;
- planning lessons to provide work which enables these pupils to be challenged from the start of activities rather than through extension activities which they do after completing the same work as the other pupils;
- having clear whole-school methods for identifying these pupils;
- improving their research skills and their capacity to work independently;
- making the role of the co-ordinator for more able pupils more effective.

## OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- ensuring that pupils with special educational needs receive equality of opportunity when they are withdrawn for lessons for additional support and that pupils in a class where there is an unbalanced number of boys and girls are given similar opportunities to respond to lessons. (Paragraphs 18,31,61,81)
- making sure that the minor omissions in the statutory information to parents are rectified. (Paragraph 50)
- being certain that support staff are deployed to the best advantage at all times. (Paragraphs 25,63,95)
- investigating the reasons why small but significant numbers of parents feel that three aspects of the school should be improved.

(Paragraphs 30,50)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	47
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	46

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

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	19	38	43	0	0	0

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

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

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	182
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	21

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	62

#### **English as an additional language**

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	3.98
National comparative data	5.4

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.29
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	7	15	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	13	12	14
	Total	*	*	*
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	*(88)	*(84)	*(97)
	National	83 [82]	84 [83]	90 [87]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	11	14	15
	Total	*	*	*
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	*(81)	*(97)	*(91)
	National	84 [82]	88 [86]	88 [87]

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

\* Data not entered as fewer than ten boys involved.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	14	12	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	13	14
	Girls	11	10	12
	Total	21	23	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (73)	88 (88)	100 (92)
	National	75 [70]	72 [69]	85 [78]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	11	13
	Girls	9	8	11
	Total	18	19	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (73)	73 (69)	92 (81)
	National	70 [68]	72 [69]	79 [75]

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

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	160
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

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

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

### *Teachers and classes*

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	25

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

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	164

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### *Financial information*

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	364488
Total expenditure	361084
Expenditure per pupil	1871
Balance brought forward from previous year	10632
Balance carried forward to next year	14036

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	193
Number of questionnaires returned	83

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	33	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	47	43	5	1	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	46	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	33	14	3	5
The teaching is good.	50	41	4	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	40	12	0	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	25	7	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	32	2	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	52	38	10	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	56	43	1	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	42	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	38	22	2	6

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

Fourteen parents made additional comments on their questionnaires. The only topics raised by more than one parent were expressions of support for the school, and concerns about the range of extracurricular activities provided, the amount of homework given and the school's provision for more able pupils.

## **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**

68. The children are admitted to Reception at the start of the autumn term during the year in which they become five. Those children born between September and Easter attend on a part-time basis until October and the remainder are part-time until the following January. Most of the children have already attended local nursery schools, the main one of which, although private and entirely separate, is accommodated on the school campus. Assessment made of the children on their entry to the school shows their attainment to be at average levels for their age. The class teacher has only recently taken up the appointment but a good working relationship has been established with the Nursery assistant and the recommended curriculum is fully in place. Planning is clear, with specific learning and achievement objectives in all areas of learning. This is an improvement on the findings of the school's previous OFSTED inspection. Close observation of how the children are learning ensures that good progress is made. Children respond very positively to the stimulating environment, caring atmosphere, high expectations of good behaviour and well thought out curriculum. They achieve a good start to their school lives, which parents fully appreciate.

69. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils in the Foundation Stage is good in all areas of learning. This judgment is an improvement on the findings of the school's last OFSTED inspection which judged teaching to be satisfactory. The quality of the teaching promotes good progress although, at present, the children are still at the average levels of attainment at which they entered the school in all areas of learning. This is because they and their teacher have been in the school for less than three months and there has not been enough time to raise the standard at which the children entered the school. The children are on course to reach above average standards by the end of the Foundation Stage in all areas of learning. This is an improvement on the findings of the school's previous inspection particularly in personal, social and emotional development and creative development where standards were below average.

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

70. The children have made good progress in their personal and social development since starting school in September. Their behaviour in and around the school is very good indeed. They work and play together and are beginning to co-operate well. This area of development is given a high priority and has a positive impact on learning. Classroom procedures are already well established. Children are aware of the teachers' expectations and adhere closely to rules governing, for example, the number of children allowed in an area at any one time. They choose activities in a sensible, structured way and apply themselves to tasks with enthusiasm. Most of the children are able to dress and undress themselves without too much help and they walk around the school in a quiet and ordered manner.

71. The teacher has created a calm, secure environment in which children are valued as individuals. The relationship between the teacher and the children is one of moderation and respect; qualities which set the tone for this foundation year. The children concentrate and persevere in their activities, seeking help when needed, and are eager to explore new learning, initiate ideas and solve simple practical problems with confidence. In addition to work, there are many moments for fun and for reflection, which strengthen the developing bond within the group.

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

72. Children make good progress in this area of learning. Children talk freely about their homes, their friends and about things that interest them. They particularly enjoy listening to stories and have

good recall of books, which they have listened to previously. They are attentive throughout story-time and are developing the ability to predict outcomes. There is considerable discussion about the key areas of the story that everyone enjoys. The teacher has introduced Big Book sessions in preparation for the literacy hour at Key Stage 1. Children enjoy the book 'Smarty pants' and can describe where the title is and where the author's name appears. Skilful teaching introduces the children to rhyming and they have made good progress in learning several initial sounds of words in the text. The concept that print carries meaning and that text is read from left to right is understood by most of the children. The more able are beginning to see patterns of letters, especially interesting words such as aeroplane. All the children are developing pencil control through practising writing patterns and letter formation. Reading books are introduced at the appropriate time and the children are keen to share them with visiting adults. They can follow the text with their finger as they read. There is good liaison between the teacher and the parents who support their children very well indeed.

73. Learning support assistants are used effectively in small groups when direct teaching is involved. They are well briefed and assist the teacher in maintaining ongoing assessments of individuals' progress. The programme is well structured and linked to the National Literacy Strategy framework for young children. Classroom displays are rich in language clues intended to reinforce learning and a strong emphasis on language development is evident throughout the whole programme of work.

### **Mathematical development**

74. The teacher's good awareness of how to develop this area through a structured programme of practical experiences enables children to make good progress. Many children can name common shapes such as circle, square and triangle. They recognise numbers up to ten and can count to 20. These skills are practised regularly when singing nursery rhymes and playing simple board games. The children can throw a die, count the dots and collect an equivalent number of cubes, which are then placed, as red apples, on one side of a 'tree'. The die is thrown again, cubes are counted out and placed on the other side of the tree and then added to those from the first throw. When working with sand and water, children fill and empty small containers. They know that wet sand is heavier than dry sand and can describe whether a container is full or not.

75. The teacher uses every opportunity to reinforce basic skills through practical experience. Correct mathematical vocabulary is used from the outset and all activities build upon the child's understanding at that time. Assessment techniques continue to be developed to enable the teacher and the assistant to monitor the progress of each child and structure the work accordingly. The use of information and communication technology enhances the provision, for example, when two children were matching numbers in order to move up and down a series of ladders. The work is well planned and the tasks are appropriate and in line with the recommendations in the National Numeracy Strategy.

