

INSPECTION REPORT

EASTCHURCH CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Eastchurch, Sheerness

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118644

Headteacher: Mrs P. Shipley

Reporting inspector: Mr D. Collard
OFSTED Inspector Number: 11122

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th September 2001

Inspection number: 230408

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of school: | first school |
| School category: | voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 - 9 |
| Gender of pupils: | mixed |
| School address: | Warden Road Eastchurch Sheerness Kent |
| Postcode: | ME12 4EJ |
| Telephone number: | 01795 880279 |
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| Appropriate authority: | governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Captain John Carter |
| Date of previous inspection: | February 1998 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|---------------|----------------------|--|--|
| 11122 | Mr D. Collard | Registered inspector | special educational needs; English as an additional language; information and communication technology; geography; history | What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further? |
| 9595 | Mrs S. Cash | Lay inspector | none | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| 11848 | Mr J.Taylor | Team inspector | equal opportunities; mathematics; physical education; religious education | How well is the school led and managed? |
| 1838 | Ms B. Pollard | Team inspector | the foundation stage; English; music | None |
| 29995 | Mrs M. Walker | Team inspector | science; art and design; design and technology | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Eastchurch Church of England Primary School is situated on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent. There are 270 pupils on roll which is larger than the average primary school. There are ten classes with pupils ranging in age from four to nine years old. A substantial number of pupils enter the school during Years 3 and 4 and this adversely affects the overall standards within these year groups. Pupils come from a variety of social backgrounds. At the time of the inspection, all children attended school on a full-time basis in the 'pre-school' class. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals (22.4 per cent) is close to the national average but has decreased since the last inspection. One pupil comes from a minority ethnic background and is identified as being at an early stage of learning English. This is very low when compared nationally. Thirty-nine per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register which is above the national average. Nine pupils have a statement of special educational need, which is also above the national average. The school has a designated 'Key School' status for supporting pupils with moderate speech and language difficulties. At the time of the inspection 5 pupils, each having a statement of educational need, were part of this unit. Attainment on entry to the reception classes at four years is below average overall. These children's knowledge of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology is especially weak. The assessments carried out soon after they start school show that many children find communication difficult and their knowledge of numbers is limited. The school has gained the status of an 'eco-school' because of the high emphasis that has been placed on environmental issues.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an increasingly effective school that provides good value for money. By the time pupils leave the school, at the end of Year 4, they have standards that are close to average in most subjects and they have made good progress. All pupils are provided with an exciting, wide and varied curriculum that is helping to engender a thirst for learning. Teaching is good overall and there are particular strengths in the management of pupils and in the use of support staff and resources this particularly helps those pupils with special educational needs. The leadership of the school is very good and the governing body's management is good. The school is well placed in its capacity to make further improvement.

What the school does well

- Improved standards in reading, mathematics, science and information and communication technology by the time pupils are seven years old.
- Ensures that pupils are taught well
- Provides very strong leadership and good management
- Provides a well balanced and rich curriculum which it makes available to all pupils
- Provides a caring and friendly environment that centres around improving achievement for all pupils
- Develops good links with parents

What could be improved

- Standards in writing by the end of Year 4, in length, quality of content, handwriting and presentation, especially for the more able pupils
- Standards in mathematics by the end of Year 4, especially orally and mentally and particularly for the more able pupils
- The use of day-to-day assessment so that all teachers provide the best opportunities for learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been good improvement since the last inspection in February 1998. The school has fully addressed the key issues identified at that time. The statutory requirements for information and communication technology are in place and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education has been applied. The school development plan is a very well constructed, consultative, working document that has helped improve the role of the governors in their management of the school. The senior management team has recently been appointed and now have clear and well defined roles. Subject co-ordinators provide knowledgeable expertise that is helping to improve the standards that are being achieved in all subjects. In addition, the curriculum has improved substantially and is being reviewed in light of the improved assessment procedures and wealth of data that is being collected. More monitoring of teaching has been

undertaken which has helped to improve the quality of learning. The Foundation Stage children in the reception class have work that is planned to the nationally agreed guidelines and their progress has improved.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2000 |
| reading | E | E | E | D |
| writing | E | E | C | B |
| mathematics | E | C | D | C |

