

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PETER'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Tunbridge Wells

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118614

Headteacher: Mrs L E Sydenham

Reporting inspector: Mrs M S Summers
25455

Dates of inspection: 9th-11th October 2000

Inspection number: 224832

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | Infant and junior |
| School category: | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Windmill Street Tunbridge Wells Kent |
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| Appropriate authority: | The governing body, St Peter's Church of England Primary School |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr D Smith |
| Date of previous inspection: | October 1996 |

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|-----------------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Mary Summers | Registered inspector 25455 | English, history, physical education, equality of opportunity. | What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? |
| Jan Leaning | Lay inspector 9569 | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? Partnership with parents. |
| Judith Howell | Team inspector 18083 | Science, information and control technology, geography, music, English as an additional language, children aged under five. | |
| Audrey Quinnell | Team inspector 19142 | Mathematics, religious education, art, design and technology, special educational needs. | How good are curricular and other opportunities? |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Peter's is a small Church of England primary school catering for pupils between four and 11 years of age. The school admits pupils from a wide area and pupils come from a broad mix of privately owned and rented accommodation. Houses in the immediate locality are small and pupils often move away from the school as families become larger. This results in a fairly high turnover of pupils, with fewer pupils in older classes. Three per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is well below average, but is not representative of pupils' circumstances generally. There are currently 131 full-time pupils on roll, 54 boys and 77 girls, including eight children in the Reception class who are under five years of age. Seven per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds although less than two per cent speak English as an additional language. Twenty-six per cent are on the school's register for special educational needs which is slightly higher than average. About one per cent of pupils have statements of special educational need. The results of baseline assessments confirm that children enter the school at average standards for their age. Apart from the headteacher, the entire teaching staff has changed over the last 18 months, which represents a very significant challenge to the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Clear leadership and good quality teaching in the older classes mean that standards are beginning to rise. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils reach high standards in information and communication technology by the time they leave the school.
- The quality of teaching is good overall and is having a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- The school provides a calm and caring environment where pupils feel safe and confident to learn.
- Pupils show very good behaviour and attitudes to their work and these greatly assist their learning.
- The governors fulfil their responsibilities very well and provide good support to the school's work.
- The school involves parents very well in the education of their children.

What could be improved

- The standards reached by pupils in the national tests, when compared with similar schools, particularly at Key Stage 2.
- The consistency of teaching in literacy and numeracy throughout the school.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and the progress they make.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory improvement overall since its previous inspection in October 1996. However, the appointment of some new, well-informed and enthusiastic teachers and the governors' and headteacher's determination to raise standards mean that it shows a good capacity to improve in the future. Standards of attainment have been variable since the last inspection but the introduction of good assessment systems for English and mathematics has highlighted where pupils' achievement could be better and groups of pupils in each class have been targeted for concentrated support. The quality of teaching has improved overall. The school has addressed the key issues identified at the last inspection well. For example, provision in information and communication technology is now good and standards have improved significantly. More pupils are now reaching high levels in the national tests for seven year olds, although there is room for improvement in the current cohort of Year 2 pupils.

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 |
| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 1999 |
| English | B | C | C | D |
| mathematics | C | D | C | B |
| science | C | D | E | E |

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The table indicates that, over the past three years, standards have been falling, although the small size of the Year 6 cohorts mean that these grades must be treated with caution. The results of the most recent national tests in 2000 indicate a significant improvement in science, with all pupils achieving nationally expected levels. They also show that more pupils are gaining high levels in English and science, although there are still too many pupils who do not reach nationally expected levels in English and mathematics. The targets the school set for pupils' achievement in English and mathematics this year were modest and the targets set for 2001 are too low for the current pupils in Year 6. The findings of this inspection judge current standards to be above average in English, including literacy, mathematics, including numeracy and information and communication technology. The improvement in standards is due to the present good quality teaching at Key Stage 2 and in Year 6 in particular. In English, pupils have good speaking and listening skills, which help them, make good progress in lessons. They write with good attention to punctuation and spelling and standards of handwriting are good. In mathematics, pupils are able to perform mental calculations well and are able to explain how they have arrived at their answers. Standards in science, religious education, art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education are judged to be average. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are on course to reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the year. Children aged under five reach average standards in most areas of their learning and above average standards in their personal and social development.

Most pupils, including higher achieving and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress and achieve good standards for their capabilities by the time they leave the school. Many pupils with special educational needs, however, are not making sufficient progress and achieving the standards of which they are capable.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Very good. The pupils take a pride in their work and are keen to do their best, which helps them to make good progress. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Pupils behave very well in assembly, around the school and in class. They show excellent behaviour when walking between the main school and the playground and hall. |
| Personal development and relationships | Pupils work very well together, share ideas and equipment and take responsibility enthusiastically. |
| Attendance | Attendance is good and most pupils arrive punctually for school. A few parents take their children on holiday in school time and this affects the progress of these children during the summer term when some of them take national tests. |

Pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and personal development assist them to make good progress.

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.

Ninety two percent of the teaching observed was at least satisfactory and thirty five per cent was very good. All the teaching for children aged under five was good and much of it was very good. There has been a complete change of teaching staff over the last 18 months. Most teaching of English and mathematics, including literacy and numeracy, is good. Most teachers have a sound knowledge of what pupils need to learn and plan suitably interesting lessons, which motivate them to do their best. They use question and answer sessions well to remind pupils of what they have learned, to challenge their thinking and to move them on in their learning. Relationships with pupils are very good and mean that pupils are confident to speak up in class and ask if they do not understand. Teachers are not planning the use of classroom and special educational needs assistants well enough to help pupils with special educational needs make enough progress.

The quality of learning is good. Throughout the school, pupils of all ages work hard and, currently, they are making good progress. They are enthusiastic and interested in their lessons and produce good amounts of work. In a very few instances, where the work is either too easy or too hard, pupils lose concentration and waste time chattering.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | The curriculum is well organised and assists the pupils to make good progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The number and variety of extracurricular activities are good. Sometimes, pupils are withdrawn from class lessons for music or for extra support and this results in their having unequal access to the curriculum. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Unsatisfactory. The support for these pupils is not managed well enough to ensure that they make sufficient progress. Work in class is not matched well enough to pupils' individual needs and the work of support assistants is not managed closely enough to ensure that they have a real impact on pupils' learning. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | Good. The few pupils with English as an additional language take a full part in the school's curriculum and make good progress. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good overall. Moral and social provision is very strong and contributes well to pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and personal development. Cultural provision is good and spiritual provision is satisfactory. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school cares for its pupils well. Systems to monitor pupils' progress in English and mathematics are very good and there are clear procedures in place to monitor and promote good behaviour. |

Excellent links with parents help the pupils to feel comfortable at school and contribute to their good progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher gives the school purposeful leadership. This results in a calm and happy atmosphere where pupils feel valued and try their best. The deputy and other teachers with subject and management responsibilities work extremely hard and are having a very good effect upon provision and standards in the school. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | The governing body fulfils its responsibilities very well. The governors monitor and support the work of the school very effectively and are committed to providing the best possible conditions for individual pupils to thrive and achieve good standards. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The headteacher and senior staff have a thorough knowledge of the school's performance and have taken effective steps to address any weaknesses they have noted. The support in place to address current weaknesses in teaching has not yet had time to take effect. |
| The strategic use of resources | The school's resources are used well to promote pupils' learning. Major spending items are carefully costed and governors assess the value they have achieved for their money through carefully focused visits and formal discussion at their meetings. The school development plan also provides useful criteria for evaluating value for money but these are insufficiently focused upon raising standards. |

Accommodation is satisfactory and staff work hard to ensure that the difficulties it presents do not hinder provision for the pupils or their learning. Learning resources are of very good quality and support teaching and learning effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The progress that their children make. • The quality of their children's behaviour. • The quality of the teaching. • The school is approachable. • The school's high expectations of their children. • The way in which the school works closely with them. • The leadership and management of the school. • The way in which the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. • The range of activities on offer outside the school day. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of information they receive about their children's progress. • Arrangements for younger children at lunchtime. |

The findings of the inspection support the positive views of parents, although pupils with special educational needs are not making as much progress as they should. The quality of information that the school provides about pupils' progress is excellent and the school welcomes parents at any time to talk about any concerns. The findings of the inspection agree that younger pupils have insufficient time to enjoy their lunch.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Pupils in Year 6 reached average standards in English and mathematics in the national tests in 1999, when compared with all schools, although their attainment in science was well below average. When compared with similar schools, standards were average in mathematics, below average in English and well below average in science. These statistics must be treated with some caution however, because the numbers of pupils in Year 6 are small and the results of one pupil can affect the overall data. The overall standards achieved by the school were affected adversely by the small percentage of pupils who reached high levels in the test. For example, in English, the number of pupils reaching Level 5 was only about one third of the national average and, in science, the number was about half of the national average. Assessments made by teachers reflected the test results in mathematics and science although showed under-expectation in English, because of a lack of confidence on the part of the teacher in assessing pupils at these high levels. Taking the four years 1996 to 1999 together, the performance of girls was significantly better than that of boys in English and mathematics.

2. When the 1999 results are compared with the previous three years, they show falling standards in English and science. However, the results of the most recent national tests for 11 year olds in 2000 indicate a rise in standards in science, with all pupils reaching the level of the national expectation and a quarter of pupils gaining higher levels. The percentage of pupils reaching high levels in English has also increased to one third and the percentage in mathematics has been maintained. However, these standards are likely to be below the average of similar schools in English and well below average in mathematics. This is because pupils with special educational needs are not making enough progress to reach nationally expected levels. The targets the school set for pupils' achievement in English and mathematics this year were modest and the targets set for 2001 are too low for the current pupils in Year 6.

3. The findings of this inspection are that the current pupils in Year 6 are on course to reach above average standards in English, including literacy, and mathematics, including numeracy, and average standards in science. These standards reflect the current good quality teaching in place in Key Stage 2 generally and for Year 6 pupils in particular. Standards in information and communication technology are above those found in most schools and, in religious education, art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, standards are average. Standards found at the school's last OFSTED inspection have been maintained, except in art, where standards have fallen to average and in information and communication technology where they have risen to above average. The school has worked hard on improving provision for information and communication technology and teachers' knowledge of, and confidence in, the subject and this has had a positive impact on standards.

4. In English, standards are high in speaking and listening and in writing, and are average in reading. Pupils in Year 6 have good literacy skills. They listen carefully and respond confidently and clearly, using a good range of vocabulary, for example, when they discuss their scientific investigations into water evaporation. Most pupils read fluently and with good levels of expression, although a few have more limited understanding of what the text is about. They use reference books appropriately to help them find out information to support their work in other subjects, but the lack of a library restricts more advanced knowledge of classification and catalogue systems. Most pupils write well in a range of subjects, using accurate punctuation and spelling. They use their good range of vocabulary well to

provide interest and excitement to their stories. Handwriting standards are good, and most pupils show very good attention to presentation.

5. In mathematics, pupils' numeracy skills are well developed. They show good abilities when working out mental calculations and work enthusiastically on problems, converting percentages to fractions and finding the perimeters of two-dimensional shapes. They have a clear understanding of tens, hundreds, thousands and beyond and of the function of the decimal point. They use their numeracy skills well in other subjects, for example, in geography when finding the co-ordinates of a place on a map.

6. In science, pupils' investigative skills are well developed. They use their previous knowledge to plan an experiment to test which factors affect evaporation, taking into account the conditions necessary for a fair test. They show a sound knowledge of the differences between solids, liquids and gases and the changes that occur in the water cycle.

7. In art, pupils have good skills in handling a range of tools and working in different media and use their sketching skills appropriately in preparation for watercolour paintings of their local park. They use the results of their research into waterproof materials to design a tent and then evaluate their products, saying what could be improved. In geography, they have a sound knowledge of rivers and how erosion occurs and develop their knowledge of other cultures when they study rivers in India. They develop a sound understanding of some of the major periods in British history, and can use historical evidence, such as photographs and pictures, to help them form conclusions about the past. They have well developed skills in information and communication technology: they are able to select and organise text and graphics, retrieve information from CD-ROMs and the Internet and write a simple program to make a screen turtle draw their initials. In music, pupils sing tunefully and use percussion instruments confidently. They gain appropriate standards in swimming and show good games skills when dribbling a ball round a series of cones. In religious education pupils show a secure understanding of the beliefs, symbols and traditions of the five main world religions.