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

76. On entry to the school, the children's knowledge and understanding of the world are average for their ages. During the Foundation Stage, they make good progress learning about their immediate environment and are well prepared for the programme of study in the National Curriculum, which commences in Key Stage 1. The teacher considered the concept of family with the children and read 'My Family' and used this to explore what a family is. The children talked about their mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters. The concept of chronology was introduced. 'Who is the oldest and who the youngest?' The various members of the family were drawn and named. The children were encouraged to think about the changes, which had happened to them since they were babies. Children talked confidently about their school and home environment. They knew a little about the town where they live and explained in simple terms the route they take to school and some of the significant features along the way. A book of favourite things was made. Children talked about their own favourite things, which were recorded as pictures in their book. The children were taught how to use

the computer. A good range of planned activities, which always starts from what they know at the moment, enables the children to expand their experience and knowledge of the world.

### **Physical development**

77. Children are making good progress in developing physical control, mobility, awareness of space and manipulative skills, both indoors and out in their own secure fenced area, which contains a sufficient range of large play equipment. At this early stage in the academic year, the children are mostly able to dress and undress themselves independently. They make good use of the space in the hall, throwing and catching to a partner with balls that are sometimes large and sometimes small. Children's eye to hand co-ordination is developing well. Their throwing is becoming more controlled and they know where to position their hands to make a catch. Within the classroom, children develop increasing hand control through cutting, and gluing and by practising their writing patterns. The teacher has good control and instructions are clear. Insufficient emphasis is given to the direct teaching of skills and the highlighting of good examples of children's work during physical education lessons.

### **Creative development**

78. Good use is made of opportunities to encourage and develop creative skills. Children are stimulated by the attractive use of displays and colour in the classroom, and, within the planning, the teacher has devised imaginative ways to broaden their experience. A pineapple was brought in. Children looked at it and handled it. They discussed its texture, colour and smell. It was drawn using black pen on white paper. Observational skills were heightened and the finished products displayed good development of skills. Children were given 'smelly pots'. They were asked to identify an unseen edible item and their conclusions were drawn in boxes. Healthy foods and not so healthy foods were discussed and children made models of favourite fruit using plasticine. They sang traditional songs and enjoyed music and movement.

## **ENGLISH**

79. Overall, standards in English are typical for seven and 11 year olds but those in writing are below average. This represents a decline in writing from the standards reported at the last inspection in 1997 when all aspects of English were judged to be average. The findings of this inspection differ from the results of the 2000 national tests at Key Stage 2, which showed that standards were below average because speaking and listening skills are taken into account by the inspection. Over the past four years, standards have risen in Key Stage 1 but have fallen when 1999 and 2000 are compared. In Key Stage 2, standards in English have fallen mainly due to weaknesses in writing and under achievement by girls. When compared with similar schools, pupils' results in the national tests in 2000 were average in reading and well below average in writing at Key Stage 1 and average in English at Key Stage 2. The school easily exceeded its targets for the percentage of pupils expected to reach Level 4 and above in the national tests although few reached the higher Level 5 in writing. The pupils in the present Year 6 have had their education disrupted during their progress through the school because of behavioural difficulties experienced in the class in the past. Consequently, the school has reduced its target in English to 65 per cent of its pupils to reach or exceed the expected levels at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2001. This represents an inadequate degree of challenge. The school has already identified pupils' writing as an area of weakness and has made it a main priority for development. Targets for improvement are appropriate. Speaking and listening have also been identified as a focus for development particularly within the literacy hour.

80. All pupils achieve soundly in English as they move through the school although standards in writing are not high enough. Pupils with special educational needs achieve good standards compared with their previous attainment especially when they receive well-targeted support in class. The

Additional Literacy programme in Years 3 and 4 supports their needs well. Underachievement in boys' writing and in girls' contributions to oral sessions were found during the inspection.

81. In both key stages, standards in speaking and listening are average. Many pupils enter the school with low levels of confidence and spoken language. Pupils enjoy listening to, and talking about, stories, rhymes and poems as was evident when Year 2 pupils discussed the poem 'Wet playtime'. All pupils listened very attentively and were aware of the importance of taking turns and valuing the contributions of others. Some pupils spoke confidently and audibly with interesting vocabulary but others remained passive and could not develop their replies without prompting or support from the teacher or assistant.

82. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to be active and responsive listeners. In class, they listen thoughtfully and show good respect for the views of others. More able pupils express their ideas confidently and fluently, respond precisely to the point being made and use a well-developed vocabulary and complex sentences. Average pupils describe events and convey their opinions clearly but less able pupils are diffident when airing their views publicly or analysing their work. In a Year 6 personal, social and health education lesson, pupils were examining the level of risk in different situations. The discussion was over directed by the teacher and was dominated by more articulate pupils whilst others, mainly girls, remained passive so that opportunities to extend language skills were lost. Drama is included in extracurricular activities but it is insufficiently developed across the curriculum, particularly in the literacy hour, and opportunities for pupils to speak in formal contexts such as mini debates are limited.

83. Standards in reading are average at both key stages. Pupils' obvious enjoyment of books is a strength of their learning. At all ages, they like reading the shared text in the literacy hour and most do so with clear and expressive voices. In Key Stage 1, pupils handle books confidently and take them home regularly to practise their skills. Average pupils read simple texts accurately and with understanding and employ a number of strategies to tackle unfamiliar words although some less able pupils do not always do this automatically. The more able read confidently and with good expression and have strong views about their likes and dislikes in reading.

84. Pupils' interest in, and enthusiasm for, books develop well through Key Stage 2. In Year 6, they read with fluency and accuracy and evaluate the texts that they read with growing competence. Many give a concise summary of events and discuss characters in some detail but even more able pupils cannot give a simple prediction of possible outcomes. Less able pupils read appropriate books fluently but do not always understand the context. Research and referencing skills are satisfactorily developed across the key stage and most pupils are familiar with the Dewey system of classification.

85. Standards in writing are below average at both key stages. Average pupils in Year 2 have a growing awareness of the structure of a story and most can write a description of a length appropriate to their age as in their work on 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory'. More able pupils use a broad vocabulary and are beginning to develop interesting ideas but the less able use a narrow range of words and their sentence structure is not always coherent. Handwriting is usually carried out carefully but size and shape are not always consistent. Accuracy in spelling and punctuation is also variable.

86. In Year 6, pupils write in an appropriate range of forms including newspaper reports, diaries, poetry, reviews, stories and biography. The best writing shows a good command of style and expression. Most pupils organise their writing in a logical sequence and generally show a sound understanding of grammatical structure. Strengths of older pupils' learning in English are the sensitivity of their response to poetry and their enjoyment in experimenting with language. Year 6 pupils studied the poem 'The Magic Box' by Kit Wright and then created their fantasies about what they would like to put in their own magic box. Ideas were exciting and original – dreams, the glittering colours of the rainbow, wide-eyed eagles that eye their prey, fifty silver stallions to ride in the moonlight – but pupils' weak spelling and inadequate mastery of grammar meant that their writing could not keep pace with the richness of their imaginations.

87. Pupils in Key Stage 2 do not develop their ideas in sufficient detail or have the skills and confidence to tackle extended pieces. As a result, the more able do not have the chance to develop their talents fully. The analysis of work, in particular, showed the lack of emphasis placed by the school on the importance of pupils planning, drafting, editing and refining their written work. This shortcoming in provision undermines achievement in writing in the school. There is also little evidence that pupils discuss and appraise their own and others' writing. Some pupils have not developed a clear understanding of the sound and spelling system. In addition, common words are left uncorrected over periods of time so that pupils become accustomed to spelling them inaccurately. Punctuation is generally appropriate but there is insufficient awareness of paragraphing. Handwriting is generally well-formed but, in some cases, presentation is untidy.