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

On entry to Year 1 at the end of the Foundation Stage pupils are ready to start work on the National Curriculum. The table above shows that pupils in Year 2 in Year 2000, when measured against all schools, had standards well below those expected in reading, at average levels in writing and below average in mathematics. When compared to similar schools the standards were better in writing where they were above average and in mathematics where they were average. They were below average in reading. Results in 2001 are better, although there were no national comparisons available at the time of the inspection. In reading and writing, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level rose, although in writing no pupils achieved the higher level. In mathematics and science, the standards also rose - especially the number of pupils gaining the higher levels. Pupils in the present Year 2 have standards that are average in all subjects except geography and history. This is because the level of general knowledge is lower than might be expected and pupils are not fully aware of the world around them. Pupils' progress in learning is good through Years 1 and 2 because the quality of teaching is good and pupils are challenged in the work that is expected of them.

Pupils in Year 4 have average standards in reading, mathematics, science, speaking and listening but they are below the expected level in writing. Pupils are on line to reach expected levels in religious education, design and technology, art and design, physical education and music. Pupils' singing is particularly good. Standards are not high enough in information and communication technology because pupils have not had enough access to computers over a period of time. This is now being addressed well by the regular sessions in the newly completed computer suite and by an extensive training programme for teachers. Standards are also below that expected in geography and history because pupils do not have enough understanding about people, places and time. Progress in learning is sound overall although they are not high enough in writing and for the small number of faster-achievers. In Years 3 and 4 a substantial number of pupils enter the school and a significant number of them have additional special educational needs. Their specific needs are dealt with well and the individual progress they make is good. These additional pupils do, however, detract from the overall learning standards achieved.

The trend over time has been one of gradual improvement especially in the areas that the school has prioritised. The school sets challenging targets for all pupils based upon good analysis of available data.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Good. Pupils are interested, keen and motivated. Pupils are proud of their school. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | There is good behaviour in lessons and around the school. Pupils play well together and there are many activities for them to do in the playground. |
| Personal development and relationships | Good overall. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good. All staff set good examples and the pupils respond well to the challenges they are set. |
| Attendance | Well below average. As at the last inspection unauthorised absence is high despite the good efforts the school makes to encourage pupils to attend school. |

Reception children behave very well and co-operate well with each other. In the rest of the school pupils concentrate well and work hard. This is because the school works hard to improve personal development and provide an ethos

that celebrates shared success. When the tasks set by teachers are not so challenging then pupils become easily distracted.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Reception | Years 1 – 2 | Years 3 – 4 |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| Quality of teaching | Good | Good | Good |

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

Teaching is good overall. The majority of lessons seen during the inspection were at least satisfactory with only a small number being unsatisfactory. Teaching in the foundation stage is consistently good because the teachers plan, and execute lessons that are very suitable for the ability of the children. The teaching in English is good for pupils in the reception, Year 1 and Year 2. It is sound overall in Years 3 and 4. The only shortcomings relate to inexperience. Teaching of mathematics is good overall. Teachers use the national literacy and numeracy formats well although a somewhat more flexible approach is needed in mathematics. These are helping to raise standards in the use of language, writing and the use of number. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well both by specialist teachers and by the highly experienced learning support assistants. Pupils with statements of special educational need in the 'Key School' programme also progress well despite them not always receiving their full entitlement to specialist outside support.

Overall, pupils learn well. The teaching is focused on improving the limited experience of the pupils and to developing specific language and understanding especially in the Foundation Stage. This is successfully achieved by the good planning, use of time and by the good quality resources that are available. Time is used well and in the best lessons there is an urgency as well as a sense of excitement about the learning that is taking place. Teachers work hard at including and progressing children of all levels of ability and are making better use of their assessments to guide this process. Where lessons are not satisfactory it is because these high qualities are not evident, especially in the organisation of the lesson.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Good. The school provides a well planned and rich curriculum that has been well considered to meet the needs of all pupils. Planning takes very good account of the new national guidance and incorporates personal, social and health education as well as a programme for citizenship. Much emphasis is placed on ensuring policies and schemes of work highlight environmental issues that are used to give a particular emphasis in lessons. All statutory requirements are met regarding the curriculum. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Very good. Pupils are supported by knowledgeable teachers, assistants and some specialist help. Pupils with statements of special educational need have particularly good support because the individual education plans lay out what should be done to improve their learning. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | Pupils are given suitable specialist support to help them improve their use of English and are supported well in class lessons. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Very good. The school has worked hard to improve the provision for this area since the last inspection. The spiritual element in assemblies makes a powerful contribution to personal development. Social and moral issues are discussed in an open and supportive way. Cultural awareness is good because the school involves a number of visits and visitors that link work in various subjects. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Very good. Academic and personal development is monitored very well. Pupils know the rules of the school and understand the impact of their actions. They are made aware of potential dangers with regular visits from the uniformed services. Academic monitoring now focuses clearly on raising the achievement of pupils and the progress that they make. |