8. In the 1999 national tests for seven year olds, standards were average in reading, above average in writing but below average in mathematics, when compared with all schools. When compared with similar schools, standards were above average in writing, below average in reading and well below average in mathematics. As in the Key Stage 2 tests, the low percentage of pupils reaching high levels in mathematics affected the overall standard attained. Assessments made by teachers reflected the national test results, although they showed some under-expectation in reading, where more pupils reached high levels than forecast by teachers.

9. In Key Stage 1, standards varied considerably between 1996 and 1999, although showing broadly rising standards overall. Boys performed better than girls in writing and mathematics.

10. The results of the most recent tests in summer 2000 indicate improvement in reading and writing, with standards likely to be above average in reading and well above average in writing when compared with schools nationally. Significant improvement has been made in mathematics, where standards are likely to be above average. The overall improvement is due to more pupils reaching high levels than in the previous year.

11. The findings of this inspection show that overall, pupils in Year 2 are on course to reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This reflects the results of the 1999 tests in reading, shows a rise in mathematics but represents a drop in writing. Standards in literacy and numeracy are in line with those expected nationally. However, standards are on course to be lower than those of pupils in similar schools. Pupils reach average standards in science, information and communication

technology, religious education, art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. Compared with the school's last OFSTED inspection, standards have risen in information and communication technology but have fallen in art. Standards in information and communication technology have risen because of the better resources now available to teachers and pupils and to teachers' improved knowledge and understanding of the subject.

12. In English, in Year 2, pupils' speaking and listening skills are good because teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to discuss work between themselves and also in class discussion. Pupils have good vocabulary, which they use confidently, for example when they talk about differences between their own town and the fictional Scottish island of Struay in their work in geography. Most pupils in Year 2 read their books accurately and many do so with good expression. They can talk about the plot and describe the characters and a few know how to use the contents and index pages to help them find out information from reference books. Many pupils are beginning to use full stops and capital letters in their written work, although standards of handwriting and presentation vary widely.

13. In mathematics, the pupils are developing sound numeracy skills. Most can add and subtract mentally with numbers to twenty and many are able to explain how they arrived at their answers. They can round up, double and half numbers and are beginning to use standard measurements of length and time effectively. They recognise simple two-dimensional shapes and can describe some of their properties.

14. Pupils are developing satisfactory understanding of different scientific concepts. For example, they can classify materials into groups according to whether they are hard or soft and they understand how animals produce offspring and that these grow into adults. They are learning how to conduct simple investigations and record the results of their experiments in simple tables and diagrams.

15. In art, the pupils can draw reasonably proportioned human figures and a few use oil pastels effectively to blend colours. They can use a variety of small tools safely when cutting and joining materials to construct small-wheeled vehicles in design and technology. Most pupils know the countries within the British Isles and can pinpoint their own town on a map. They understand the passage of time when they place important events such as the Great Fire of London on a timeline and begin to compare aspects of their own lives with life in the past. They have sound skills in information and communication technology, being able to highlight text and change font and size. In music, they show a growing awareness of rhythm and can sing a range of songs tunefully from memory. In gymnastics, they show satisfactory control of their bodies when running, stopping and changing direction and they are beginning to perform sequences, involving balances and rolls. Their work in religious education shows a sound understanding of why different religions are important to different groups of people and a growing knowledge of the important aspects of Christianity.

16. When children aged under five enter the school, their overall attainment is generally as expected for their ages. From this starting point, the children make sound progress and most are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and in their creative and physical development. Standards in personal, social and emotional development are good and most children are on course to exceed the recommendations for the end of the foundation stage. In the school's previous inspection, the children were judged to attain average standards in all areas of learning except speaking and listening and some aspects of physical development where high standards were attained.

17. Most pupils in the school make good progress and achieve high standards for their capabilities in English and mathematics by the time they leave the school. However, pupils with special educational

needs, especially those who are on Stage 2 or above, do not make sufficient progress either in class or in the one-to-one sessions with support assistants. Teachers are not planning work, which is matched well enough to their individual learning needs, and they are not planning the work of support assistants effectively. The work prepared for these pupils is often not interesting or stimulating enough to involve them in their own learning and this hinders their progress. The very few pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress and take a full part in the school's curriculum.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. Pupils' attitudes and values are very good; they are a strong feature of the school and reflect its aims and Christian ethos. Pupils know the school rules and each class has its own rules. They understand the difference between right and wrong, and are very polite, friendly and courteous to visitors, teachers and their classmates. Pupils are happy and enjoy school; they are keen and enthusiastic in their learning, concentrate well and work at a good pace. In most lessons, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. In the playground, pupils are very keen to join in activities and organise themselves well. There is a good range of activities for them to enjoy. Since the previous inspection, the movement of children between the sites has been tightened up and now includes the use of a mobile telephone to keep contact with the main building. The level of supervision is now very good.

19. Behaviour overall is very good. Pupils understand what is expected of them in lessons, in the playground and around the school. They behave sensibly and no rough or inappropriate behaviour was seen during the inspection. In the dining hall and in the playground, behaviour is very good, so that lunchtime becomes a valuable social occasion. Pupils' behaviour while walking between the playground, hall and main school is excellent. Playtimes are split so that younger children and older pupils have different times and this allows more space for pupils to play. There have been no exclusions over the past year.

20. The personal development of pupils is very good. They act as monitors, taking dinner registers and getting out books and equipment before and during lessons and at playtimes. At lunch times, older pupils take turns to help in the dining room and they are always supportive of the younger children. Pupils are involved in evaluating their own work in, for example, physical education lessons and this helps them develop respect for one another's ideas. Relationships within the school are very strong: adults provide very good role models, pupils show high levels of respect and members of staff know the children and are sensitive to their individual needs. There were no incidents of bullying or racism during the inspection. The atmosphere is calm and relaxed, yet purposeful and geared towards learning. In classes, pupils listen carefully and wait politely for their turn to answer; they work well, both in their groups and independently. Pupils are aware that there are others much less fortunate than themselves and raise funds for national and international charities. They respect the values and beliefs of others and understand that there are many different kinds of faiths and cultures.

21. Children aged under five settle very quickly into the school routines. They have a positive approach to their learning activities, grow in confidence and quickly become independent. They co-operate well together and respond to the activities with a sense of excitement. The quality of personal, social and emotional development in the Reception class is very good because the staff work hard to promote good attitudes and motivate them to participate. All children are very friendly and their behaviour is very good both in and out of the classroom.

22. The positive attitudes and behaviour noted at the last inspection have been maintained. The findings of the inspection indicate that these are having a good impact on the progress that pupils are currently making in class.

23. The attendance rate at the school in the year 1998/99 was above the national average and the figures for unauthorised absence were below the national average. Pupils arrive punctually at school and to lessons. A few parents take their children on holiday in school time and this affects the progress of these children during the summer term when some of them take the national tests.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

24. Overall, the quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good. This judgement is based upon observations of teachers currently in the school and does not relate to the standards reached by pupils in the national tests for the past two years. Across the school, the quality of teaching was judged to be good or better in almost seven out of ten lessons and very good in around three in ten. Teaching in literacy and numeracy is good in most classes. The current findings represent an improvement on the findings of the school's last inspection when more than one lesson in ten was unsatisfactory and only one in ten was very good. The last inspection noted that the teaching of science, history and religious education at Key Stage 1 had some shortcomings and that, at both key stages, the teaching of information and communication technology was weak. Teachers did not have a clear understanding of how to teach information and communication technology and, in some other lessons, pupils were not being given suitable work for their capabilities, based on the results of previous assessments. These issues have been addressed appropriately: teachers now have firm knowledge in information and communication technology and, in most cases, assessments are being used to provide suitably challenging work for pupils of different capabilities. Only in the case of some pupils with special educational needs are teachers not planning work to move them on quickly enough in their learning.

25. The current inspection finds the quality of teaching to be good in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 and in information and communication technology throughout the school. Teaching is satisfactory in science, religious education, art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education at both key stages. Teaching in English and mathematics at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall, although with great variations between the two classes.

26. The quality of teaching and learning for children aged under five is good and ensures that children enter Year 1 with a sound mastery of basic skills. All seven lessons observed in this class were at least good, with three being very good. Teaching of this quality means that all children learn at a rate appropriate to their abilities and any who struggle are soon given extra help. The Reception teacher knows the children very well as individuals and is skilled at developing warm relationships. Consequently, the children settle into school happily and develop very good attitudes to learning. The daily activities are well prepared and resources are used effectively to stimulate interest and participation. Planning is good and is matched carefully to the recommended early learning goals with a good balance between teacher directed and child-initiated activities. Well-organised routines enable all children to become used to the pattern of the day and respond quickly to the high expectations for behaviour, attentiveness and following instructions. Adults listen with interest to what the children have to say and, when working with them, demonstrate good skills in helping children to develop their language for communication. New work is explained clearly and then questions are used skilfully to assess how well the children have grasped the concept. The teacher watches the children's responses carefully and takes every opportunity to extend their knowledge. In one of the lessons that illustrated the strengths of teaching in the Reception class, the teacher used the nursery rhyme, 'Mary, Mary Quite Contrary' to develop the children's literacy skills. She extended the children's vocabulary by asking questions, such as 'What does "contrary" mean?' and when their replies made it clear that they did not understand, she used a child to help act out the meaning of the word. The teacher followed this discussion by asking the children 'What are all the pretty maids in a row?' and encouraged them to use

their imagination. The concept of plant growth was developed further in a lesson following on from this when the needs of plants and how they grow from seeds were introduced. The teaching of social skills is especially good and the children enter Year 1 with a good understanding of how to behave and a growing awareness of others' needs as well as their own.

27. At Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching and learning varies considerably but is satisfactory overall. In one class, it is good and often very good. The teacher shows very good knowledge of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and plans her lessons carefully to make sure that all pupils have work, which challenges them and helps them to learn. She presents her lessons with great enthusiasm and this means that her pupils are anxious to learn and try their best. For example, in a very good literacy lesson, after reading "We're all going on a Bear Hunt!" she involved the pupils well through a very skilled question and answer session, which encouraged them to think about an imaginary journey and where they might go. When it came time for them to do their independent work, they could barely wait to begin and their writing showed very good achievement, as they practised using capital letters and full stops. The teacher's high quality relationships with pupils instil confidence and pupils are not afraid to offer their own opinions and answers during class discussions. Her class control is very good and pupils respond to instructions immediately, meaning that no time is wasted in lessons. Explanations are clear so that pupils know exactly what is expected of them and specific skills are taught well, as in an art lesson, when her young pupils learned about proportion in figure drawing.

28. In the small number of lessons where the quality of teaching and learning is at best unsatisfactory, the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy are not being applied consistently. This results in poor structure to lessons, uncertainty about what pupils of different capabilities are expected to learn and, ultimately, in slow progress being made by the pupils. This is the case for both pupils with special educational needs and higher achieving pupils, who are unchallenged by the activities presented. In a very few lessons, pupils' behaviour is not managed well enough; strategies for gaining pupils' attention are not always successful and clear guidelines have not been established for acceptable classroom behaviour.

29. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is good, with almost three-quarters of lessons being judged as good and over one-third as very good. Both teachers in these classes show firm knowledge of what their pupils need to learn and this results in clear explanations and instructions and good questioning skills which challenge pupils' thinking and move them on in their learning. For example, in a very effective lesson in the Year 5/6 class, the teacher gave a clear demonstration of how to move information from a CD-ROM into a different format and checked that the pupils had understood the concept by skilled questioning before they began their individual tasks. He reinforced their knowledge effectively at the end of the lesson by drawing them together to describe what they had learned. Teachers at this key stage apply the national strategies well and this means that pupils receive a good grounding in literacy and numeracy. They give useful homework, which encourages pupils to practise the skills they have learned in English and mathematics. A good balance of strategies is used which makes lessons interesting and challenging for pupils and helps them to maintain their concentration. Crisp introductions to lessons and clear explanations, followed by challenging question and answer sessions provide pupils with a firm basis on which to extend their learning during their individual tasks. Interesting activities result in pupils working hard and doing their best. The way that teachers share the learning intentions of the lesson means that the pupils are involved and are able to assess their progress at the end. Management of pupils is a particular strength; teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and command high levels of respect.