88. Throughout the school, standards in literacy are average but the development of literacy skills across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. In subjects like history, geography and religious education, there is an over dependence on work sheets which require predictable and sometimes one-word answers. This leaves little scope for extending pupils' range of experience in writing and often does not present sufficient challenge especially for the more able.

89. The quality of teaching and learning in English is satisfactory at both key stages. This was broadly the finding of the previous inspection but this time, there was no unsatisfactory teaching. All teachers have supportive relationships with their pupils that create a positive climate for learning and enable pupils to enjoy their work within clear guidelines. Language has a high profile in the school and teachers reinforce this well in class by emphasising precise terms so that pupils become familiar with, and understand, words such as synonyms, syllables, images and alliteration from an early age. Good subject knowledge is also evident in teachers' clear and lively presentations and confident management of the literacy hour, which ensure an energetic pace and effectively secure pupils' interest and attention. In Year 5, the teacher successfully created a sense of fun and enjoyment when pupils looked at shape poems and appreciated how the elongated letters in 'Cats can...' conveyed the sense of a cat stretching and how they could use such devices to embellish their own work.

90. Strengths in the teaching and learning of English across the school were well illustrated in a Year 4 lesson in which the teacher analysed a challenging poem 'Amulet' by Ted Hughes with her class. Pupils were enthralled by the poem and, by perceptive questioning, the teacher enabled them to explore the regular word patterns and to understand the link between the 'wolf's fang' and the mountain and how the wolf's wet, spiky fur resembled the 'ragged forest'. The pace accelerated as her questioning increased the demands of the lesson, 'Which image do you think is the most powerful?' Pupils' responses were mature and thoughtful - 'doe's tears', 'frozen swamp', 'stony horizon'. Timed targets maintained the lively pace as pupils settled to well planned group activities - 'Now, go!' Pupils had made very good gains in their understanding of how authors can create atmosphere by selecting words and arranging their order very carefully and of how they could use similes to enliven their own writing. This was the result of well structured, dynamic teaching in which pupils rose to the high level of challenge set by the teacher.

91. In Years 1 and 2, there is a good focus on oral and listening skills and teachers use well-pitched questions to draw out pupils' responses, 'No right or wrong answers, tell me what you think!' the Year 2 teacher encouraged his pupils. However, in Key Stage 2, some teachers do not have effective strategies for involving all pupils in class discussions so that some, usually girls, do not make any contribution, which undermines their confidence as speakers. Opportunities are also overlooked for developing spoken language. In a discussion on synonyms for 'sad' and 'happy', one pupil pointed out that someone could be crying because they were so happy but the teacher did not use this point to develop confidence and vocabulary. Occasionally, teachers' expectations of the quality of work are not high enough to promote good progress for pupils of all abilities.

92. The curriculum in English is balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented satisfactorily. The comprehensive language

policy supports teaching and learning well. Assessment procedures are good which is an improvement from the previous inspection when they had only recently been formalised. Pupils have appropriate targets in literacy to motivate them and give them responsibility for their own learning although some are not specific enough – ‘improve my spelling’. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to support teaching and learning in English. Throughout the school, the quality of marking is unsatisfactory. It is merely congratulatory – ‘Well done!’, ‘Good effort!’ - and does not provide pupils with constructive comments about how they can improve their work. The coordinator is very experienced and committed and has a realistic view of issues facing the subject and of how to address them. She monitors planning and samples of pupils’ work but has limited opportunities for classroom monitoring. Systems for the regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching were not in place at the last inspection so this is an improvement although the monitoring of writing is not rigorous enough. Classroom assistants are not always deployed efficiently at the beginning of the literacy hour although they give good support in group work. Resources in English are satisfactory and the library and most classrooms have an appropriate range of books to support research and study skills and to enable pupils of all ages to enjoy their reading. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The subject is enhanced by events including visits by theatre groups such as the Very Moving Theatre Company and the Channel Theatre, presentations by local secondary school pupils, poetry assemblies, book fairs, handwriting certificates and governors’ awards for writing which are published in the Annual Report. Imaginative and vibrant displays of pupils’ work such as ‘Autumn leaves by a seasonally inspired Year 5’ and ‘Epic poems – The Battle of Salamis’ effectively instil a sense of pride in pupils and celebrate their creativity.

## **MATHEMATICS**

93. The findings of this inspection indicate that, by Year 2, most pupils reach typical standards but few pupils achieve standards above this level. Pupils’ standards in numeracy are as expected of seven year olds. In the latest national assessment tests for seven year olds, the proportion of pupils attaining the national standard was above average. Their average scores, when compared with all schools and with similar schools, were below average, because there were fewer who exceeded the nationally expected level. In the tests for eleven year olds, pupils’ results in mathematics were above the national average which is the same standard as the judgement of the inspection. When compared with the results of similar schools, the standards were well above average, and over one quarter of them exceeded the national standard. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Trends in performance over the last four years indicate a good improvement in standards, and at a higher rate than the national trend. Given their average attainment on entry, pupils make good progress through the school, and learn particularly quickly in the juniors. This is illustrated by comparing the results of pupils in Year 6 who took the tests this year, with their scores when they were seven, and they made well above the national rate of progress in those four years. The successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive impact on pupils’ progress. This strategy has, for example, helped the school to improve standards by Year 2 and Year 6 compared with those reported in the previous OFSTED inspection, which were only average.

94. The quality of teaching and learning is good at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 which accounts for pupils’ good progress through the school. All lessons seen were at least satisfactory and a half, mostly in Key Stage 2, were very good. This is an improvement on the findings of the school’s previous inspection. Teachers have adapted well to the three-part numeracy lesson, and this enables pupils to establish their basic skills, try them out in group work, and learn from the work of others in the plenary session. In Key Stage 1, whilst the planning ensures that all pupils learn the basic skills well, too little work is set to challenge those who learn very quickly. This is why, in the national assessment tests, most pupils reach the national standard, but few exceed it. In Key Stage 1, pupils count confidently to 20 and back to zero. Nearly all add and subtract single digit numbers quickly in their head, and double them accurately. They have a sound knowledge of the two times table, but only a few more able pupils fire back the answer to, for example, seven times two without having to work it

out. They work out money problems well, finding the smallest number of coins, for example, to make 12 pence. Pupils' understanding of shape and measure is above average. They measure plants accurately in centimetres, and estimate length with good skill. Many talk in an informed manner about three-dimensional shapes when describing, for example, 'a pyramid sitting on a cube'. Teachers generally keep a good watch on the different groups, but occasionally in Key Stage 1, the teacher becomes so involved in one group that others are missed. This slows down the progress of the few pupils who are more interested in flicking their pencils through cubes than they are in building towers of five with them.