Parents are very supportive of the school and are confident in what is being provided. The school works closely with them to ensure that they are kept fully informed. Special attention is given to finding ways of involving them as a large number of pupils live in outlying villages.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Very good. The headteacher and senior management team, as well as all other staff, have a shared commitment to providing the best possible opportunities for pupils. There has been a comprehensive evaluation and assessment of the workings of the school since the last inspection and this is now beginning to have an effect on the overall standards that are being achieved. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Good. There has been a significant improvement. Governors are more aware of their roles and are making an informed contribution to the strategic direction of the school. This includes developing an excellent school improvement plan that drives the work of the school over the longer term. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Good. Teachers and governors monitor various aspects of the school. The information that this provides is helping to inform management decisions and to then move the school forward. |
| The strategic use of resources | Very good. Spending decisions are evaluated to help apply the principles of best value. This is achieved well. One of its strengths is the consultation that takes place involving all interested parties including pupils and parents. |

The school has sufficient qualified teachers and one unqualified teacher. There is an abundance of learning support assistants who provide very good support to the teachers. The school also benefits from an efficient administrative staff and a caretaker who keeps the school maintained well. Resources are good and easily available. The accommodation is spacious and has a number of specialist rooms to further enhance curricular opportunities.

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 • They have confidence in what the school is doing • They are kept informed about the progress of their children and about activities that are taking place. • The leadership of the school and the level of good teaching. • The behaviour in and around the school | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of extra-curricular activities that are provided |

The inspection team agrees with the positive comments made by the parents. The team does not agree that the range of extra-curricular activities is limited. The provision for all pupils is very good. However, in light of the negative comment made by parents, the school is planning to provide an even wider range of activities during this year.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. By the end of the Reception Year, most children achieve the national goals in all the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum and they are able to begin the National Curriculum. The attainment of the children in this stage fluctuates considerably each year depending on the intake of the children. Progress is very good in communication, language and literacy and personal and social and emotional development. Pupils are given some experience of the National Literacy Strategy through well-formulated whole-class lessons. However, the teachers ensure that these are given in context and are not too long. Children are encouraged to develop their speaking and listening skills by regular role-play and by encouraging children to talk with each other. In one lesson involving a robotic toy the children learnt how to direct and control the movements by the teacher using activities that were exciting and aimed at the correct age and maturity of those involved. The majority begin Year 1 as confident, mature individuals with positive attitudes to learning.
2. The Year 2000 National Curriculum test results show attainment by age seven to be well below the national average in reading and average in writing. When compared with similar schools, reading is below average and writing is above average. In the Year 2001 National Curriculum tests, reading standards rose considerably but writing standards fell because no children gained the higher level. The national comparisons for 2001 were not available at the time of the inspection. Trends over time show that reading standards are steadily rising while attainment in writing varies but has risen since 1998. Girls perform better than boys; this is because there are more boys on the school's register of special educational needs. The school does not have as many children reaching the higher levels of the National Curriculum for the age-group as other schools and this is largely owing to the low ability in language of the intake into the reception classes. The school has to work hard to develop the vocabulary of children. Standards among the current nine year olds show that they are on course to reach the nationally expected levels in speaking and listening and reading but they are below them in important aspects of writing. Boys do not perform as well as girls and the faster learners are under-achieving.
3. Most children in Year 2 attain the expected standards for their age in numeracy and all areas of mathematics (number, algebra, space, shape, measure and data handling). Results in the National Curriculum tests have shown gradual improvement over the last three years and, whilst they were slightly below the national average in 2000 in comparison to all schools, they were in line with those of similar schools. The 2001 results show a further improvement, particularly in the number of children attaining a higher than average level. The majority of children in Year 3 and Year 4 attain the expected standards for their age, although in some classes there is weakness in numeracy and a minority of the faster learners are not always attaining high enough levels. There is significantly lower attainment in the Year 3 class where some teaching is unsatisfactory. Almost a half of the children in Year 4 are on the school's register for special educational needs. A third of these joined the school in the last two years which explains the apparent decline in standards within this year group since Year 2. Most children make good progress and, although many of them have not yet attained the expected level, a significant number are in line to do so by the end of the school year.
4. In science, pupils' attainment as shown in the teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in Year 2000 was at average levels although the number of pupils achieving the higher level was below average. There was an improvement in 2001, particularly in the larger number achieving the higher level. Pupils in the present Year 2 are in line to reach average levels by the end of this year. Pupils in Year 4 are also in line to reach the nationally agreed average levels by the time they take the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6.