30. The main weakness in teaching relates to the teachers' provision for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers are not identifying clearly enough what these pupils are expected to learn and are not using learning support assistants effectively to ensure that these pupils make good

progress. In a few instances, the activities provided for these pupils are not interesting or stimulating enough and pupils become bored and make little progress. This is particularly the case when worksheets are provided which provide little incentive for pupils to be involved in their learning and assess their own progress.

31. Teaching for higher achieving pupils is generally good as is the case for pupils with English as an additional language.

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

32. Overall, the school provides a good curriculum for pupils and fulfils its aims well. It includes all subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and personal and social education. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and offers pupils a good range of opportunities. The time allocated to each subject is appropriate and weekly teaching hours are satisfactory. Health, sex education and the use and misuse of drugs are taught as part of science and personal and social education. Appropriate policies and schemes of work are in place. The school uses national guidance as the basis for curricular planning and the provision for homework is satisfactory.

33. Long-term and medium-term planning is satisfactory and provides for the coverage of all nationally recommended programmes of study. Weekly plans are detailed, but vary in quality. The best focuses on specific attainments for groups of pupils, but others do not focus sufficiently on what skills are to be learnt. Planning of the curriculum is monitored by the headteacher and occasionally by subject co-ordinators. The curriculum is planned on a two-year rolling programme for most classes, which enables the school to ensure that pupils in the mixed-age classes receive the full curriculum. Individual lessons are evaluated and are used to inform future planning.

34. In the Reception class, the curriculum provided takes full account of the six areas of learning as set out in national guidance. Planning is thorough and detailed for each area of learning and linked well to appropriate topics, such as 'Nursery Rhymes', 'All About Me' and 'Mini-beasts'. A strong emphasis is placed on providing first-hand experiences of quality. There is very good provision for personal and social development and this prepares children well for Key Stage 1. More focused teaching, linked to literacy and numeracy, is carefully planned and introduced appropriately to the children.

35. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented successfully in most classes. Both are being effective in helping to raise standards, together with school's focus on raising the standards of attainment for the higher achieving pupils. However, they are having less effect upon the standards reached by some pupils with special educational needs.

36. Pupils with statements of special educational need receive extra help from learning support assistants, as specified in their statement. Pupils on Stages 2 and above on the special educational needs register receive extra support within their class and in short periods where they are withdrawn for extra help. These pupils miss other lessons and are not receiving their full entitlement to the curriculum. Although pupils enjoy the extra support, both in class and when withdrawn, the level of intervention is not always set appropriately to address the needs of each pupil. The needs of each pupil are not identified clearly enough and plans are not rigorous enough to enable pupils to make fast enough progress. The responsibilities of the special educational needs co-ordinator, teachers and learning support assistants are not clear enough to ensure the appropriate level of intervention for each pupil.

37. The school provides pupils with English as an additional language with a curriculum that reflects a positive attitude towards their languages and culture. These pupils have full access to the curriculum and their language skills are not a barrier to learning. The pupils are enthusiastic, well motivated learners and behave well in and outside the classroom. A member of the Kent Language and Achievement Support Service carries out the support teaching of pupils with English as an additional language in the mainstream classes. Regular liaison with class teachers and the headteacher provides the school with a clear understanding of the pupils' progress and their future needs. The school meets its aim to celebrate each child as a unique individual.

38. Extracurricular provision is good and pupils can take part in a wide range of activities. They are able to participate in clubs during the lunch hour or after school, where they can learn, for example, to play the recorder, sing in the choir, make music, undertake art activities and play football. They can take part in various sporting activities with other schools, such as the local schools' football, netball and pentathlon tournaments. Parents are also involved in organising the netball and gardening clubs and, once a month on a Saturday morning, they lead a craft club in the school hall. The curriculum is enhanced through the good range of visits made by pupils and by visitors to the school. Pupils visit the local parish church and the vicar is a regular visitor and participator in school assemblies. Visits to Crofton Roman Villa, Hurstmonceux Science Museum, Yalding Fen, the National Gallery, the local library and museum all enrich pupils' learning in many subjects. The school plans visits to a zoo, and pupils in Years 5 and 6 are able to have an activity weekend in the Isle of Wight. Visits to the school by the National Trust Theatre Company and pupils from a local High School drama group enhance pupils' appreciation of theatrical productions.

39. There are good links with playgroups and other schools and both teachers and pupils make regular visits in the summer term to use the computer suite at a local high school. These links help to prepare pupils well for their transfer to a new school.

40. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good, cultural development is good and spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual development is enhanced by the strong connections with the local church and through religious education, where they learn about the five main world religions. The daily acts of collective worship provide staff and pupils with a sense of shared values and the feeling of being part of a large family. The focus is mainly Christian; pupils sing hymns and take part in prayers, and the local vicar leads assemblies regularly. Pupils visit Rochester Cathedral every other year for a special service for schools. Pupils are encouraged to develop an appreciation of, and to wonder at, the natural world during science and art lessons. Pupils and parents are very involved with the new 'Millennium' garden, which now provides useful opportunities for pupils to study and wonder at the natural world.

41. The very good provision for pupils' moral development is founded on the very high expectations that staff have for them. All adults are very good role models for their pupils and are very consistent in the way they show respect for both pupils and adults. The school's positive approach to the management of behaviour and rewards, such as the 'Star of the week', team points and the headteacher's praise makes pupils aware of good values and helps them to develop an appropriate idea of what is right and wrong. The weekly celebration assembly enables pupils to value their own efforts and those of others. Through their sporting activities, pupils are developing a healthy sense of competition and pride in group achievements.

42. The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development. It creates a strong sense of identity as a community in which everyone is cared for and supported well. Pupils are given good opportunities to work together in class in pairs and in groups, and to take responsibilities in their classes

and around the school appropriate to their age. During lunchtime, a young pupil was having difficulty with his lunch and, without being asked, an older pupil went to him, asked if he would like some help and cut up the younger one's food. Each half term, the 'Courtesy Cup' is awarded to a pupil, who is nominated by staff and pupils and chosen as the 'most courteous pupil' by the mid-day supervisors. Pupils are given good opportunities to become aware of the wider community and how they can affect the lives of others by their fund-raising activities. Parents, relatives and local residents all enjoy sharing in the celebrations at harvest, Christmas and Easter, when pupils take part in performances in the local church and sing in the local shopping precinct.

43. There is good provision for pupils' cultural development. Pupils learn about the richness and diversity of their own and other cultures through their work in many different subjects. In geography and religious education, they learn about the culture in India. As part of their work in history, pupils study Victorian houses and younger pupils have visited the local toy museum. In their art lessons, they study the works of famous artists from around the world, such as Jan Vermeer, Picasso and Van Gogh and look at objects from Thailand. They sing songs from Africa and Australia and listen to a wide variety of music. Parents helped to organise a 'Bastille Day', when pupils were able to taste French food, play French playground games and sing songs from France.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The school provides a safe, orderly and caring environment in which the pupils learn well and make good progress. A very high priority is placed on the safety, security and happiness of the children. Members of staff, even those comparatively new to the school, are making very good efforts to ensure that they know pupils and their parents. External agencies including the school nurse, educational welfare officer and the school doctor, give good support to the school. At play and during lunch breaks, pupils are supervised well.

45. Procedures for promoting the health and safety and well being of the pupils are very good. The health and safety policy is clear and comprehensive and all adults share a good awareness of their roles. Even the pupils are encouraged to think about their own safety. The governors have carried out a full risk assessment. The issues identified at the previous inspection have all been addressed successfully. Procedures for reporting, recording and investigating accidents are in place and there are regular safety checks on equipment, such as fire extinguishers and electrical equipment. There are staff trained in first-aid and first aid equipment is regularly checked.

46. There are very good procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour. The behaviour policy outlines rewards and sanctions clearly and the school's expectations, which are high, are shared with parents, both in the governors' Annual Report to parents and the home-school agreement. Behaviour is managed well with few sanctions but many rewards including praise, stickers, certificates and a 'merit assembly'. There are policies dealing with bullying and anti-racism, which are also very good.

47. The procedures for encouraging regular attendance and punctuality are satisfactory and are monitored regularly. Parents are aware of the need to inform the school of absences. If there are problems, the educational welfare officer is involved. Since the previous report, the registers are now kept accurately, according to Local Education Authority guidelines, are monitored weekly by the school secretary and meet statutory requirements. The headteacher notifies parents regularly about the importance of not taking holidays during term time.

48. The school's provision for personal support and guidance is good, with clear expectations of all school personnel. There is a sex education policy, which is taught across the curriculum in the context of loving family relationships. Drugs education is also covered. The procedures for child protection are very good: the policy contains clear guidelines and good information, and all staff are aware of the need to be vigilant and report any incidents to the headteacher, who is the officer with responsibility.

49. There are very effective procedures for introducing children to the Reception class, including meetings and visits. Pupils move to several different secondary schools and have the opportunity to visit them. Records, annual reports and other curricular information are passed on appropriately.

50. The monitoring and support of pupils' academic performance and personal development are satisfactory overall. Good assessment and record keeping procedures are in place in English and mathematics and are used well to identify underachievement and target pupils effectively. Careful analysis of the end of key stage tests in English, mathematics and science has led the school to identify weak areas and those which require emphasis. These elements are subsequently incorporated within the planning of lessons and are proving productive in raising standards. Pupils are assessed yearly and the results are used by teachers to forecast the level that pupils are likely to achieve the following year. Those who do not achieve the expected grade are targeted for further support and are given group improvement plans to work to with a learning support assistant. Assessment procedures in other subjects of the curriculum are, at present, undergoing change. The school has recently adopted nationally recommended guidelines for most other subjects and is considering the adoption of recommended forms of assessment. At present, teachers keep their own individual records of pupils' progress and evaluate their weekly plans and individual lesson plans to identify pupils who need either extension tasks or require extra support. The headteacher has an overview of all evaluations. Good use is made of baseline assessments to guide curricular planning for the youngest pupils. The results of these assessments are shared with parents throughout the year. The school has fully addressed the key issue arising from the previous report that identified the need to improve the use of assessment data to analyse and assist progress.

51. The school knows its pupils very well and their personal development is monitored well by teachers, who include comments in the end of year reports to parents. Teachers make useful notes, sometimes assisted by the learning support assistants, concerning behaviour, attitudes and response in class lessons and in group situations. These are valuable and indicate that all adults are concerned with pupils' social development and their emotional well-being. All teachers provide effective support and advice to pupils but at present there is no whole-school system in place for pupils to be involved in setting their own targets for improvement on a regular basis.

52. The assessment system for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Pupils' needs are reviewed regularly by the use of standardised tests in reading, spelling and mathematics, and by reviews of individual education plans each term. However, assessment is not used well enough to set appropriate targets to help pupils to make fast enough progress. When pupils' needs are too complex to be managed from within the school, outside professionals, such as the educational psychologist, members of the Local Education Authority's support team and the speech therapist are called in to give further advice. The current weakness in the system is that pupils' current level of understanding is not always taken into account, when class lessons and pupils' individual education plans are drawn up. The intervention for each pupil with special educational needs is not always planned clearly enough to enable teachers and assistants to provide effective support. Too much responsibility is given to the learning support assistants, when planning the level of support for these pupils, and withdrawal sessions for extra support lack sufficient focus on the specific needs of the pupil.

53. Assessment and record keeping procedures for children aged under five are good. On-going observations of the children at work and play within each area of learning are well-established and documented. Consequently, the teacher recognises the purpose and potential for each child within each activity she plans. Children are assessed on entry to the school and again at the end of the year to monitor their progress. The information provided is used appropriately to identify children with special educational needs, to plan work that will meet the needs of individuals and to decide which literacy and numeracy groupings.