95. Teachers' planning is good in Key Stage 2 where more able pupils are often set separate work to extend their learning. Teachers provide interesting tasks in the group work, which consolidate pupils' skills well. Initial mental mathematics sessions move along very briskly, with the teachers asking quick-fire questions pitched at appropriate levels to match the differing needs of the pupils. In one lesson in Year 3, for example, the teacher said, "This question is for the Blue Group". This keeps all pupils involved in the lesson, and is especially good for pupils with special educational needs, who are able to make as good a contribution to these sessions as more able pupils. In Year 6, pupils have developed a good understanding and knowledge of the multiplication tables up to ten, convert decimals to fractions and use and explain their mental strategies well. Some pupils have difficulty in using approximation strategies in multiplication and division. They divide numbers by tens, hundreds and thousands and have a good understanding of the use of the decimal point. Pupils use non-calculator methods for long multiplication and long division, including the multiplication and division of decimals. They have a good feel for number, and quickly work out algebraic problems, such as  $26 + n = 48$ . Pupils demonstrate their good understanding of shape as they explore their angles, radius and circumference, and construct accurate three-dimensional shapes. They collect information and record it in line and bar graphs, which they interpret effectively. The expectations of teachers are high, and particularly so in Year 6 where pupils are learning especially quickly. In one of the best lessons, the teacher stimulated these pupils with a brisk warm-up, which practised their recall of number facts to 100, and then taught them how to extend these skills to reach 1000. This worked very well, and ensured that all pupils were clear about what to do, and could make best use of the group work. As each group worked through their tasks, the teacher brought them to the carpet, and assessed their progress. This cleared up any problems, and the very good plenary showed that all groups had made rapid progress. The teachers use classroom assistants well in group work to support pupils with special educational needs and, as a result, these pupils are making good progress. In the taught part of the lesson, however, these skilled assistants have too little input, and are rarely asked to sit with pupils who are struggling, or to assess the contributions made by different members of the class.

96. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in mathematics, and their good progress is shown by their results in the latest national assessment tests, when all attained, or came close to, national standards. Some more able pupils underachieve in Key Stage 1, because they are given too little work to extend them, but, in Key Stage 2, the teaching is so demanding that these pupils flourish, and achieve appropriately high standards by Year 6.

97. Throughout the school, pupils make too little use of computers to support their learning in mathematics, because of the shortage of computers and programs. They use their mathematical skills well in other subjects, measuring quantities of water in science, for example, and constructing graphs as part of their geography work on the local area.

98. The mathematics curriculum is broad and balanced and fully covers the requirements of the National Curriculum. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and experienced, and provides very good guidance to other members of staff, both formally and informally. The co-ordinator has monitored the teaching of mathematics effectively, and provided good training for staff. She has worked successfully with parents to inform them of the school's strategies for improving mathematics, and this has made homework more useful. The school makes good use of assessment, including the national

assessment tests, to see where pupils' strengths and weaknesses lie, and this has helped to raise standards from year to year.

## **SCIENCE**

99. In Year 2, standards are above average, which is an improvement on the judgement made by the school's last OFSTED inspection. This is due to the school's successful efforts to raise standards to the same level as those in Key Stage 2 by, for example, improving the quality of teaching. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during this inspection. The pupils also reached above average standards in the 2000 end of key stage assessments by teachers. Pupils with special educational needs achieve similar good results at this key stage. No significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls were observed.

100. The findings of this inspection are that pupils in Year 6 achieve standards that are above average. This is a similar judgement to that made by the school's 1997 inspection. However, evidence collected during this inspection indicates that significant improvements in attainment have been made since 1997. This is because due emphasis is now being given to all the areas of study, including experimental and investigative science, and to the progressive teaching of skills. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well for their abilities and make good progress at Key Stage 2. Test results for 2000 indicate that all the pupils reached at least the nationally expected standard of Level 4, the first time the school has achieved this level of success. The percentage of pupils reaching Level 5 has also increased, placing the school above the average for similar schools. Trends over time from 1996 to 2000 show that the school's performance has improved year on year, being well below expectations in 1996, rising to average in 1998 and significantly higher in 2000. Standards have similarly improved across the country but not by nearly so much. This inspection finds no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls, both of whom achieve above average standards.

101. The quality of teaching and learning is good at Key Stage 1 and promotes good progress. All pupils enjoy science and capture the enthusiasm of their teachers. They concentrate fully on their work and make effective use of the time available. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils explored sources of light. They used torchlight of different strengths to identify everyday objects placed in a large sealed box. The teacher showed sound knowledge of the topic, which resulted in appropriate learning. The pupils learnt that the stronger the source, the easier it is to see. In the Year 2 class, where pupils were working with clay, they used their senses to describe the material. They observed it wet and dry and described how to make it into different shapes. The pupils were told to make a pot that would hold a substance effectively and were expected to be critical about the product. The teacher told the pupils to ask themselves questions such as "Is it strong?", "What is the difference between a pot that is and one that is not?" They learnt to predict whether a pot would hold a liquid or not and if not, then why it would not. At Year 2 the pupils receive a stronger approach to investigation and experimentation which prepares them well for Key Stage 2. For example, they investigated the contents of packed lunches. The teacher linked this to learning about healthy eating and balanced meals. The pupils' own experience was drawn upon when the school dinner menu was examined and a further evaluation made. The planning of the work was linked to a published scheme that allows the teacher to extend the learning to meet the needs of individual pupils. Assessment is included in the scheme but is not used sufficiently well to identify clearly pupils with the potential to achieve higher standards.

102. The above average attainment at Key Stage 2 is due to good teaching, which results in good learning and good progress. Almost all the observed lessons were at least good. They were well planned, resourced and executed. A good example of this was in the Year 4 class. Pupils were working on circuits and the high expectations of the teacher were clearly evident in the challenge of the tasks set for pupils of different abilities. Less able pupils made a single circuit and could explain why it worked. The more able designed and built double circuits and collaborated very well in small groups. Results were recorded in the correct way and suitable conclusions were drawn. The teacher

circulated around the class offering appropriate comments such as “EUREKA” when the bulb lit. In Year 3, pupils have visited Tyland Barn to pond dip, take a woodland walk and go hunting for mini-beasts. They have found evidence of animals and have recorded their discoveries appropriately. In Year 6, pupils were dissolving salt in water. The teacher ensured that principles of fair testing were used to determine how quickly salt would dissolve in water by changing one variable in the process each time the test is repeated. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, learnt from this activity as they worked in mixed ability groups. The teacher’s learning objective for the lesson was precise and the pupils were required to co-operate closely with each other. Results were recorded in the recognised way and conclusions were appropriately drawn. The pupils ask relevant questions and are keen to engage in scientific discussion. They know how to conduct experiments, make predictions, interpret results simply and draw conclusions from their investigations. They use accurate scientific vocabulary. However, not all pupils are able to devise, carry out and evaluate their own investigations.

103. Science is well supported by a school policy and a published scheme of work, which provides good coverage of all aspects of the subject. The Foundation Year prepares children very well for the National Curriculum which is taught in a straightforward, logical way. The leadership is provided by a new postholder who is keen and enthusiastic. In addition to a wealth of opportunities for study in the locality, the school has a developed meadow area and tree trail in the grounds. Attainment is improving at both key stages and in order to maintain this, the coordinator is concentrating on monitoring and assessment to meet the needs, particularly of more able pupils. Progress since the last inspection is very good and the subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum overall. Good links with numeracy were evident during the inspection but insufficient use is made of information and communication technology. Resources are satisfactory and attention to health and safety is very good.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

104. Pupils’ work in art and design, including that of pupils with special educational needs, is above average throughout the school. This is similar to the standards reported in the previous OFSTED inspection at Key Stage 2 but an improvement on the average standards reported at Key Stage 1. This improvement is due to the school’s successful efforts to raise standards in this subject to the same level as those in Key Stage 2.

105. The quality of teaching and learning is good at both key stages and promotes good progress. Teachers are confident in their knowledge of the subject, and this ensures that pupils learn the basic skills of drawing, designing and painting well. Teachers’ high expectations mean that pupils move on from basic art techniques quickly. They experiment with more and more exciting methods, and develop a feel for the capacity of art to make you happy or sad. Teachers provide stimulating materials to grab pupils’ interest at the start of the lesson, and this creates a feeling of anticipation as pupils start work. A particularly good feature of pupils’ work is the strong link that it has with other subjects. In Year 2, pupils produce lively work linked to their science topic on the solar system, smudging chalk and washing over wax crayon to produce exciting pictures of planets. They extend this process well to make three-dimensional representations of the moon, making it stand out from a galaxy littered with stars. In work linked with history, they draw carefully to illustrate toys from the past, and this enhances the quality of their written work. Pupils mix paint well to create interesting shades, and talk critically about the new colours they have produced.