5. At the end of Year 2, attainment in other subjects is in line with that expected nationally in information and communication technology, religious education, design and technology, art and design, physical education and music. It is below that expected in geography and history because pupils do not have a wide enough personal knowledge of the world around them or about significant events in history. As a consequence, they cannot develop the specific skills that are required in these subjects. Pupils in Year 4 are in line to achieve the expected level of understanding by the time they reach the end of the key stage in Year 6 in religious education, design and technology, art and design, physical education and music. Particular strengths for these pupils are in their ability in singing, in their use of various types of media in art and in performance in physical education. Standards are below those expected in information and communication technology (ICT), geography and history. Whilst progress has improved recently in ICT this has not been over a long enough period to enable pupils to become confident in using computers and to enhance their work in other subjects. The general knowledge of pupils in Year 4 is low. Whilst they are given many opportunities to develop this knowledge they have difficulty retaining the information and using it to talk knowledgeably about topics they have studied or to make comparisons about different places and times.
6. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils make at least sound progress in all subjects. It is good in reading and writing, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, religious education, physical education and music. This is because teaching is well planned and challenges pupils learning. Pupils make sound progress in design and technology, art and design, geography and history. These lessons are also planned well but the pupils find more difficulty in using the knowledge that they have already gained to develop better understanding.
7. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make sound progress in their learning in English, science, design and technology, art and design, geography, history and physical education. Overall they make good progress in mathematics although there are some deficiencies associated with the learning of the higher attainers and in religious education, physical education and music. Progress in singing is particularly good and in using mathematical skills in other subjects such as geography. Progress is unsatisfactory in information and communication technology because pupils have not had enough time to develop their skills over a period of time. Progress in this subject has been better recently since pupils now get regular access to the computer suite and undertake work that is more appropriate.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress against the individual education plans that have been devised for them. The support they receive is of very good quality. The targets they are set are based around a variety of problems including language and literacy, mathematical understanding and behaviour. In all cases, good progress can be seen resulting in stronger learning opportunities. One pupil with English as an additional language is also making sound progress in his understanding of language. He is given both specialist and in-class support and is developing a range of vocabulary that is allowing him to access all areas of the curriculum.
9. The school sets challenging targets for pupils in all years. There is now better analysis of all assessment data and this is ensuring that the targets are realistic.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The Reception Year children are keen and eager to please their teachers. They behave very well and learn to co-operate with one another in work and play activities. They grow in independence and are proud of their achievements. This is because of the many opportunities provided by staff for taking responsibility and sharing with others.
11. Pupils in the rest of the school have good attitudes to their learning and show a keen interest in lessons and the extra-curricular activities offered. They concentrate well and work hard at the tasks they are given to do. Most of them listen well to instructions. In all but one of the lessons seen,

pupils' behaviour was at least satisfactory and in over one third of lessons, their behaviour was very good. For example, in a Year 2 English lesson about 'The Little Red Hen', pupils responded to the challenges in the lesson, concentrated well and were willing to contribute and to work independently. The classroom had lively displays and this led to very good learning and pupils achieved very well. In some lessons, for example a Year 4 English lesson about fantasy stories, most pupils worked well but a small number took time to settle, had not listened to instructions and so were unsure of the task and were easily distracted. When a high number of pupils did not behave as in a Year 3 mathematics lesson this was because the lesson was slow and did not challenge them.