54. Parents appreciate the very high standards of care, the very good support for settling children into school and the approachability of the teachers. Pupils' well-being is of paramount importance and this has a positive influence on their progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. The school's partnership with parents is excellent and is a strength of the school. The school works hard and very successfully to ensure that parents feel welcome in school and are involved in their children's learning. Parents appreciate the dedication and commitment of the staff and the very good relationships within the school, which they say have improved since the previous inspection. They are always welcome in school, and feel that members of staff are very approachable. Many parents help on a regular basis, with reading, covering books, on school visits and helping in the classroom. Parents are supportive, praise the school for its high standards and very high expectations and recognise the quality of the information that the school provides. There is a very active Parent Teacher Association, and successful fund raising has provided a valuable extra source of income, which has funded extra playground equipment, the millennium garden and many other school projects. Each year, it makes a contribution towards the cost of school visits.

56. The quality of information provided for parents is excellent. The school prospectus and the governors' Annual Report to parents are interesting, clear and informative and meet statutory requirements. There is a consultation evening in the spring term and curricular information and regular newsletters are also sent out. Although a few parents felt they should receive more information about their children's progress, inspection findings indicate that annual reports meet statutory requirements and are of very good quality. They include targets and areas for development and provide an opportunity for parents' comments. The home-school agreement indicates useful ways in which parents, pupils and the school can work together. The homework policy provides clear information and most parents appreciate the amount and quality of homework set. These excellent links support and encourage pupils' learning.

57. Induction procedures for children aged under five are good. Parents are invited to meet the Reception teacher, headteacher and a representative of the Parent Teacher Association, when they have the opportunity to hear about the experiences their child will have and receive the school documentation. The teacher also visits all the pre-school playgroups which children attended before starting school. The children are then invited into the class for two visits during the term before they start school to get to know their teacher and become familiar with their new surroundings. There is constant daily communication between the Reception teacher and parents. Parents receive a detailed written report of their child's progress and achievement at the end of their year in Reception.

58. The parents' questionnaires, comments by parents at the pre-inspection meeting and in discussion during the inspection revealed very high levels of satisfaction with the school. A few parents raised concerns about the arrangements for younger children at lunchtime and observations made during the inspection indicate that the time they have to eat their lunch is too short.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The headteacher and governors lead and manage the school well. They have a strong commitment towards improving standards and, although there has been some variation in the standards attained in recent years because of the small numbers of pupils involved, the results of the most recent national tests show that their action towards this is beginning to be effective. The current inspection shows that standards in Year 6 are above average in English and mathematics which is the same as those found at the last inspection, although there have been some low standards in the intervening years. However, standards in science and art have fallen to average levels. Standards in information and communication technology have risen from below average to above average, which shows very good improvement on one of the key issues identified at the last inspection. Other issues identified have been addressed effectively. The quality of teaching is now good overall. Procedures to monitor the work of the school are now good and information to parents now meets statutory requirements. Registers are now marked correctly and the health and safety issues identified have been attended to very well and have had a considerable impact on the comfort and provision for the pupils. Higher achieving pupils at Key Stage 1 now reach higher standards, although teachers' planning does not always ensure that work challenges these pupils fully. Assessment information is used effectively to guide planning in most cases, but still requires improvement in the case of pupils with special educational needs.

60. Staff who are involved with children who are aged under five are suitably qualified and experienced and provide a strong lead in ensuring that provision meets national recommendations. The present co-ordinator has worked extremely hard to ensure that the difficulties presented by the accommodation do not affect provision for the children.

61. The deputy headteacher provides the headteacher with very good support and other teachers with a very positive role model. His impact on the work of the school and on standards in Year 6 is particularly notable, especially considering his relatively recent appointment and the fact that he has a full-time teaching commitment, with no regular non-contact time to fulfil his many extra responsibilities.

62. The provision for special educational needs is not managed well enough to ensure that all pupils on the register receive good quality support. Although statutory requirements are met regarding progress reviews and the provision of individual education plans, these plans are often not focused enough on identifying the specific needs of the pupils. This means that the additional support that these pupils receive is not planned well enough to help these pupils make enough progress. In many cases, teachers do not plan the use of learning support assistants well enough to ensure that they know exactly what the pupil is expected to learn during the lesson and involve them enough in assessing progress on a short-term basis. Learning support assistants are given too much responsibility for teaching these pupils and their work is not monitored regularly to ensure that they are providing the right support.

63. Overall, the school monitors its performance effectively. The headteacher has a good knowledge of the school and undertakes regular monitoring of teaching where any weaknesses are identified and addressed. Teachers with subject responsibilities monitor standards and teaching of their subjects well and have very clear ideas of what needs to be improved. Considering the short time that these teachers have been in the school, they have undertaken their responsibilities thoroughly and effectively. For example, the literacy co-ordinator has worked closely with the headteacher to analyse the results of recent tests and rates of progress. They have identified groups of pupils in each class who are

underachieving and teachers now have clear targets to meet for these pupils, which are monitored regularly by the co-ordinator. These are driving up standards effectively, particularly in Year 6.

64. Governors take a full part in monitoring the work of the school. They have an appropriate sub-committee structure that helps them to manage their work effectively. They undertake a systematic programme of visits, which link appropriately to the school's development plan, and liaison meetings with subject co-ordinators. These ensure that they are well informed about the school's work and are able to make informed decisions about budget allocations. At present, governors are undertaking a review of their performance and have already identified some areas in which they could improve, for example, how they could use governors with particular skills and knowledge more effectively. Careful financial planning, administration and monitoring of expenditure ensure that the school's resources are well used to promote pupils' learning. For example, spending on information and communication technology resources has raised standards in this area. The school makes good use of specific grants, for example, to improve the premises. Funds currently carried forward since the last financial year, have been saved to support the replacement of windows and external painting later this year. In order to ensure value for money, three quotations are obtained when significant expenditure is planned. Although criteria to judge the success of their spending are noted in the school's development plan, these are often not focused enough on improving standards.

65. The high turnover of staff in the past year has, overall, not affected the continuity of education for the pupils. Many positive aspects can be seen, for example the appointment of enthusiastic and hardworking teachers, who, because this is a small school, have had to assume a great many subject responsibilities. This they have done willingly and with great enthusiasm. Very good procedures are in place for supporting teachers who are newly qualified and the school offers appropriate support for other staff new to the school. Good relationships enable this support to be given sensitively and accepted readily. There are good systems for the professional development of teachers. Regular interviews are held where targets for development are agreed and these are reviewed regularly. These interviews also identify their individual training needs.

66. Accommodation in the school is satisfactory overall. Although the split site causes some difficulties, these are overcome well and parents feel that, in fact, their children gain good road safety skills through their regular walks to and from the school hall and playground. Staff work hard to ensure that classrooms are bright and interesting and are ably assisted by parents and friends who help with redecoration. All the health and safety issues raised with governors at the last inspection have been addressed. The accommodation for children aged under five is limited but staff here work hard to ensure that this does not hinder the provision made for the children or their development. The school has no library and this prevents the development of more advanced library skills.

67. The school has a very good range of high quality learning resources, which are used well to promote teaching and learning. Books and equipment are stored carefully and are easily accessible to staff and pupils. Computers are used very well in a range of subjects and pupils receive many opportunities to develop their information and communication technology skills. For example, pupils develop their literacy skills when they write their stories using a word processing package and gain information through the Internet about their work on the Great Fire of London. The locality is used extremely well to provide pupils with first-hand experience of, for example, life in Roman times, when they visit Crofton Villa. Visitors to the school also enhance pupils' experience, for example, when French parents organised a day when pupils could experience French culture through games, food and by learning some simple words and phrases.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

68. The headteacher, governors and staff should:

(1) Improve the standards reached by pupils in the national tests, particularly at Key Stage 2, to levels which are closer to those reached by pupils in similar schools by:

- ensuring that improvements in the school development plan are more closely linked to improving standards;
- using the results of existing assessments to identify the needs of individual pupils, including those with special educational needs.

(Paragraphs 1, 2, 8, 9, 11, 12, 17, 59, 64, 80, 83, 86, 89, 90, 96, 98)

(2) Raise the quality of teaching in literacy and numeracy to a uniformly high standard throughout the school by:

- ensuring that all teachers have a clear knowledge of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies;
- monitoring and supporting lesson planning where necessary;
- sharing examples of good practice in the school;
- monitoring lessons closely and providing clear targets for improvement where necessary.

(Paragraphs 25, 28, 93, 101)

(3) Improving provision for pupils with special educational needs to ensure that they make sufficient progress by:

- identifying their specific needs more clearly;
- using the results of regular assessments to set appropriate targets and plan effective support;
- ensuring that the responsibilities of the special educational needs co-ordinator, teachers and learning support assistants are clear and agreed in terms of planning and support;
- ensuring they have equal access to the whole curriculum;
- monitoring the work of learning support assistants more closely;
- involving these pupils more in assessing their own progress.

(Paragraphs 2, 17, 24, 28, 30, 35, 36, 52, 59, 62, 90, 93, 94)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Implement assessment systems for all subjects.
- Review the arrangements at lunchtime for younger children.
- Make suitable arrangements to allow the deputy headteacher to carry out his many duties.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 37 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 28 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0 | 35 | 33 | 24 | 3 | 5 | 0 |

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

| | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|--|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | | 131 |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | | 4 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

| | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | | 1 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | | 34 |

English as an additional language

| | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 7 |

Pupil mobility in the last school year

| | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 9 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 14 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 4.5 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.2 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

| | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | 1999 | 8 | 19 | 27 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|----------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 7 | 8 | 7 |
| | Girls | 16 | 19 | 16 |
| | Total | 23 | 27 | 23 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 85 [85] | 100 [95] | 85 [90] |
| | National | 82 [80] | 83 [81] | 87 [84] |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| | Girls | 16 | 16 | 17 |
| | Total | 23 | 23 | 24 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 85 [85] | 85 [80] | 89 [100] |
| | National | 82 [81] | 86 [85] | 87 [86] |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

| | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | 1999 | 9 | 7 | 16 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| | Girls | 7 | 6 | 7 |
| | Total | 14 | 12 | 12 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 88 [57] | 75 [57] | 75 [71] |
| | National | 70 [65] | 69 [59] | 78 [69] |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 4 | 6 | 6 |
| | Girls | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| | Total | 9 | 12 | 12 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 56 [52] | 75 [66] | 75 [71] |
| | National | 68 [65] | 69 [65] | 75 [72] |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 |
| Black – other | 1.6 |
| Indian | 1.6 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 |
| Chinese | 1.6 |
| White | 91.9 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 3.3 |

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) | 6.1 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 21.5 |
| Average class size | 26.2 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 6 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 86 |

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Financial year | 1999/2000 |
|----------------|-----------|

| | |
|--|---------|
| | |
| Total income | 265,621 |
| Total expenditure | 262,020 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1899 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 15,927 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 19,528 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 131 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 50 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 70 | 30 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 60 | 38 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 62 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 46 | 42 | 8 | 0 | 4 |
| The teaching is good. | 74 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 40 | 38 | 16 | 0 | 6 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 82 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 78 | 16 | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 58 | 38 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 72 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 64 | 24 | 4 | 0 | 8 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 48 | 44 | 6 | 0 | 2 |

Other issues raised by parents

A few parents were concerned about the arrangements for younger children in the dining hall.

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

69. The school has maintained the good provision for children in the foundation stage since the previous inspection. The present Reception teacher, who is fairly new to the school, is now well established and the Reception class is well organised. The school provides a safe environment, which, together with the calm and purposeful atmosphere in the classroom, enables children to feel secure. Good quality teaching is having a positive impact on children's learning.

70. Most children enter the Reception class with average skills in writing, mathematics and personal and social development. This is confirmed by the initial assessments conducted with these children. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1, the majority of children achieve appropriately and attain suitable standards in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. This is due to good teaching and learning in these areas. In their personal, social and emotional development, the quality of teaching and learning is very good and almost all children are on course to exceed the goals.

71. Children start school full-time either in the September or January of the year in which they become five, according to when their birthday occurs. Of the ten children currently in the Reception class, eight are under five. Most have attended either a pre-school nursery or playgroup.