106. As they move into Key Stage 2 classes, pupils refine their skills well. Their sketching is of good quality as they reproduce designs of the Torah in their religious education topic, and produce lifelike drawings of objects brought into the classroom, such as tin cans and gnarled pieces of wood. Pupils experiment successfully with more demanding techniques as they move into Years 5 and 6, blowing ink, for example, to create spooky trees. Year 6 pupils’ good drawing skills are illustrated by their effective designs of Greek amphorae as part of their history work, and excellent sketches of athletes, showing how their joints move, and the definition of their muscles. Pupils’ portraits are of a

particularly high standard, especially those by more able artists who draw faces from different angles. A Year 3 lesson, which illustrated the strengths of the teaching and learning began by the teacher showing pupils sculptures from around the world on a computer linked to the Internet. This fascinated them as they marvelled at sculptures made of stone and 'rubbish'. They were quick to express their opinions on these structures, and showed a clear appreciation of how people would like to see them 'in the flesh'. From here, pupils looked at an area around the school that would benefit from a sculpture, and set about designing one that was appropriate. This was a very effective way of teaching about sculptures, because it made pupils think about their purpose, and their work afterwards showed how much they had learned.

107. The co-ordinator bases the school's art and design work on the scheme of work produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, but has modified it in the light of the needs of these pupils and staff. This works well, and provides a good structure to the teaching and pupils' learning. An event which has an excellent impact on pupils' work is the biennial Art Week, when all pupils focus just on art and design. Specialists and interested people come into school to show different techniques and explore a wide range of media, from candle-making and basket weaving to computer-design and marbling. This is very good practice, and the work that pupils produce is of a high quality. A weakness in art and design is the lack of assessment procedures to gauge pupils' progress and raise standards even higher. This is particularly so in the case of evaluating their own and others' work at Key Stage 1 and in their knowledge of multicultural art at Key Stage 2.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

108. From evaluation of the two lessons seen, analysis of planning and pupils' work, and discussion with pupils and teachers, the indications are that average standards are achieved in Year 2 and in Year 6. This represents an improvement at Key Stage 2 where attainment was judged to be below expectations in 1997. Standards have improved because of the school's effective response to the key issue for action from the last inspection. The rate of progress for pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory at both key stages with some good progress evident in Year 5.

109. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory at both key stages. In a Year 1 lesson about fruit and vegetables and methods of preparation before eating, the teacher placed a strong emphasis on safety and cleanliness. Pupils were asked to identify a range of fruit and vegetables provided by the teacher. Their existing knowledge was good and a more able pupil identified a mango. The pupils showed far less understanding about the preparation of vegetables and about which fruit can be eaten cooked. There was considerable discussion about the potato and its skin and strong views about the merits of leaving it on or taking it off. To complete the lesson, the pupils were asked to design and produce a poster encouraging healthy eating. In Year 2, the analysis of work shows that pupils are disassembling puppets and finding out about the working parts. They also use a variety of materials to discover ways of attaching one piece of material to another and think of tests to measure which is the strongest and most effective.

110. By the age of 11, the principles of design, making and evaluation are soundly established and pupils have participated in food technology projects. The analysis of work shows that Year 6 pupils have completed a topic on shelters in which they successfully investigated a range of structures through building and assessing the strengths and weaknesses of several types. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils were designing a musical instrument. They were given clear learning objectives, studied pictures and drawings, planned in a logical way and selected appropriate materials. The teacher had very good subject knowledge and actively intervened to enable pupils to clarify their thoughts by posing searching questions. There was a good balance in the lesson between teaching and independent work. The pace encouraged all the pupils to complete the task in the time allowed. Pupils collaborated very well, sharing ideas and opinions to improve designs. The examination of the pupils' work in Year 4 indicated that they had investigated a purse but there was too little material to judge how effective this work had been. The analysis of work in Year 3 showed that pupils are successfully finding out about

plastic bottles. They have made a survey to determine how effective they are as containers, whether they are environmentally friendly and whether the various fonts on the labels are appropriate. Insufficient attention is given to the employment of finishing techniques to improve the quality of the artefacts produced by the pupils.

111. The co-ordinator is new to the post. There is a policy document, supported by a published scheme of work that has recently been introduced. The teaching time allowed for design and technology is recognised as being low by comparison with other subject areas. This was a management decision, which is now under review as, particularly at Key Stage 2, the amount of work produced is still limited. Formal systems to monitor teaching and progress and assessment procedures are not established.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

112. During the inspection, the teaching of geography was observed in Years 1, 3, 4 and 6. Judgements are based on these observations and on the analysis of pupils' work throughout the school, discussions with pupils and teachers and on the school's planning and records. The evidence indicates that pupils reach average standards and that their progress and attainment are satisfactory in Year 2 and in Year 6. This judgement represents a fall in standards compared with the findings of the school's previous OFSTED inspection when standards were judged to be above average. This is because the school has concentrated on raising standards in English, mathematics and science since then and because the full National Curriculum requirements for geography have not been required to be taught. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress for their previous attainment. There are no differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

113. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 which is broadly the same judgement as that of the school's last inspection which said that teaching was "at least satisfactory". In a very good Year 1 lesson to develop pupils' understanding of Lenham and develop their map skills, photographs were used very effectively to stimulate discussion. The pupils' existing knowledge was built on as they enthusiastically identified human and physical features – "I can see it! I can see it! The railway station". The teacher harnessed this interest well and, for example, discussed if the features they were talking about were always in the same place or not, as in the case of the postman. The pupils' own journey to school was then considered and they identified if any of the photographs were to be seen on their route and, if so, whether they were near to, or far from, the school. Work on display showed that a block graph of children living near to and far from the school had been produced in a good application of their numeracy and information and communication technology skills. The learning support assistant helped the pupils well during their group work but was given the role of a passive observer during the introduction to the lesson. The analysis of the pupils' work in Year 2 shows that they have studied and understood aspects of the fictional island of Struay at a level that is typical for their ages. For example, they have looked at shopping on Struay, land use and the reasons to live, or not to live, on a small island. In almost all cases, the work set for the pupils was identical although that which they produced was different in quality. However, more able pupils could not, for example, develop their independent research skills sufficiently and pupils with special educational needs found aspects of the work too difficult for them.

114. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. This is broadly the same judgement as that made by the school's previous OFSTED inspection. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher used learning resources effectively to assist pupils in matching an aerial photograph of the school with a plan view of it. The teacher's control of the pupils was good and they were keen to work. Some pupils who rejoined the class from other activities after the lesson had started were given good assistance in taking a full part in it. A pupil with severe special educational needs was given good support in a group situation and took a full part in the lesson. Most pupils made satisfactory progress in interpreting aerial photographs but more able pupils clearly found the task very easy when spoken to and asked to explain it. Similarly in a Year 5 lesson on water, a good discussion between the teacher

and the pupils took place about the differences between clean and dirty water and the importance of conservation. Pupils with special educational needs received suitable help from the learning support assistant. There was good control of the pupils and an appropriately high expectation of how they would present their work. The pupils gained a good understanding of the value of water and the way people can damage the environment and so made sound progress. However, the work was the same for pupils of all abilities. The more able were not given the chance to reach above average levels of attainment, for example, by researching how water is cleaned. Again, in a Year 6 lesson about the effects of tourism on the environment, pupils were able to name and locate a number of mountain ranges and discuss the weather in mountainous regions. They were unable to suggest varied reasons – skiing, climbing, mining – why people might visit mountainous areas and to contribute to a discussion of the benefits and negative effects of tourism on the environment. Sound progress was made in this lesson but much of the discussion was too directed by the teacher to allow pupils to contribute fully and develop their ideas. The work set did not enable more able pupils to reach above average levels of attainment.