12. Pupils behave well in the playground and around the school. They have plenty of activities to keep them occupied at lunchtimes and they know what is expected of them. They move to assembly in silence. Some Year 1 pupils were given very clear instructions about how to behave when they walked to the library, and so their behaviour was exemplary. Pupils and their parents are confident that there is very little bullying and rare incidents are dealt with firmly and effectively. There have been no exclusions. Behaviour has improved since the last inspection.
13. Older pupils have very good opportunities to take on responsibilities and use their initiative. They are doing jobs often undertaken, in other schools, by children two years older, and doing them well. The 'Buddies', who help to look after the youngest children, show a high degree of responsibility and use their initiative to take care of their charges with kindness and consideration. Each class has an 'Eco-monitor' whose duty it is to switch off the light when the room is empty. The school fosters a strong sense of environmental awareness and this shows in the good care that pupils take of their surroundings. Too often, in lessons, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their initiative.
14. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Adults set very good examples in the very positive way they relate with pupils. This is a friendly school, where adults are looking to reward pupils who are doing as they should. Mid-day supervisors play with the children and encourage them to play with each other. For example, two older boys were helped to move together on skis, to their delight. These aspects of the school's work have been well maintained since the last inspection.
15. Pupils with special educational needs have similar attitudes to learning and develop well through the school. A number of pupils have individual education plans that highlight behavioural as well as learning difficulties and the strategies used to develop better social skills ensure that their personal development is good. An example of this is for a pupil who has been given specific targets to achieve and a sheet to fill in as these are done.
16. Levels of attendance are well below the national average, and have fallen since the last inspection. Unauthorised absence is high. This is partly due to parents not providing an explanation and partly because the school is, rightly, strict about what reasons it will accept as authorised absence. Some absence is due to long-term illness, holidays in term time or lack of information about where a child has moved to. Too much is because odd days are frequently missed, which disrupts the pupil's learning. Punctuality is difficult to judge, because if pupils miss the bus they cannot get to school and so are absent rather than late. Those pupils who do attend school are punctual. Attendance was a key issue at the time of the last inspection, and remains one.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and this is reflected in the good quality learning that is taking place in all year groups. During the inspection 62 lessons were seen. 95 per cent of these were satisfactory, good or very good, 76 per cent were good or very good and 32 per cent were very good. Two lessons were unsatisfactory and one lesson was poor. These were in different subjects in Year 3 and 4 and generally relate to inexperience. There are very few differences between the teaching in

different subjects because the school has given this a high priority. There is still some lack of challenge for the more able in English, mathematics and science, especially where the ability of pupils in the class is much wider. The overall good quality of teaching represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection and the issues in this area have been fully addressed.

18. In the reception classes, the quality of teaching is never less than good and sometimes it is very good. Teachers show a good understanding of what young children need and how they learn. In a mathematics lesson about using number rhymes the teacher organised fun activities in a very natural way. Activities are based securely around developing a bank of knowledge and skills that will help them to progress towards work within the National Curriculum. This worked very well in one lesson where the teacher was making a house. There was a very good balance between those activities directed by the teacher and which the children chose. By using skilful questioning the children were encouraged to develop their knowledge of colour and about how to paint. Teachers and support staff enjoy the company of the children in their charge.
19. All teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they are teaching. There is now much more understanding about what should be taught in information and communication technology and religious education is being given a much higher profile. Evidence for good subject knowledge is apparent from the quality of discussions that take place and by the way difficult questions from pupils are answered confidently. The teaching of basic skills is very good in the reception class, Year 1 and Year 2. It is good for those in years 3 and 4. Much attention is given to developing speaking, listening, reading, writing and numeracy. Here there is a much wider gap between the ability of pupils and teachers have difficulty in ensuring that tasks are always challenging for each level in English and mathematics. It is especially more difficult for those whose attainment is higher. Wherever possible, teachers encourage pupils to use better vocabulary and to understand specific language within different subjects. In a Year 4 art lesson, the teacher encouraged the pupils to talk about Tudor portraits and asked searching questions about the way the artist had portrayed rich and poor people. This included using specific artistic vocabulary. The basic skills of computing such as word-processing have only recently improved with the better development of the computer suite. As a consequence, the learning that takes place during these lessons is now very rapid but this has not always been the case.
20. Teachers plan well. Similar themes are covered between year groups. As a consequence, all pupils get an equal opportunity to develop their skills. This also ensures coverage of the different strands of subjects. Most lessons have a clear aim or intention and this is portrayed to the pupils at the start of the lesson. Very often the teacher will return to this at the end and ask whether pupils feel that they have achieved what they set out to do. Pupils are encouraged when they know that they have gained new knowledge or have understood a concept that they have been studying. Pupils respond well to the challenges they are set. They are keen, interested and motivated in the work because teachers work hard at making it stimulating and fun. The planning is often comprehensive and includes the resources that are going to be used. This enables time to be used well and lessons move at a good pace. In general, teachers have high expectations of what is going to be achieved. Work, particularly in English, is different for each ability group. Where this happens successfully pupils have to think and concentrate even more to get the right answers. Where it was not successful, as in a Year 3 mathematics lesson the pupils quickly become bored. In this case, the teacher spent too long trying to demonstrate a one pence coin. The pupils were well aware of how to add and subtract this as it had been covered in Years 1 and 2. Here the teacher had not geared the work sufficiently to what the pupils already knew and thus been able to give them enough challenge. The pupils did not misbehave but their attention wandered and they lost interest.
21. In most lessons, teachers use effective methods. They ensure that any resources are laid out on desks ready for use, that account has been taken of concentration levels and that support staff are fully briefed about their role. This was particularly good in a Year 4 numeracy lesson where the teacher had laid out all the resources needed in boxes ready for each group at the start of the session. This ensured that the lesson got off to a brisk start, followed a logical progression and had time for a