Personal, social and emotional development

72. Many of the children enter the Reception class with good skills in personal and social development and, by the time they leave, most children are on track to have exceeded nationally expected levels in this area. This shows good achievement and is the result of skilful teaching, where children are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can do. The inspection took place early in the autumn term when the children had only recently been admitted. These young children were very well settled and had already learned to share and take turns while exploring the variety of activities on offer. Children play and work together well. They show consideration towards each other and are helped to learn how to apologise effectively if they upset one another by their actions. The children are enthusiastic about their learning. For example, when examining a range of seeds and plants, one child exclaimed, 'This is so much fun!' and when opening a horse chestnut shell and finding a conker inside, they showed great wonder. Even at this early stage in the term, the children settle quickly to more structured activities, such as literacy and numeracy, and show ability to concentrate for appropriate periods of time.

73. Personal and social development is planned for and promoted very well in all areas of learning. The well-established routines and caring nature of the provision allow all children to feel secure and to grow in confidence. The adults provide very good role models for the children, and always treat each other and the children with courtesy and respect. This leads to trusting relationships and helps the children to develop an awareness of others. The adults also promote children's personal independence effectively. For instance, the 'Plan, do, review and child-orientated play' activities on the timetable enable children to make choices, take decisions and learn how to solve problems for themselves. During personal, social and health education time, the teacher makes very good use of 'Jenny,' a model iguana, to encourage the children to talk about their own experiences, take turns, listen to others and to develop an awareness of the feelings of others.

Communication, language and literacy

74. On entry to the Reception class, the attainment of many of the children in communication, language and literacy is generally average. They make sound progress and, by the time the children end their Reception year, most are on course to achieve the recommended early learning goals. Their communication skills are particularly strong. All adults use talk to good effect and are good active listeners. Throughout all the areas of learning, both the Reception teacher and helpers talk to the children individually and in groups to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to communicate effectively. They show children that they value their efforts at communicating. The children listen well and participate confidently in discussions. They enjoy listening to stories and sharing books with adults. They experiment with words and text when, for example, listening to the story of 'This is the Bear'; they join in with the repetitive phrases and rhymes with the teacher. They begin to hear, say and confidently 'have a go' at writing the initial sound in words. For example, when writing a line of the nursery rhyme, 'Mary, Mary Quite Contrary' one child wrote 'w s b c s' for the line 'With silver bells and cockle shells.' Most children write their own name independently. The children are fascinated by the illustrations in books, such as 'This is the Bear' and know that the print told them what the story was about. They show good book handling skills and understand the concept of a word. Although the higher achieving children are beginning to recognise a few words in simple texts, the majority of children are at the early stages of learning in this element. The shared partnership with parents for reading has a positive impact on the child's development and learning.

75. Elements of the National Literacy Strategy are well used by the Reception teacher. A good understanding of phonics is developed through effective use of well-known stories and rhymes. Children are provided with a good range of purposeful activities to develop their use of language for reading and writing whatever their stage of development. For example, in the role-play area, they are provided with paper and pencils to take telephone calls for the King and Queen in their castle and are asked to write notes to the teacher. Through the effective interaction and questioning by all adults who help in the Reception class, the children extend their vocabulary and develop a greater understanding of reading and writing.

Mathematical development

76. This area of learning is well taught and, by the end of the Reception year, most children are on course to achieve the early learning goals for mathematics. The children are provided with a wide range of practical experiences, such as threading beads, dice games and building with bricks. The more formal activities for mathematics are introduced carefully to the children through the national framework for teaching numeracy. Most children can count to ten and some count beyond to twenty. Children use mathematical language with confidence, such as, 'I need one more to make eight' when threading beads or 'There are three bears in the sand, I need to find one more to make four'. Many children name the simple shapes of triangle, circle and square and begin to use mathematical names for 'solid' three-dimensional shapes. The work is well planned and children are encouraged to see mathematics all around them and develop their mathematical ideas through play situations, as in the sand tray when looking for 'bears' or when counting the number of jumps they make in physical education activities. Children are encouraged to use their imaginations appropriately, for example, they are asked to close their eyes and imagine they are painting a picture inside a square. All adults treat children like mathematicians and encourage them to use their growing understanding of how to be problem solvers.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

77. Children enter Reception with a basic general knowledge. They build on this knowledge to help them understand more about places beyond their own locality, such as those they go to for their holidays, and to find out what has happened to them since they were babies. They learn that plants need sun and water to grow and understand that the roots take up water. The children use the computer with confidence and can already control the mouse to click and drag images on the screen in order to dress teddy. Children were also observed using a paint program, changing the thickness of the brush and the paint colour and printing out the result independently. Taking themes such as “All About Me” and “Nursery Rhymes”, activities are well planned to enable children to explore aspects of the environment and to relate the work to their own experiences. Discussion forms an important part of the work and children are encouraged to be observant and describe and what they see. For example, the children look carefully at a range of seeds, including conkers in their shells and talk about what they see with great wonder. Through the opportunity to make a ‘velcro plant’ by joining the component parts together, they learn to recognise and name parts of flowering plants. Good use is made of the local environment to provide children with a variety of experiences, such as visiting parks, walking to the library and going to the local church for a baptism. Visitors such as the police and fire brigade provide the children with opportunities to learn about people who help them in the community. A wide range of construction toys and materials is provided for the children to explore and use their skills to make models. The children are introduced to a suitable range of cultures and religions. For example, they use resources in role-play that reflect a variety of cultures and gain an awareness of their own and beliefs of others by celebrating festivals such as Harvest and the Jewish festival of Sukkot. Most children are well on course to meet the early learning goals in this area of learning.

Physical development

78. By the end of the Reception year, most children are on course to have achieved the early learning goals in their physical development. In the previous inspection, opportunities for appropriate free activities to develop the children’s gross motor skills were judged to be limited owing to the restrictions caused by the premises. Although this is still the case as regards the premises, the Reception teacher has planned many worthwhile activities for the children to experience in the playground for periods of outdoor play. Resources are good, with a range of wheeled toys and small equipment for the children to use. When outdoors, the children are expected to plan what they want to do and afterwards to talk about what they did. Consequently, not only do they enjoy the freedom of large-scale movement, such as running energetically and improving their co-ordination and control but they also become increasingly independent in physical activities. Indoors, in their physical education lessons, the children run, jump and change directions skilfully. They jump with their feet and knees together and rock and roll on the floor with their knees crossed. The majority of children can hop well and are developing a range of balancing skills. They describe and comment on their own and others’ actions, making remarks such as ‘easy’, ‘hard’ and ‘brilliant!’ The children are taken to the local Sports Centre on a regular basis for swimming lessons. In the classroom, children use a range of small equipment and tools with increasing control. They are provided with a wide range of malleable materials and demonstrate increasing skill and control in the use of paintbrushes, construction sets, puzzles and ‘small world’ activities. Children are also taught skills, such as cutting, to help them gain safe control of these finer movements.

Creative development

79. This is also an area of learning where most children are on course to attain average standards by the end of the Reception year. Children start from a satisfactory level of skill when they enter the Reception class and make sound progress throughout their Reception year. The children are

particularly able in role-play, largely due to the way in which adults support and extend these opportunities for them. For example, while the children play in the 'King and Queen's castle', an adult sits outside and, through effective questioning, extends their learning. Children are able to sustain aspects of the characters for long periods of time and talk about their roles. They play co-operatively as part of a group and enjoy acting out stories based on themselves and people they know. They engage with delight in the play activities, which often link well with literacy and mathematical activities. However, the development of imaginative play outdoors is restricted by the lack of an adjacent outdoor space for the children to use daily. In their art activities the children create interesting pictures with seeds, print with different objects and explore what happens when they mix colours. Children are encouraged to mix their own colours when painting and find out that red and blue makes purple and red and yellow makes orange. The classroom is has attractive displays with collage work where the children have depicted the different characters in Nursery Rhymes. At times, however, this type of work is too prescriptive when children simply fill in prepared shapes with paint or tissue paper. The children show a developing musical awareness, and are able to sing a variety of nursery rhymes and action songs from memory.

ENGLISH

80. The results of the national tests in 1999 showed that, by the time they left the school at 11, pupils reached average standards in English compared with most schools. Compared with similar schools, however, standards in English were below average. Standards were affected adversely by the low number of pupils who gained high levels in the test, that is, only around one third of the national average. Over the past four years, standards have varied considerably because of the small numbers of pupils involved and the varying number of pupils who had special educational needs. Looking at the four years together, girls' performance was well above the national average whereas boys' performance was below. The results of the national tests this year indicate an improvement in standards, with a third of the pupils reaching high levels, although there are still too many pupils who do not reach nationally expected levels. The modest target the school set for pupils' achievement this year has been exceeded and the target for next year represents a similarly modest degree of challenge.

81. The findings of this inspection indicate that standards are above average in Year 6. No significant differences were observed between the attainment of boys and girls. This judgement represents an improvement since 1999, shows a return to the above average standards noted at the last inspection and reflects the current high quality of teaching for the oldest class.

82. By the age of eleven, pupils reach above average standards in speaking and listening. They use a good range of vocabulary when discussing their work together, for instance, when they plan an investigation in science to find out how puddles on the playground evaporate. They use such words as "hypothesis" and "condensation" confidently and show good listening skills when they respond to one another's ideas. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and to each other's contributions during class discussions and this helps their learning in a range of subjects. For example, during a history lesson, pupils quickly noticed the differences between Roman and Celtic dwellings because they listened and responded carefully to their teacher's questions and were encouraged to suggest their own ideas and opinions.

83. Reading standards are average by the time pupils are eleven. Pupils read fluently and most have a good understanding of the content of their books and are able to describe the characters and predict what might happen at the end of the story. A few lower achieving pupils, although able to read the text fairly fluently, do not understand the content and are unable to discuss events or ideas in the story.

Most pupils show an enthusiasm for books and are able to talk about particular authors or types of books they enjoy. They use reference books appropriately to help them with their work in other subjects, for example, when they find out about the differences between rich and poor people during Victorian times. They find out further information using the Internet. The lack of a library in the school, however, limits their understanding of classification systems and catalogues.

84. Standards in writing are above average by the time pupils are eleven. Pupils show good understanding of how to write in a variety of forms, for example, letters, stories, and poems and how to set out scientific investigations. They write instructions on how to make chicken nuggets or how to brush their teeth. They use their wide vocabulary to make their stories interesting and exciting. Handwriting is usually of a high standard, with pupils showing great care over the presentation of their work. Spelling is usually accurate and shows a good knowledge of common spelling rules. They use punctuation carefully and structure their work well, often organising it into paragraphs.

85. The results of the 1999 national tests for seven year olds showed that, compared with all schools, pupils reached average standards in reading and above average standards in writing. Compared with similar schools, standards were below average in reading and above average in writing. Over the past four years standards have always been at least average and sometimes above, depending upon the capabilities of different cohorts of pupils. Taking the four years together, boys performed better than girls in writing, although there was no significant difference in reading. Standards have risen considerably since the tests in 1996, when they were below average in both reading and writing. The results of this year's national tests indicate that standards have risen still further, with more pupils reaching high levels than previously.

86. The findings of this inspection indicate that an average percentage of pupils in Year 2 are on course to meet nationally expected levels by the end of the year. No significant differences were observed between the attainment of boys and girls. The standards noted at the school's previous inspection have been maintained. However, this finding represents a fall in standards in writing since 1999.

87. By the age of seven, pupils reach above average standards in speaking and listening. They have a good vocabulary and most are confident speakers. They are able to answer questions confidently and thoughtfully and suggest their own ideas during class discussions. They enjoy using their voices expressively, for example when they read their class book "We're all going on a Bear Hunt!" together in the Year 1/2 class. These pupils answered their teacher's questions well, showing they had been listening carefully and were able to suggest a range of exciting places they might travel through if they were going on a bear hunt.

88. Year 2 pupils reach average standards in reading. Pupils in the Year 2/3 class read their class book, "Not now, Bernard!" enthusiastically and with good expression, clearly enjoying the story. They are able to talk about the characters in the book and say how they might be feeling. They use a good range of strategies to read unfamiliar words, for example, sounding out the letters and looking at the pictures for clues. Pupils have a sound knowledge of books and many are able to talk about the author and illustrator, with a few beginning to use the index and contents pages in simple reference books.