115. The co-ordination of geography is satisfactory as, given the school's and the national emphasis on English and mathematics, is its development since the last inspection. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work has been introduced this year although some shortages of resources are limiting its effectiveness. The co-ordinator has a limited amount of time to evaluate the subject each term and has, for example, checked teachers' planning but not observed lessons. Throughout the school, inadequate use is made of assessment information in planning lessons largely because assessment procedures are not good enough. This means that, in particular, work is not well matched to the needs of the more able pupils. In addition, marking of the pupils' work is essentially ticks and exhortation rather than constructive advice on how to improve. The analysis of work shows that the pupils' literacy skills, especially at Key Stage 2, are not applied well enough in the subject. Too much of their work is presented in the form of worksheets, which limit the style, quantity and quality of their writing. There are also weaknesses in the way fieldwork is used to develop the pupils' geographical concepts at Key Stage 2. Information and communication technology is used to find information but that which is found is not used effectively enough to present the knowledge gained in a useful way that indicates understanding.

## **HISTORY**

116. During the inspection, it was only possible to observe teaching of history in Year 2 and Year 4. Judgements are made on this evidence, also on an analysis of pupils' work in Key Stage 2, discussions with pupils about their topics and an examination of the school's planning and records. The indications are that average standards are achieved in Year 2 and Year 6. Attainment and progress, including that made by pupils with special educational needs, are satisfactory. This represents a decline in standards since 1997. This is because the school has concentrated on raising standards in English, mathematics and science since then and because the full National Curriculum requirements for history have not been required to be taught. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress for their previous attainment. There are no differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

117. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher revised work that the pupils had covered about the two main wars of the twentieth century, Remembrance Sunday and a visit to the local church to look at the memorial to the men who died. The pupils were able to place each event, and their own birthdays, in the correct slot on a time-line and most could explain why the memorial exists, who put it there and why the day is remembered each year. The teacher's control of the class was good. A calm working atmosphere was created, any loss of concentration by the pupils was soon corrected and the lesson proceeded at a steady pace. Following the introduction to the lesson, pupils were given suitable tasks to undertake. Less able pupils cut and pasted pictures of events in the correct sequence and more able pupils recorded their work directly into their books. Less able pupils received good support from the learning support assistant

and the teacher circulated around the classroom reinforcing the concepts of the lesson where necessary. At the end of the lesson, the class was collected together to discuss their work and showed that they had made sound progress. No written work was presented for analysis in this subject at Key Stage 1.

118. The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. In the very good Year 4 lesson observed, the pupils were learning about the Roman occupation of Britain. They also considered the importance of archaeology as a means of finding out about people who lived in the country in ancient times. The teacher had collected a number of artefacts, including a Roman scent bottle found in a grave and used these very well to capture the pupils' imagination. The pupils looked at these artefacts and handled those that would not break. They took a full part in discussion of the artefacts and asked questions and gave opinions. They fully understood the importance of the clues and evidence that the artefacts gave them about the past. The pupils learnt that many everyday items have been in use for centuries. The teacher skilfully introduced passages of text written by eminent Romans about Boudicca to the class and the pupils learnt that information can be transmitted in different ways and that writing expresses the thoughts and ideas of the writer. Questions about equal opportunities arose regarding the authority of a woman in a male dominated society, "How was this woman able to attract men to her banner?" and were carefully considered. The analysis of work shows that Year 3 pupils are dealing with the same basic topic as those in Year 4. In Year 5, the pupils' work shows that they have an appropriate understanding of Victorian Britain. The analysis of work produced by Year 6 pupils confirms that pupils have a sound insight into the way of life, beliefs and achievements of Ancient Greece and the legacy of that civilisation. The analysis of work shows that pupils generally present their work satisfactorily and that they produce suitable amounts of work. It also shows that, although there are some examples of good written work, for example, some creative writing about chimney sweeps, much of the work is in the form of worksheets. These worksheets often prevent the pupils from fully applying their literacy skills, particularly writing, in this subject. In addition, although information and communication technology is used for research too little use is made of any information found. The teachers' marking of the pupils' work is variable. There are some constructive comments which would help the pupils to improve but most marking consists of ticks and praise.

119. The subject co-ordinator is a skilled and experienced teacher who is knowledgeable and enthusiastic about history. Her role in classroom monitoring is underdeveloped but good support is provided to colleagues. A good policy supports teaching and learning in the subject. The school has recently adopted a published scheme and the assessment procedure included in this document. At present, the assessment procedure is informal and does not systematically record pupils' progress in acquiring historical skills. Artefacts have been collected over a number of years and the school has access to a number of experts who visit the school to talk to the pupils. Classes in both key stages explore Lenham regularly. Year 2 visit Dover Castle. Key Stage 2 classes visit many places of historical interest, which include Chatham, Canterbury and Rochester Castle. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example, through their understanding of the legacy of ancient civilisations to modern society and discussions about the morality of actions carried out in the past. Key Stage 2 pupils are learning about the Pilgrims' Way. The pilgrim's staff is currently being taken from one parish to another between Winchester and Canterbury and many of the pupils have shared the experience with their parents and other adults as the staff entered the parish of Lenham.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

120. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is below average, and lower than at the time of the previous inspection when it was average at the age of seven and above average at the age of 11. This is due to the facts that the school has lost ground with other schools, both in the

provision of computers and software, and in the amount of time it allocates to teaching pupils the necessary skills.

121. On the evidence of two lessons observed, the quality of teaching is satisfactory, but the shortage of resources means that pupils' learning is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Most teachers have adequate knowledge of the programs on offer to pupils, and explain new work clearly. Pupils make a sound start in Key Stage 1 and have an average understanding of how to turn on the computer and operate the mouse. They enter their text slowly, however, and few show confidence amending their work, or saving it without considerable help. The shortage of computers begins to tell when they are taught a new skill, and then have to wait a week before they can use it. The floor robot is broken, and pupils have had little experience of programming such devices.

122. In Key Stage 2, keyboard skills are still slow for their ages, and many still have to search for the shift and caps lock keys. Three classes have computers that have been out of action for much of this term, and this has limited their progress still further. The problems that arise because of inadequate resources were illustrated by a lesson in Year 4 when the teacher gave a clear explanation to the whole class on how to cut and paste text. Twenty-two pupils strained to see what changes were happening on the screen, but all gained a reasonable idea of how to perform the task. The few pupils who could then put their learning to the test did well, and selected text to be edited appropriately. Most of the class, however, had to wait for another day to do the work, and thus lost the impact of the teaching. Pupils generally have basic word-processing skills, and change the size and appearance of text with reasonable confidence when drafting their letter to a school in Holland. They are beginning to use electronic mail by Year 3, and do this effectively to search for information about sculptors in their art topic. The few more able pupils, often with computers at home, work confidently, and negotiate menus and programs with good skill, but even these pupils make too little progress in school because of the shortage of time they have to refine their skills. Pupils with special educational needs make slow progress, and are more disadvantaged than most by the gap between being taught a skill, and the opportunity to use it. The school has no control technology, and no means to monitor changes in materials using sensors. The selection of adventure simulations is poor, and so few pupils learn how to frame questions to achieve a reliable answer. Year 6 pupils benefit from the expertise of a local computer expert, and they have created a good web page illustrating features of their school and the village. This represents average attainment, and shows what pupils can do given the time and expertise that this initiative provides.