short discussion to round it off. The successfulness of this was demonstrated by the reluctance of pupils to leave the room at the end of a lesson and the way they wanted to make sure their work was completed. In the large majority of lessons, pupils work hard and put in a great deal of effort. In a Year 2 physical education lesson the teacher, knowing that the pupils would be excited by the end of the lesson built in a good, quiet activity to ensure that the pupils were ready to return back to the classroom. The effectiveness of the teaching methods is not so good when the teacher is inexperienced. In one information and communication technology lesson, two pupils were sitting to one side for too long after a minor incident and lost time for their learning. This was not a good use of time.

22. All teachers have very good strategies for behaviour management. In a Year 1 history lesson the teacher encouraged the class to listen carefully and questioned pupils to ensure this happened. During lessons the school is a very orderly place with few interruptions. No teachers raise their voices and pupils have a clear understanding about the work ethic that is expected. There are a small number of pupils who would easily challenge the authority of the teacher but because they are given very good support this rarely occurs. It is one of main reasons why there have been no exclusions in the recent past.
23. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The learning support assistants are highly experienced. They have been given specific training for conflict management and about how to deal with the wide variety of learning difficulties that are apparent in the individual education plans. These pupils, as well as those who are part of the 'Key School' group for speech difficulties are fully integrated into the work of the lesson. They are able to progress well within their own capability. Unfortunately, these pupils have not been able to have their full entitlement to outside specialist help because of staffing difficulties within the local education authority. Despite the best efforts of the special needs co-ordinator to resolve the problem, this has been the case for a year. It is in the process of being resolved through a new appointment.
24. Teachers mark work conscientiously. In the best cases, as in Years 1 and 2 it includes praise and also some indication for improvement. Where it is very good it also contains some assessment of the work that is then used to plan future work. This is not so evident in Years 3 and 4. Pupils have some knowledge of their own learning from the remarks that are made. The school is in the early stages of giving individual and group targets for the core subjects of English and mathematics. This has not yet been incorporated into other subjects.
25. The use of homework is satisfactory and often good. Pupils take their reading books home and some other extra work is set in all classes. When it is returned to school it is valued by the teacher who refers to it and compliments those who have done a good piece of work. It also enhances the work that is going on during lessons.

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

26. The school provides a good, well planned and rich curriculum that has been well considered to meet the interest and needs of all its pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. The school confidently meets the requirements to teach all of the subjects of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus of religious education. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage fully takes into account the Early Learning Goals, rectifying a weakness identified at the last inspection. It now covers all six areas of learning and lesson plans focus on an outline of expectations for the age group. Activities are relevant and appropriate and every opportunity is taken to enhance children's knowledge of the world around them and encourage curiosity. The reception children are provided with a good curriculum.
27. Other curriculum related issues arising from the previous inspection have been addressed. Policies for all subjects are in place and are regularly reviewed. The school makes very good use of the

agreed national guidance when planning its work. A programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship has been very successfully implemented throughout the school.