89. By the end of Year 2, standards in writing are average. Many pupils are able to convey meaning in simple sentences and a few are using capital letters and full stops accurately in their work. Most are aware of question and exclamation marks, which they use effectively when they write what the characters from "Not now, Bernard!" might be thinking. The range of pupils' vocabulary is good and they are able to use this appropriately in their work, making reasonable attempts to spell new words.

There is a wide variation in standards of handwriting and presentation: many pupils forming their letters carefully but a few show very weak pencil control.

90. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress and reach appropriate standards for their capabilities. Some pupils with special educational needs, however, are making insufficient progress and are not achieving high enough standards. These are mainly pupils on the higher stages of assessment of special educational need. The lack of progress is because their needs have not been identified sufficiently clearly and the plans to meet their needs are not reviewed regularly enough to assess progress and set new targets. In the 1999 and 2000 national tests, higher achieving pupils have reached good levels, but indications are that current high achievers in Year 2 are not making enough progress in reading and writing.

91. Standards in literacy are average at Key Stage 1 and above average at Key Stage 2. Literacy skills are developed well in different subjects. Younger pupils label pictures of themselves, naming the different body parts, as part of their work in science and older pupils write about different beliefs and customs in their work in religious education.

92. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, although it is only satisfactory at Key Stage 1. These findings are similar to those of the school's previous inspection. During this inspection, eight literacy lessons were observed and, of these, three were very good, one was good, two were satisfactory, one was unsatisfactory and one was poor. Three out of the four teachers in Key Stages 1 and 2 have a good knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy and are using it well and this is having a good impact on the pupils' progress. A significant feature of all teaching in the school is the very good relationships between pupils and teachers, which enable pupils to feel confident and valued and provide good motivation. Strengths in the teaching and learning of English across the school were well illustrated in a good Year 1/2 literacy lesson. The teacher immediately involved and interested the pupils in the book "We're all going on a Bear Hunt!" by her own enthusiastic reading of the text. She encouraged pupils to join in with the reading and helped to set the atmosphere by dimming the lights at various moments during the story. Through very effective use of questions, she ensured that all the pupils understood the main learning points of the lesson and that they were all able to contribute, whatever their capabilities. Another strong feature of the teaching is the good range of opportunities which pupils have to work together and share ideas. This enables pupils to develop good speaking and listening skills and to consolidate their learning. The pace of lessons is usually brisk and this helps to maintain pupils' interest and concentration. For example, in a very good Year 5/6 lesson, the teacher moved quickly and efficiently through an introduction to remind pupils what they already knew about the class book "The Suitcase Kid". He then involved pupils through a good question and answer session, making relevant teaching points about direct and reported speech and pupils were able to discuss their work together before attempting their written task. The good range of strategies used meant that pupils had no time to become bored and that they put good effort into their work.

93. Where the teaching is unsatisfactory, weak knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy means that the teacher is not focused enough in identifying exactly what she wants the pupils to learn. The content of the lesson is often too much for the pupils to understand and the tasks are not matched well enough to pupils' individual needs. In other classes, the work prepared for some pupils with special educational needs is not focused carefully enough on moving them on to the next stages of their learning and learning support assistants are not always used effectively. Teachers do not plan the work of teaching assistants carefully enough to ensure that they know exactly what pupils are expected to learn. Opportunities are also missed to involve learning support assistants and pupils themselves in assessing progress.

94. The curriculum for English is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school has responded very well to the findings of the last inspection, which found that higher achieving pupils in Key Stage 1 were not making sufficient progress. The results of recent national tests shows that these pupils are now reaching high levels. The discrepancy between last year's test results and the assessments made by teachers was due to a lack of confidence in assessing pupils at high levels. The school has evaluated test information well and developed good assessment systems to track pupils' progress through the school and this has been effective in identifying some groups of pupils who have been underachieving. A target group in each class has been identified to receive focused support to ensure that they make sufficient progress to meet nationally expected levels by the time they leave the school. Whilst extra support has been given to pupils with special educational needs to try to raise their levels of achievement, this has not been effective enough. The developments in assessment and target setting have been brought about by the enthusiastic and well-informed subject co-ordinator, who sees it as the school's first priority to raise standards. Her monitoring of the subject and that of the Local Education Authority's English adviser over the past year identified weaknesses in teaching that were addressed successfully. However, there has been insufficient time in the five weeks of the current term for her to affect current practice.

95. Resources in English are good overall, although the lack of a library does inhibit pupils' opportunities to extend their understanding of classification systems and catalogues. Each class has a good range of books, both fiction and non-fiction, to interest pupils and further opportunities are provided for them to improve research skills through use of the Internet and CD-ROMs. The subject makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' social awareness when they are encouraged to work co-operatively in pairs and small groups, and to their cultural development when they learn about literature from other countries as well as their own.

MATHEMATICS

96. The findings of this inspection indicate that, in Year 6, pupils attain standards that are above the national average, especially in numeracy. This judgement is similar to that found in the previous OFSTED inspection. In the national tests for eleven year olds in 1999, the pupils' results in mathematics were broadly in line with the national average and when compared with similar schools. In the last four years, girls outperformed boys, but there is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls in the present Year 6. Trends in performance over the past four years indicate variable standards of attainment, although the above average standards found at present reflect the current good quality teaching and the success of the action plan to raise standards of attainment for the higher achieving pupils. Pupils for whom English is an additional language receive well-targeted support and are making good progress. Although satisfactory systems are in place for identifying pupils with special educational needs, procedures for supporting those on the higher stages lack sufficient focus to enable these pupils to make good progress. Targets set for the past year in the national tests in mathematics have been met and the targets set for the 2001 tests are too low for the current group of pupils.

97. By the time they are eleven, most pupils have a sound understanding and knowledge of the multiplication tables up to ten, can find the perimeter and area of a rectangle, square and triangle, convert percentages to fractions, and explain their mental strategies well. They use correct mathematical terminology well, such as 'translation', 'proper' and 'improper' fractions. They divide numbers by tens, 100s, and 1000s, and have a good understanding of the decimal point. When working with two and three-dimensional shapes, pupils confidently work out the number of degrees within a given angle. They make good use of their mathematical skills, when using the co-ordinates on a map

in geography and when finding the difference in time between two given dates in history. Good use is made of information and communication technology to reinforce pupils' mathematical understanding.

98. In Year 2, most pupils are attaining average standards in mathematics. Standards in numeracy are generally in line with the national average. This judgement is similar to the findings of the school's previous OFSTED inspection report. In the 1999 national tests at the end of Year 2, the pupils' results were below average when compared with schools nationally and well below similar schools. Trends over time indicate fluctuations in standards of attainment. In the last four years, boys outperformed girls, but there is no significant difference between boys and girls in the present Year 2.

99. By the age of seven, pupils confidently add and subtract numbers to 20 mentally and understand clearly the place value of numbers to more than 100. They show good understanding of how to round up numbers and can easily double or halve them. Higher achieving pupils can count in twos, fives and tens to more than 100 and can double or halve larger numbers, which shows a good grasp of number facts. Most show a sound understanding of time, and identify hours, half and quarter hours using analogue and digital clocks. A few higher achieving pupils use their mathematical knowledge well to calculate that 'half of 30 minutes is 15 minutes' and '15 minutes and another 15 minutes is 30 minutes or half an hour'. They use estimation and standard units of measurement well, such as using centimetres to measure the length of a robot's limbs. They work well with shapes and enjoy using the computer to generate repeating patterns. Pupils are able to explain their methods of calculation effectively.

100. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good in Key Stage 2. Teachers have high expectations of, and good relationships with, pupils, which enable them to feel confident to answer questions. Pupils are very well behaved and have very good attitudes to learning, which allow teachers to teach with brisk pace and have a positive impact on pupils' learning of mathematical concepts and skills. The teachers plan their lessons well and make pupils well aware of what they are expected to learn by the end of the lessons. Teachers use plenary sessions very well to review and reinforce learning, often asking if pupils feel that the learning objective for the lesson has been met. In good lessons, the mental mathematical sessions move along very briskly, with teachers asking quick-fire questions pitched at the appropriate level to match the differing needs of the pupils. This contrasts with lessons when teaching is satisfactory, when the pace of questioning is slower and the impact is lost. Teachers encourage pupils to explain the strategies they use to solve problems, which enables pupils to think logically through their answers and teachers to assess pupils' learning. Although work is prepared to meet the needs of pupils of different capabilities, that for pupils with special educational needs often lacks challenge and interest.

101. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1 although in the lessons seen, they ranged from very good to poor. The very good teaching in the Year 1/2 class is having a significant impact on pupils' learning and is enabling them to make very good progress. Most teachers plan their lessons according to the National Numeracy Strategy, adding in their own good ideas to the lessons. This was evident in a very good lesson, when the rapid mental recall session was brisk and challenging and was followed by a session on shape. Pupils were presented with many different practical tasks to create a range of repeating patterns using different shapes. Paint and potato prints were used, with the potatoes cut into circles, squares, rectangles or triangles and pupils were able to draw round a wide range of different sizes of plastic shapes, or to use the computer to create and print their patterns. Pupils were engrossed in their tasks and their knowledge and learning were extended well by thorough planning to match the needs of every pupil. The final session was used well to check what pupils had learned and understood. The teacher conveyed her enthusiasm for mathematics well to pupils and made mathematics exciting and enjoyable to them. Pupils were well aware of the teacher's expectations for high standards of work and behaviour, and understood what they would be

doing in the lesson. However, in contrast to this, when teaching is poor, as observed in a lesson on time, the teacher's planning showed weak knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy and did not provide effective learning opportunities for pupils. The teacher's expectations were unrealistic, pupils were overburdened with too much information and became restless, teaching time was lost trying to maintain their attention and they made little progress. The teacher did not use what was already known about the pupils' previous attainment in order to teach them effectively.

102. Planning is based successfully on the National Numeracy Strategy. Most teachers plan well and the school has a good range of high quality resources for mathematics. The two co-ordinators for mathematics are new to the post this term and are enthusiastic about their responsibilities. They have attended relevant courses and are planning to continue the monitoring of mathematics teaching started by the previous co-ordinator. Very good assessment procedures are in place and information gathered from these is being used well to extend the attainment of higher achievers. However, insufficient use is made of assessment information to ensure that the activities planned are appropriate to pupils' previous level of attainment for lower achieving pupils and those with special educational needs.

SCIENCE

103. The findings of the inspection indicate that, in Year 6, standards are average. In the school's previous inspection, comparable standards were observed. The school's 1999 end of Key Stage 2 test results show that standards were well below average. However, these figures have to be treated with caution as the number of pupils was small and a third of the pupils had special educational needs. Standards over the past four years show a variation from one year to the next and the provisional results of the 2000 national tests indicate that the pupils' performance in science is above average. This represents a considerable improvement and is due to the commitment by the school to raise standards, the careful analysis of test data and planning activities that provide challenge for the higher achieving pupils. The findings of the inspection indicate that the current pupils in Year 6 are on course to reach broadly average standards in science by the end of the year. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English as an additional language achieve satisfactory standards relative to their previous attainment. Good opportunities exist for the development of the skills of the higher achieving pupils in most science lessons as teachers provide an appropriate match of extension activities to meet their needs.

104. By the age of 11, the pupils' skills in investigative science are well developed. They devise their own tests and show in the way they perform their tasks, how to vary one factor whilst keeping others the same. For example, pupils in Year 6 put forward their own ideas on how to find out what factors affect evaporation, decide what evidence to collect and consider how to make the test fair. By Year 6, pupils demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties and classify substances as solids, liquids and gases. When recording their observations they use appropriate scientific vocabulary such as 'condensation', 'evaporation', 'water vapour' and 'precipitation' to describe the changes that occur in the water cycle. From the limited sample of previous work, pupils show they have a sound knowledge of electricity and use symbols accurately to draw an electrical circuit.