123. The school is aware of the problems with information and communication technology, and has the development of the subject as a priority in the school improvement plan. The co-ordinator has used extra government funding wisely to equip all classes with up-to-date computers, networked together and attached to the Internet. The school has provided good training for teachers and classroom assistants, and this has raised their competence and confidence although additional training is required in some cases. The school uses the scheme of work produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority as a good basis for teachers' planning, but the lack of resources and programs limits its effectiveness. There is no whole-school system of assessment, but individual teachers make their own, brief comments on pupils' progress. The school is planning to provide a computer suite, but this is at an early stage, and there are no indications about how this will be funded. In view of the restrictions placed by the lack of computers, monitoring equipment, and appropriate software to develop pupils' modelling skills, the subject does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.

## **MUSIC**

124. Standards in music are average for pupils at seven and 11 years old. This broadly reflects the finding of the previous inspection. Evidence from this inspection has been based on classroom observations, scrutiny of teachers' planning and displays, photographs, assemblies and discussions with teachers and pupils. Pupils delight in music making and their achievement is sound across the school. Pupils with special educational needs achieve appropriate standards and take a full part in all activities.

125. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. In the previous inspection, teaching throughout the school was reported as being satisfactory with half the lessons good or very good. Lessons are well planned and prepared with a broad range of musical activities that are suitably challenging. As a result, pupils sing a variety of songs tunefully and with good control and enjoy carrying out appropriate actions. They are able to sustain a sound rhythm for their age and compose by clapping patterns and using body percussion. In discussion, they talk animatedly about their enjoyment of musical activities. They know the names of various percussion instruments and know that sounds can be made with the voice, clapping or with instruments. Although they listen to music during the school day, pupils are less confident when talking about the moods and feelings that it conveys. The quality of teaching and learning is enhanced by pupils' interest and behaviour and because teachers work hard to motivate pupils and boost their confidence. This was evident in a singing assembly when the teacher's supportive comments enabled pupils to tackle a difficult song, which they performed with good awareness of diction, rhythm and dynamics.

126. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. Pupils have a sound understanding of rhythm and basic musical structure. Most of them sing a good repertoire of songs with accurate pitch, vary dynamics and show their appreciation of rhythm. In singing assemblies, a sense of enjoyment and achievement was clearly shared between the teacher and pupils. They sang the pilgrimage song 'We're climbing Jesus' ladder' with gusto in contrast with their sensitivity when they successfully maintained an unaccompanied four part round in 'Shalom'. Teachers give pupils many opportunities to listen to music in detail and to discuss their responses. Pupils perceptively identified the mood evoked by the strains of the cello as they listened to 'The Swan' by Saint Saens. In Year 3, pupils explore how musical elements can be used to describe different sounds in Animal Magic whilst Year 4 pupils experiment with notes of the pentatonic scale and use it to make up simple songs and accompaniments. In Years 5 and 6, pupils learn how to develop their singing voices and group performance by taking part in songs from the shows in Lights, Camera, Action. This was seen during the inspection when the teachers' infectious enthusiasm and the cracking pace of the lessons created an air of excitement and ensured pupils' total involvement in their learning. 'I want to hear a giggle in your voice and see a smile on your face'. The pupils promptly obeyed the instruction and moved spontaneously to the rhythm of 'Make them laugh' which they sang expressively with sound attention to breathing, diction, phrasing and pitch. When encouraged by the teachers to evaluate their work to improve it, pupils used an appropriate musical vocabulary to describe what they had heard. By the end of the lessons, pupils had made good gains in developing rhythm in their performance, evaluating their efforts and exploring feelings in movement. Although they had not had time to develop some musical ideas, both teachers had used the short, snappy sessions well and had also made learning rapid, relevant and enjoyable for their pupils. Across the key stage, pupils rarely record their work to listen to or record what they have done and only pupils who receive instrumental tuition are confident in using musical notation.

127. The subject is well led and promoted by the coordinator. There was no coordinator at the last inspection, the policy was out-of-date and the scheme of work needed development. The policy has been updated and the existing scheme of work based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines provides teachers with the support to develop pupils' musical skills in a structured way as they move through the school. These are good improvements. The coordinator has monitored every class this term and has decided to focus her support amongst the younger pupils. There are no consistent forms of assessment to develop systematically the skills which pupils are expected to acquire. Information and communication technology is also insufficiently used to support teaching and learning. The subject is well resourced. There is a good supply of percussion instruments, ethnic instruments and listening music to enable pupils to broaden their skills in musical appreciation. Pupils have opportunities to join the choir, receive musical tuition from the peripatetic teacher, and take part in one of the three recorder groups according to their level of expertise. Productions such as 'New Millennium Heroes' and this year's Nativity and 'Cinderella' allow every member of the school to take

part in making music. The subject makes a good contribution to pupil' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development when they reflect upon music, share instruments, polish their performance together and take part in a stimulating work shop featuring musical instruments from around the world.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

128. Standards of attainment are average in Year 2 and above average in Key Stage 2. No physical education was observed in Year 6 during the inspection as the subject was not taught in that year during the period of the inspection. In Key Stage 1, the pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve sound standards. At Key Stage 2, progress and achievement are good. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress and reach good standards relative to their previous levels of attainment. There are no differences in the standards achieved by boys and girls. These judgements are similar to those made by the school's previous OFSTED inspection.

129. At Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. This judgment is similar to that made by the last inspection which found teaching to be "at least satisfactory". In a Year 1 dance lesson, the teacher's control, adaptability and enthusiasm created a positive working atmosphere in which the pupils were well motivated and worked hard. They listened carefully to the teacher's instructions and discussed the strengths of the performance of the work, which their classmates eagerly demonstrated. The pupils showed good levels of co-ordination and control whilst creating interesting sequences of movements involving a "funny walk", balances, falls and juggling. The teacher successfully encouraged them to improve their work by, for example, varying the speed, height and level of their actions. In a well organised and managed Year 2 lesson to develop the pupils' hockey and ball skills, the class was well structured into appropriate group activities. The teacher gave instructions clearly, and emphasised the need for safety, and the pupils took careful notice of what was said. Support staff were well deployed and good use of ample learning resources supported the pupils' progress. The pupils were clearly shown how to hold a hockey stick correctly, how to pass accurately and how to roll a ball properly. These factors supported their progress effectively and they made sound progress in the development of their hockey based activities and showed average levels of skill. The pupils' skills of throwing and catching were below average in this lesson and they make insufficient progress in increasing these skills. Pupils throwing the ball frequently missed the hoop in which they were supposed to bounce pass a ball to a partner although they were often standing very close to it. Those receiving the ball often missed it and spent too much time chasing it rather than practising their skills. The pupils received too little direct instruction on how to get better.

130. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good. This judgement compares favourably with that of the school's previous OFSTED inspection, which said that teaching was "at least satisfactory, often good and sometimes very good". In Year 3, a well-planned lesson exploring different ways of travelling showed the high expectations of the pupils which teachers at this key stage have. The pupils were reminded to concentrate on the quality of their movements and did so. Technical language such as "contrast" and "explosive" was well used to extend the pupils' understanding and to improve their performance successfully. The demonstrations by pupils concentrated on specific aspects of their work such as their landings and the shape of their bodies and enhanced these aspects of their work. As a result, the pupils made good progress and developed good quality sequences of movement on the floor and on benches. In a Year 4 lesson to develop the pupils' ball skills, the teacher's assured and authoritative air gave the pupils confidence and a high level of motivation. The teacher gave clear instructions, which the pupils followed well and tried hard to carry out. The lesson proceeded at a good pace and making the best use of the space available was well emphasised. The pupils were given varied and demanding activities to undertake. They bounced a ball standing still and when walking; used different hands, varied the height of the bounce and changed the size of the ball. In group games activities, the pupils marked, dodged and anticipated well. They enjoyed their own successes and those of others and commiserated with those who were unsuccessful. Progress in this lesson was good and standards above average. In both of these

lessons, pupils with special educational needs received good individual support, which enabled them to take a full part in the lesson, for example, by demonstrating their work, and to make good progress. In a Year 5 lesson, the pupils showed sound stick handling, passing, dribbling hockey skills and good throwing, catching and feinting skills when passing a bean bag. These skills were appropriately demonstrated by the teacher and carefully watched by the pupils before they practised them. Pupils were helped to improve as the teacher carefully noted and addressed weaknesses in their performance. Swimming was not taught during the period of the inspection. However, discussion with teachers and analysis of the school's planning and records show that this is well organised and that most pupils swim at least 25 metres safely and confidently before they leave the school. At this key stage, the effect of exercise on the body is not adequately considered and evaluation of performance does not sufficiently extend beyond identifying what is done well. In addition, pupils who cannot take part in the lesson for various reasons are not given work related to physical education, for example, evaluation of the class's work.

131. The management of the subject is satisfactory as is its improvement since the school's last inspection. The current co-ordinator took on the role at the start of the present term and has already produced a position statement, which suitably provides for the development of the subject. The physical education policy is appropriate, was revised in March this year and has been presented to the governors. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work is being implemented and evaluated and a good range of extracurricular activities is provided for Key Stage 2. The school has a good sized field, hard surfaced area and hall which support learning well. Learning resources adequately support curricular provision. Some use of literacy skills takes place involving physical education, for example, in project work in Year 6. Half a day each term is provided to allow the coordinator to evaluate the subject but this time is not regularly used for rigorous observation of the quality of teaching and learning. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory as little information is recorded.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

132. At the age of seven and 11 years, pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This is the same as the finding of the previous inspection. Judgements in this inspection are based on classroom observations, analysis of pupils' work, scrutiny of teachers' planning and displays, and discussions with teachers and pupils. The caring ethos of the school supports the teaching of religious education, which is given a high status, and together with collective worship, it makes a distinctive contribution to pupils' personal development. All pupils make sound progress in the subject as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs are involved in all class activities and make good progress especially when they receive well-targeted support in lessons.

133. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory at Key Stage 1. In the previous inspection, teaching throughout the school was reported as 'never less than satisfactory and sometimes good'. A strong bond of trust and support exists between pupils and teachers that promotes learning effectively as pupils are unafraid to explore their ideas and express their feelings. In a Year 2 lesson about the Hindu celebration of Divali, a pupil asked, 'What do evil spirits do to you?' The teacher sensitively guided the discussion to the story of the blessing of Lakshmi, goddess of wealth and why she is worshipped. Pupils in this year group also have a satisfactory understanding of why Divali cards are sent and the purpose and use of Rangoli patterns. They enjoy listening to stories like Rama and Sita and their interest was engaged by the teacher's clear and expressive reading of the Divali acrostic poem. In Year 1, pupils draw upon their experience of belonging to a family to develop a sound understanding of how the church welcomes a child into its family at baptism and of the links with the baptism of Jesus. However, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual awareness through observation and reflection on the natural world.

134. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory at Key Stage 2. The analysis of work and talking with pupils show that pupils in Year 6 have sound insight into the way that religious buildings reflect the values and beliefs of worshippers. They can compare the interiors of Anglican and Baptist churches and are aware of how significant features like the font, altar and pulpit relate to different Christian beliefs. Their knowledge of how symbols and metaphors can deepen religious understanding is less well developed. As a result of well-structured and direct teaching, pupils in Year 4 have satisfactory understanding of why Hindus worship at home and in the mandir whilst Year 3 pupils know about the significance of the Torah and what this shows about Jewish beliefs. Pupils' love of poetry was exploited effectively by the teacher when Year 5 pupils studied the importance of sacred texts to believers. By skilful and perceptive questioning, she encouraged pupils to retell simple Bible stories as material for writing acrostic poems based on the word 'sacred' and gave clear guidelines to help them with this demanding task. Pupils were very responsive and, although some only wrote lists of Biblical words, the writing of others was mature and reflective – 'D – Death, when Jesus bowed his head' wrote one pupil. They had met the high expectations set by the teacher and acknowledged at the end of the lesson that they felt a sense of pride in their achievement.

135. A strength of teaching and learning at this key stage is the sensitivity and respect that teachers and pupils show towards the feelings, beliefs and opinions of others. Pupils are attentive and thoughtful listeners and teachers effectively value and build on their ideas and experiences to promote learning. 'Will your sacred book be held in the same esteem by anyone else?' asked the Year 5 teacher when her pupils discussed which book, such as a diary or Harry Potter, was 'sacred' to them. Year 5 pupils have also thought about what God means to them and pupils in Year 4 have discussed Hindu beliefs and the significance of the house shrine. During their work on religious buildings, Year 6 pupils were asked by their teacher to write about what were the most important things in the Church and what made them friendly and intimate or mysterious and awesome. However, teachers give pupils insufficient time to reflect on how different religious beliefs influence each other and how they affect personal behaviour and responsibility towards others. Teaching is also too dependent on the use of undemanding work sheets that do not promote the skills, knowledge and concepts required and present insufficient challenge to the more able. Over long sessions in religious education sometimes lead to a flagging pace so that the lesson begins to lose momentum and pupils' sharp concentration wanes. This was seen in both lessons observed and marred otherwise good learning.

136. The subject is satisfactorily led and resourced. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines are being used in conjunction with the locally agreed syllabus as a scheme of work and this is being monitored by the coordinator to gauge its feasibility. Targets for development are appropriate and include increasing resources and building up the confidence of staff. The coordinator monitors planning and displays and gives informal advice to staff but does not undertake classroom observation. Assessment is earmarked as an area for development as it is unsatisfactory and does not support pupils' progress. Marking is also unsatisfactory. It is not evaluative enough – 'Great work!' 'Super' – and does not help pupils to understand how they can improve their work. Literacy skills are insufficiently developed in the subject. Although pupils discuss religious beliefs and write letters and poetry, teaching relies too much on work sheets instead of allowing pupils to explore issues and write in their own words. Pupils visit St Mary's Church and the Church Army chaplain is a regular visitor, but there are few visits or visitors to enrich the curriculum. Stimulating and colourful displays such as Divali, Hindu festival of light in Year 2, The Torah in Year 3 and Hindu worship in Year 4 capture pupils' interest and provide a good focus for learning. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development when they reflect on Hindu prayers, study some of the world's great faiths and learn that stories like Rama and Sita illustrate common features of religions and their moral teachings.