28. The National Strategy for teaching literacy is in place and working effectively. It is having an impact on standards in aspects such as reading and spelling. Writing techniques are developing but more opportunities need to be provided for children in Years 3 and 4 to use the skills they are learning in the literacy hour across other subjects in extended pieces of writing. Very good provision is made for pupils to use and develop their literacy skills in the infant classes. In science in Year 1 sharing a big book with the class, encouraging pupils to consider the feelings of the characters and identifying what tigers like to eat. In design and technology younger children are encouraged to develop their language skills describing and naming fruits and vegetables, and learning some of the names of the tools they will use. The National Strategy for teaching numeracy has been satisfactorily implemented. The oral and mental element of the numeracy hour needs to be used more flexibly in classes with a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs. In their work in other subjects, pupils use their numeracy skills appropriately. In Year 3, pupils designing their packets use their knowledge of three-dimensional shapes. Pupils in Year 1 collect information about favourite foods, using a computer database to record their data to produce a simple graph.
29. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Work is specifically tailored to meeting the needs of the individual education plans. These are reviewed on a regular basis and account is taken of successes. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides a lead for this work but it also involves the classteachers and learning support assistants who are directly involved. This shared approach ensures that staff are working to common goals.
30. The school makes very good provision to enrich the curriculum through a very wide range of well-supported extra-curricular activities. These include many sports, the creative arts and music and environmental activities. New clubs, such as drama, are introduced and the sporting activities, currently basketball, are regularly changed. As large numbers of pupils travel to school by bus, the school makes very good arrangements for some activities, such as the choirs, to take place during the lunchtime break. Pupils in Year 4 have the opportunity to take part in a residential weekend at HMS Arethusa in Rochester experiencing a range of locally based activities. National activities such as the National Art Day and the Year of the Artist are celebrated. Visits are made to Leysdown Beach and to Hever Castle supporting the Year 4's study of the Tudors. Many visitors are regularly welcomed into school to enable all pupils to benefit from their expertise and enjoy their visits. These range from theatre group productions such as "Bullies Paradise" to the excitement of welcoming a national gymnast as part of the "Get Fit Kids" sponsored event.
31. The school works hard to provide a socially inclusive curriculum. All members of the school community are well respected and their contributions to the life of the school are highly valued. Very effective strategies, including high levels of classroom and specialist support, ensure that pupils with special educational needs take a full and effective part in the life of the school. Recently purchased specialised computer resources enable pupils with specific learning difficulties to develop their skills more easily. Improved access for disabled children and adults is being explored. The school responds well to the diverse needs of its pupils, although it still has to consider planning more appropriately challenging work for the faster learners. Ways to address the gender difference between boys and girls' reading are regularly reviewed. New materials to motivate interest are purchased and adult male role models work with reading groups.
32. The school makes very good provision for personal, social and health education, not only through its new programme of work but also through the relationships within the school and experiences that it provides. The introduction of 'Circle Time' throughout the school has been very successful. Teachers sensitively use these times to develop not only the confidence of each child but the positive relationships between members of the class. Sharing their thoughts about friendship, Year 2 pupils listened very carefully to each one's contribution, reacted with a smile and showed respect for the

feelings of others. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to accept responsibilities and take initiative to help with the daily running of the school. They prepare the hall for assembly, act as 'eco-monitors' and offer help willingly in their lessons. Each day, when the school is in session, pupils raise the flag denoting the school's Eco-status. The school is justifiably proud of its achievements and members of the Green Club continue to work in many ways to care for the school's environment and work in the community. The school deals sensitively with issues relating to sex education as they arise. Aspects of relationships are included in personal, social and health education. The Life Education Caravan visits the school and effectively supports the school's work in promoting a healthy lifestyle and begins to address issues of the use and misuse of drugs.