105. The standards attained by the pupils in Year 2 are similar to those found in most other schools. This judgement is similar to school's results in the 1999 end of key stage assessments made by teachers and is broadly the same as that of the school's previous inspection. Indications are that standards in 2000 are similar and that pupils this year are on course to reach average standards. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress and achieve satisfactory standards for their capabilities. Higher achieving pupils also make satisfactory progress.

106. By the age of seven, pupils know that animals produce offspring and that these grow into adults. They sort objects into groups on the basis of simple material properties such as shininess, roughness and flexibility. They have a sound knowledge of common types of materials, for example, metal, plastic, wool and clay and recognise that some of them are found naturally. Higher achieving pupils explain clearly why some materials are particularly suitable for specific purposes such as wood for desks and metal for radiators. In Year 2, the pupils' investigative skills are satisfactory. They explore, using the senses of sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste and learn to record their findings in a variety of ways. For instance, after using non-fiction books to research for information on animals, they record their findings in simple tabular form and, in their work on humans, they use information and communication technology to locate and label external parts of the body.

107. On the basis of the lessons seen, scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work on display, the quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good overall. However, in the lessons observed, the teaching ranged from very good to satisfactory. This is an improvement in the findings of the previous inspection when the quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall. In the best lessons, the management of pupils is good, the content is pitched at an appropriately challenging level and the teacher intervenes well during group work to explain aspects of the work further and to teach the appropriate scientific skills. Strengths of the teaching of science and its impact on learning were well illustrated in a Year 4 lesson in which pupils were set the problem of finding out which paper would be best for mopping up spills. At the start of the lesson, the teacher carefully checked the pupils' previous knowledge by asking what they had been learning earlier in science and, as a result, gauged an awareness of their understanding before moving on to the investigation. The teachers' clear explanations and good level of challenge motivated the pupils and made learning both relevant and enjoyable. Levels of interest were high and were maintained by allowing the pupils to explore and take responsibility for their own learning. Questions such as 'What do we mean by "best"?' were used to make the pupils think for themselves and develop their scientific skills. By the end of the lesson, pupils had made good gains in their knowledge and understanding of the absorbency of different papers and had increased their skills in investigative work. A particularly effective aspect of science teaching is the paired work that provides pupils with the opportunity to discuss and develop their own ideas when planning an investigation. Lesson planning overall is good and the activities provided indicate that pupils' learning is well organised. Most teachers show confidence when teaching science and, at best, provide a good range of opportunities for the pupils to become actively involved in their own learning. In these lessons, the teaching style is such that pupils are encouraged to ask questions to clarify their ideas and, as a result, they know the reason for learning and achieve well. Resources are prepared carefully and are used to provide all pupils with good opportunities to participate in the practical activities and consolidate their learning. Minor weaknesses in the quality of teaching are a failure to plan work which is well matched to the needs of all pupils, particularly for those with special educational needs and, very occasionally, the pace of teaching becomes too slow which results in the pupils' losing interest. Most teachers provide opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills in their scientific work but there is less evidence of pupils using and applying their numeracy skills. Appropriate use is made of information and communication technology in science, both for researching information and recording results.

108. The science curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The subject is well managed by a knowledgeable and competent co-ordinator who has made an impact on the subject over a short period of time. The school has adapted national guidelines successfully to cover a two-year rolling programme for each of the three classes that contain pupils of mixed ages. The new format for assessment adopted by the school is closely associated with each of these units of work. The subject makes an important contribution to pupils' spiritual and social development when they observe living things in their environment and when they collaborate as they

carry out investigations. Resources in science are good and although the school grounds are not particularly suited to environmental studies, good use is made of nearby parks and visits to places of interest such as the Science Museum to enrich pupils' learning.

ART

109. In Year 6 and Year 2, most pupils attain average standards. This judgement is based on the scrutiny of a limited range of work, photographic evidence and discussions with staff and pupils, as there was limited evidence from lesson observations. The judgement of this inspection is that attainment in art is lower than the findings of the previous inspection report, when attainment in art was judged to be good. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress and undertake a wide range of art activities, which increase their expertise and skills, as they progress through the school. They handle tools confidently and skilfully, and use a wide variety of media, such as textiles, clay, pencils, printing techniques, paints and pastels to express their ideas.

110. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, with some good and very good teaching, which is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection report, when teaching was reported to be 'sound'. Pupils in the Year 5/6 class show good observational skills in their pencil drawings of natural objects. In the best lessons, teachers inspire pupils by their enthusiasm and clear explanations. In one lesson, the teacher used a selection of prints of adults by Van Gogh, Jan Vermeer and John William Godward to illustrate proportion and a range of clothing, before asking the pupils to draw their idea of what they might look like when they were adults. The teacher's high expectations, good subject knowledge and management led to an excellent response from pupils and some very good work was produced. As the teacher moved around the class, she gave a great deal of praise, which helped all pupils to feel successful. The teacher's love of art was clearly conveyed to pupils and, combined with their positive attitudes to their work, inspired them to produce their best work.

111. Teachers make good use of the local environment for some artwork, such as the local park, where pupils made sketches before using watercolours for their paintings of the reflection of trees in the lake. Pupils develop satisfactory skills at colour mixing and benefit from using sketchbooks to experiment with different ideas and techniques before undertaking new artwork. They have satisfactory understanding of line, texture and pattern in natural and everyday objects, and in items from many parts of the world, such as the silk material from Thailand and the Islamic prayer mat. They enjoy creating designs and using textiles for their weavings and using two different colours of paper for their 'exploding' patterns.

112. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and monitors teachers' plans and displays. She provides good support for staff, which enables them to offer a wide range of activities in art for pupils. She has set up a weekly art club, which pupils enjoy. Planning is appropriate and teachers make relevant links with other subjects, such as history, with sketches of local Victorian buildings and toys in the museum. Resources for art are good, and support teaching and learning well.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

113. Most pupils attain average standards in Year 6 and Year 2. This judgement is based on the scrutiny of a range of work and discussions with staff and pupils, as there was limited evidence from lesson observations. Throughout the school, pupils are selecting materials, planning and making models and products. They are developing their skills well in using constructional equipment, joining materials

and applying techniques, such as when designing and making bags and wheeled vehicles. At the start of each project, older pupils are encouraged to undertake some research into products, such as the water resistance and suitability of the materials used for an umbrella and a tent and to evaluate their own designs.

114. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, which is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. However, an example of very good teaching was seen during the inspection. The sharing of expertise of individual teachers is used well, as observed when two teachers exchanged classes. Younger pupils gained enormously from this exchange, as the very good teaching of design and technology for pupils in the Year 2/3 class enabled them to develop their skills and techniques greatly, as well as understanding the health and safety aspects. They gained a good understanding of the need to ensure that a chassis is strong enough to support a vehicle. The teacher's very good subject knowledge and high expectations for pupils enabled them to sustain concentration well and extend their learning.

115. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and monitors planning, pupils' work and products. He has very good subject knowledge, which he shares with staff and provides them with very good support. He has introduced a 'Project Folder' for pupils, which is designed to help them to understand the process for each project, why they are doing it, how to improve, critical thinking and evaluation. It can also be used by teachers for assessment. Planning is appropriate and relevant links are made with other subjects. Resources are good and support teaching and learning well.

GEOGRAPHY

116. Standards in geography in Year 6 and Year 2 are similar to those found in most other schools, including those reached by pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Judgements are based on a small sample of lessons, planning for the subject, work on display and the limited amount of work that was available for inspection. However, the evidence provided and conversations with teachers and pupils indicate that pupils at both key stages have had an appropriate range of opportunities for geography over the past year. These findings are similar to those of the last inspection, where standards were reported as being in line with national expectations.

117. In Year 6, pupils know that rivers have a source, mouth and tributaries and understand how the processes of erosion and deposition can affect them. They use appropriate geographical vocabulary to describe the physical features of rivers such as "meander", "delta" and "flood plain". They show understanding of the functions of scale when undertaking a geographical enquiry on the length of the River Medway. For example, after locating the river on a map of the local area, they measure its length with a piece of string and use this as a marker against the scale to convert the measurement into kilometres and miles. In their study of India, pupils in Year 4 locate and mark on a map the main cities, rivers and the Himalayas, showing good use of their mathematical skills. They show an understanding of the functions of a key when using a map of the village of Chembakolli and are aware of the variations in temperature and rainfall in Delhi throughout the year. The pupils present this information through the use of information and communication technology. Older Year 2 pupils mark the countries of the British Isles on a map and use an atlas to pinpoint the approximate location of Tunbridge Wells. They compare their own local area with that of the Scottish Isles and identify differences such as Tunbridge Wells having no mountains, no sea and more housing. Through their study of the imaginary Isle of Struay, they learn about the people who live there and their occupations and, in doing this, they ask geographical questions about the features that give the island its character. Year 1 pupils are aware of their home address, draw a sketch of their route to school and mark features such as the church, houses and shops on their maps. They gather data to produce a

geographical picture of how pupils in the class travel to school and use information and communication technology to present their findings in picture graph form.

118. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and teachers provide a good variety of experiences for pupils to increase their learning by discussion and exchange of ideas. This was illustrated well in a Year 6 lesson when the teacher gave pupils the opportunity to work in pairs and take some responsibility for their own learning to work out how to measure the length of a river on a map. In doing this, the teacher enabled the pupils to carry out a geographical enquiry and introduced them skilfully to use of maps and a range of scales. In this lesson the pupils worked at a good pace, applied themselves well to the task and were actively involved in their learning. Most of the evidence indicates that pupils make sound progress in lessons. However, in one lesson seen during the inspection where the teaching had some shortcomings, too much was planned for and delivered in one lesson. Consequently, aspects of the subject were insufficiently developed and pupils were not allowed the time to apply their skills fully to the set tasks. Assessment is usually in the form of making notes of pupils' progress, but there is no formal recording of the skills achieved.

119. The subject has a relatively new co-ordinator who has had little time to carry out the management of the subject. However, he is knowledgeable and very keen to develop the subject further. The two-year rolling programme of work planned gives secure curricular coverage for pupils in the mixed age group classes and the scheme of work based on the national guidelines provides the necessary detail to support teachers in their planning. Resources have improved since the last inspection with the inclusion of good quality maps, videos and packs of support materials to support teaching and learning. The school in general makes appropriate use of visits in and around the local environment to extend the pupils' geographical knowledge, skills and understanding.

HISTORY

120. By the time pupils are 7 and 11, they reach standards in history that are similar to those found in most schools. Pupils for whom English is an additional language reach similar standards and those with special educational needs reach appropriate standards for their capabilities. In the school's previous inspection, comparable standards were observed, although it was noted that higher achieving pupils sometimes did not make enough progress. This is no longer the case. During this inspection, only one lesson in history was observed and further evidence was taken from an analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils. By the age of eleven, pupils know about a range of historical periods, including the Roman invasion of Britain, the Victorian era and Ancient Egyptian civilisation. They know about the Roman way of life and compare Roman villas with Celtic roundhouses, examining how present day knowledge about the period has been gained. They use a range of historical evidence from books and pictures to draw conclusions about the differences between the lives of rich and poor people in Victorian times. Younger pupils have a suitably developed sense of chronology for their age and use a range of words associated with the passing of time. They are able to arrange dates on a time line to show when The Great Fire of London took place in relation to other important events in British history. They can distinguish between aspects of their lives and life in the past. They compare differences between their toys and games and those of the past and talk to their grandparents about the games they used to play.

121. Indications are that the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' progress are satisfactory. The last inspection said that some teachers showed weak subject knowledge and that there was a lack of clear planning for lessons but the current inspection shows that these aspects are now satisfactory. Pupils' work shows that teachers have a sound understanding of what their pupils should know. They

plan lessons appropriately and with good attention to the school's scheme of work. They create varied and interesting opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and to record their work and this means that pupils are keen and ready to learn. Photographs and books are used well for pupils to research about the different aspects of Victorian life. In the good lesson seen in the Year 3/4 class, the teacher used a broad range of strategies to interest and motivate her pupils. A good question and answer session at the start reminded pupils of their previous learning and close examination of pictures drew their attention to specific features of Celtic and Roman dwellings. Pupils were then encouraged to work in pairs to come up with a list of appropriate adjectives, which they used, in their individual tasks to write a flier to try to sell one of the properties. They worked at this activity enthusiastically because they were interested and keen to do their best.

122. The policy for the subject is clear and the scheme of work has been recently reviewed and follows new national guidelines. The co-ordinator, although new to the role, has a very clear view of what needs to be developed and how she is going to achieve this. Resources have already been extended to fit in with the school's revised plans. The last inspection identified a need for assessment procedures to be developed and, although this has not been achieved, it is a high priority for attention. The co-ordinator monitors standards appropriately through examination of pupils' work and the school's overall subject monitoring plan allows her specific time to look at other aspects, such as teaching, more closely. Good use is made of information and communication technology to allow pupils to present their work in word-processed format and to carry out research through the Internet and by using CD-ROMs. The school uses the rich resources of the local environment well to bring history to life for the pupils. Local visits to, for instance, the Toy Museum in the town and Crofton Villa, enable pupils to examine aspects of life in the past at first hand..

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

123. By Year 6, standards in information and communication technology are above those found in most schools. This finding is a significant improvement on the school's last inspection where attainment was judged to be below the national average. Standards in Year 2 are similar to those found in most schools. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve appropriate standards for their capabilities.

124. By the age of 11, most pupils use information and communication technology to present information in different forms. They acquire and refine the techniques they need to use information and communication technology, such as re-sizing text, changing colour, saving and checking the accuracy of input and output. Pupils very quickly develop the skill of bringing together, organising and reorganising text and images. For example, after removing information from CD-ROMs they transfer it into a Word document. Many pupils access the Internet confidently, send and receive e-mails and know how to interrogate Internet databases. They use CD-ROMs as research tools to extract information to support their work in history and geography, read the information to check its relevance and modify their search strategies. Pupils in Year 4 show a good understanding of how to make things happen by controlling and modelling events on screen. For example, they draw the first letter of their name on a piece of graph paper and write a list of instructions for the screen turtle to produce the letters on screen. They use a database to sort and classify information, such as the variations in temperature and rainfall in Delhi over a year and produce bar and line graphs to illustrate their findings. Planning indicates that pupils are provided with sound opportunities to use information and communication technology devices with sensors to monitor and measure external events. Their skills in controlling the computer mouse are well developed and they use the appropriate techniques confidently to ensure that their writing is clear, well presented and free from errors.

125. By Year 2, pupils' word processing skills are sound. They know how to start the computer independently, open a file, save changes, exit and close down. They highlight text and locate appropriate icons on the computer screen to change fonts to produce bookmarks. Nearly all print out their own work. Pupils use the mouse to drag and move images and text on screen, for example, when labelling parts of the human body and are familiar with using it in connection with drop-down menus to select functions. Younger pupils have sound knowledge of how information and communication technology may be used for data handling. For example, they use a graphing package to produce a pictogram of the different ways they travel to school. They use a paint package program to create pictures and select the most appropriate tools to match their purposes. Many pupils have experience of loading and using CD-ROMs and take great delight in talking about their experiences of information and communication technology both inside and outside school. They are aware of programmable robots and the work of older pupils indicates that they know how to enter a sequence of instructions to control a device.

126. The previous inspection found that there were some shortcomings in the quality of teaching but the present quality of teaching and learning is good overall and promotes good progress. Teachers introduce pupils to the concepts and skills in a systematic way and give them regular practice to reinforce what they have learned. Teachers show sound knowledge of the subject in their explanations and instructions given to the pupils as they use the computers. This gives pupils the confidence to ask questions and extend their knowledge further. Strengths of the teaching and learning of information and communication technology were very well illustrated in a Year 6 lesson, where the teacher showed the pupils how to move information from one application to another. His step-by-step explanations and demonstration of the idea ensured that the pupils quickly learned how to master the skill when working at the computers. The teacher's use of sophisticated technical language and style of questioning challenged the pupils and moved them on in their learning. For instance, when any pupil encountered a problem, rather than telling them the answer, they were expected to tell the teacher what to do, which resulted in their having to decide for themselves what action to take. Information and communication technology is taught by all teachers as a weekly class lesson, which provides pupils with the benefit of the direct teaching of a skill before working on their own. Expectations are high and pupils are very clear about the rules of working together. This means that pupils can be trusted to work on their own or in pairs and thereby develop their independence. The management of pupils is good and the learning support assistants are well prepared to provide individuals and groups of pupils with the necessary support so that they can achieve success. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from this good support in information and communication technology and, as a result, make good progress. Most teachers make considerable effort to use information and communication technology to extend pupils' learning in other curriculum areas, such as history and geography. The co-ordinator has however, identified a need to develop the use of the Internet further within literacy and numeracy.

127. Information and communication technology has a high profile in the school and has developed considerably since the previous inspection. The school's scheme of work is detailed and ensures that all aspects of information and communication technology are covered and that skills are developed systematically from the Reception class to Year 6. Although teachers' day-to-day assessment is sound, as they make helpful notes on pupils' acquisition of skills, there is no whole-school system to track the development of pupils' progress. The subject co-ordinator provides very good leadership and has very clear ideas about the future development of information and communication technology in the school. He provides staff with the technical support and expertise to ensure a clear educational direction for the school's future. The school is well resourced with a good range of computers and sensor and control equipment. Every class has Internet access and the co-ordinator has identified the possibility of extending the links they already have with a secondary school to develop the curriculum for the higher achieving pupils.

MUSIC

128. In Year 6, standards in music are similar to those found in most schools. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve appropriate standards for their capabilities. In the previous inspection, the evidence base was too limited to make a firm judgement concerning attainment throughout the school. Eleven-year-olds sing songs, including those in two parts, and listen to and identify the patterns in two contrasting pieces of music. Many pupils sing with accurate pitch, vary dynamics and use percussion instruments confidently to extend their appreciation of rhythm. When performing as part of a group, they maintain their own part in a composition using their voices and clapping as the instruments. Pupils who learn to play the recorder in school, or have the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument through the tuition offered by the Kent Music School, are familiar with musical notation.

129. There is a wide range of attainment, but by the time that they are seven, pupils sing songs from memory, play musical accompaniments with percussion instruments and keep a steady pulse when performing with others. They listen with concentration and respond appropriately to the given musical starting point when using the percussion instruments. They know the names of various percussion instruments and learn that sounds can be made in different ways, either by vocalising, clapping or with the musical instruments.

130. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers plan their lessons well and build progressively on the pupils' skills. They have good relationships with pupils and, in most instances, manage pupils' behaviour successfully. The quality of learning is often increased because pupils enjoy music and their interest enables them to make the best use of opportunities on offer. Younger pupils particularly enjoy singing and joining in with action songs. Teachers demonstrate sound subject knowledge that in general extends the quality of pupils' learning. For instance, when teaching singing, the attention and emphasis placed on developing the pupils' diction, breathing and posture improved their performance during the lesson and culminated in them singing tunefully in a two part round. Teachers offer all pupils an appropriate variety of musical experiences and the opportunity to be actively involved in lessons. This helps to develop not only their skills but enriches their musical experiences. Pupils have a sound repertoire of songs and learn new work quickly because they respond well to suggestions for improvement. Good use is made of the sharing of musical expertise as teachers exchange the teaching of subjects. There is, however, less evidence of pupils being taught the skills of composing.

131. The existing scheme of work, based on national guidelines, provides teachers with the support to develop pupils' musical skills in a structured way as they move through the school. Forms of assessment however, are left to individual teachers and there is no whole-school format to track the development of individual skills. The present co-ordinator has only recently been appointed to the school but has a sound awareness of the needs of staff from informal discussions with them. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn to play the recorder and join the choir. Extra curricular activities are run by the co-ordinator and usually take place during lunchtimes. The Kent Music School offers pupils the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument and provides tuition in school time, for which parents pay. However, the time that these pupils spend out of class means that they miss some lessons. There is a good range of resources that includes some very good multi-cultural instruments. The co-ordinator has identified the need to extend the range of pre-recorded music. Music plays an important part in the church services and attendance at the Tunbridge Wells Music Festival provides pupils with a good opportunity of performing to an audience.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

132. By eleven years of age, most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, reach standards in physical education which are similar to those found in most schools. This finding is the same as that of the school's previous OFSTED inspection. During this inspection, only gymnastics and games lessons were seen, although swimming and dancing were timetabled during the week. Both boys and girls show good levels of control when dribbling a ball around a series of cones. They participate enthusiastically in team games, showing a healthy sense of competition. Swimming records show that most pupils are able to swim the expected 25 metres by the time they leave the school and some achieve more advanced survival awards. Younger pupils show sound levels of control when running, stopping and changing direction. They are able to balance on different parts of their bodies and to perform a simple sequence of balancing and rolling movements. Pupils make simple comments about their own and others' performances, but are less able to suggest how they may be improved

133. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, although an example of good teaching and learning was seen in the Year 5/6 class. Here, the teacher showed good knowledge of how to teach specific skills and his instruction enabled pupils to make good progress during the lesson. In the other lessons seen, however, the teacher was less confident in her understanding of how to develop pupils' skills and opportunities were missed to develop high quality in their balancing and stretching movements. Teachers' instructions are generally clear and this means that pupils know exactly what is expected of them. A good range of different types of activities is used to maintain pupils' interest, for example, individual practice, paired work and team games. Both lessons seen had suitable warm up sessions in which the pupils worked enthusiastically and teachers made sure that pupils understood the importance of them and how exercise affected their bodies. Teachers always encourage pupils to watch and comment on the work of others and, where this is done successfully, the pupils realise how to improve their own skills. This strategy also encourages pupils to have respect for one another's feelings and to value others' opinions.

134. The school's accommodation creates difficulties for the physical education programme but teachers work and plan well to overcome these successfully. Pupils use the playground a short distance from the school for games activities and are supervised carefully on the five-minute walk to the school hall. The school hall is small for a class of older pupils, but the very good attitudes of pupils and the careful attention to safety by the teachers ensure that this does not inhibit teaching and learning. During the summer, a local park and neighbouring school playing field are used for outdoor games. The enthusiastic leadership provided by the two co-ordinators ensures that physical education continues to develop. Since the last inspection, the selection of extracurricular sporting activities has increased and now pupils compete in local leagues and tournaments with other schools. These provide very good opportunities for them to develop good social skills and to learn the importance of rules and regulations in competitive activities. The co-ordinators work extremely hard to organise an excellent range of sporting opportunities over the year. Local cricket, rugby and athletics clubs provide "taster" sessions to interest pupils and they can take part in tennis and pentathlon activities. The school's monitoring programme enables the co-ordinators to monitor teaching and learning in the subject and to liaise appropriately with the governor who has special responsibility for physical education.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135. Pupils attain standards that match the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language attain satisfactory

standards, relative to their previous attainment. This judgement is similar to the findings of the last OFSTED inspection report.

136. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with instances of very good teaching and learning. Teachers plan lessons carefully with clear objectives, which engage pupils' interest. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the beliefs, symbols and traditions of the five main world religions. They are given satisfactory opportunities to compare aspects of these religions, such as prayer and places of worship. In a very good lesson, the teacher enabled pupils to gain a clear understanding of how Muslims think of the positive attributes of Allah, by linking this with the pupils' own positive thoughts about a member of the class. Most pupils have a good understanding of the teachings of Jesus, events in his life and how he used his disciples to work for him. Visits to the local church help pupils to gain a sound understanding of the main Christian festivals and why Easter is important to Christians. Teachers ensure that pupils learn that sacred writings are central to the traditions of different faiths and help them to respect the beliefs of others. They help younger pupils to gain in their understanding of different religions by making the teaching relevant to the pupils' own experiences, such as 'being special' and 'belonging' to something or someone. Teachers make good use of artefacts, such as a Bible, an Islamic prayer mat, a Qur'an, and models of Hindu gods to stimulate pupils' interest and prompt discussion.

137. The co-ordinator is new to the post this term and has made a good start by ordering more artefacts to ensure that there are sufficient to help teachers further pupils' understanding of different religions. The policy and scheme of work are satisfactory and comply with the locally agreed syllabus. Literacy skills are developed appropriately through stories, discussions and recording work in different forms. However, the use of work sheets and copy writing from the board does little to enhance pupils' learning. Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development.