33. To enhance the curriculum for all its pupils, the school has established very good links within the local community and with local environmental groups. The village locality is very well used as part of the school's annual Environmental Week providing a valuable resource for many curriculum studies. Pupils' visits include the church, Shurland Hall and the local beach. Close links have been developed with the parish council, pupils plant trees and bulbs and design benches for the village. Sporting contacts within the group of Island First Schools, such as cricket tournaments and athletics meetings, are regular events. Members of the local clergy visit the school and regularly lead the daily act of worship.
34. The school has established very good links with the other Island First Schools and the Middle School to which the pupils transfer at the end of Year 4. The close working relationships between the schools' subject leaders ensures that there is a smooth transition of learning in each area of the curriculum. Very good assessment arrangements are in place following agreements between the partner schools. The support provided through regular meetings with parents/carers and their pre-school children is very much appreciated and successfully encourages early contact with the reception class teachers.
35. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development. This is an improvement for at the time of the last inspection the provision was judged to be sound overall and the promotion of the pupils' spiritual development was unsatisfactory. The school has worked hard to successfully raise awareness of the pupils' personal development throughout the school and across the curriculum.
36. Spiritual development is very good. The school promotes spiritual awareness very well. The daily act of worship makes a powerful contribution to this aspect of the pupils' personal development. With the theme of "Friendship", pupils are encouraged to share their thoughts and suggest ways to value their friends. During the time for reflection they think about and picture their friends with quiet concentration. The school day ends in each class with a time to reflect on the good things that have happened during the time in school day. The work in religious education supports spiritual development very well. In a lesson on harvest thanksgiving, the pupils led the discussion identifying issues such giving to those less fortunate, and helping others. Through the 'Circle Time', pupils quickly learn to value the opinions and feelings of others and know that their own thoughts are valued in return by their peers and their teachers. In the secure environment of the circle, pupils may choose to focus on issues that are important to them, such as world events or their own fears and worries. In lessons, pupils listen well to the ideas and contributions of others. Examples of spirituality are seen at many different times - for instance the ripple of excitement that greets the announcement that the choir's first performance was planned and the joy on the faces of two young playground skiers who finally move in unison!
37. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. In all aspects of life in the school there are high expectations of good behaviour. The behaviour policy, which emphasises achievements, is well understood and is consistently applied by everyone. Pupils know what is expected of them and take pleasure from the praise they are given or rewards they achieve - for example, in 'Golden Time' when they may select a favourite activity, or sit at the special dining table for their lunch. Older pupils discuss the rules for their class and agree them as the new term begins. All adults within the

school promote the principles that distinguish right from wrong through their positive relationships with the pupils. The school's work in personal, social and health education strengthens these principles very well.

38. The school's provision for pupils' social development is very good. It is an open school where relationships between all of the adults and the pupils are very good. The adults provide very good role models in the way they value and support the contributions each makes to the life of the school. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibilities for themselves and others. Wearing their distinctive yellow caps, older pupils take their role as "Buddies" to their younger friends very seriously, explaining how they support and play with them at playtimes. The school council is developing its role within the school, raising and discussing issues of importance to the other pupils, such as suggesting improvements to the reception area. Its contribution is valued by the school, funding has been obtained to support the project. In lessons, pupils co-operate well in paired discussions in literacy and learn to share tasks within their groups in science. Pupils are encouraged to think of others, as they support a wide range of national charities.
39. Provision for cultural education is good. Pupils have many opportunities to appreciate their own cultural traditions both through their work in the curriculum, with local artists and craftspeople, taking part in national days of celebration and through the close links the school has with the local community. As an Eco-school the importance of the local and world environment is given very high priority. The traditional festivals are celebrated throughout the year. As few opportunities are possible to visit places of cultural significance, visitors are invited into school to support the understanding of the cultural diversity of our society. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the workshops organised by an Indian musician and eagerly sing one of the songs he taught them. Through their work in religious education, pupils learn about the major religions of the world and are encouraged to respect the beliefs, precious artefacts and traditions associated with them. In Year 2, for instance, pupils learn about the shrines found in Hindu homes and temples. The cultural links within subjects are being developed, such as in art and design where opportunities to study arts of different countries are being introduced. Developing links with a multicultural, city school via the Internet is planned to extend pupils' experiences. The school continues to look for ways to draw on people from their own and different cultures and countries to share their experiences with pupils

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The school takes very good care of its pupils. It is alert to possible dangers and has good health and safety and security arrangements. Arrangements for ensuring the safety of the many pupils who travel by bus are very well thought out and executed. Pupils are helped to be aware of potential danger through talks from the police, fire and coastguard services. Child protection procedures are securely in place and known to staff, including mid-day supervisors. Staff are diligent in their care of the reception children especially at the end of the day when many have to catch buses. They are sensitive to children who may be upset.
41. There are good systems for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. School rules and the consequences of breaking them are well known to pupils. Many teachers have very effective systems of reward and use positive comments to encourage good behaviour although in one class in Year 3 this was not as good. Teachers log any concerns in their daybooks and mid-day supervisors also keep a record of incidents in the playground. Serious breaches of discipline are recorded in the 'Green Book' and parents are involved at an early stage if the school is concerned. This has contributed to the improvement in standards of behaviour because pupils are clear about what is expected. Because of the very good relationships throughout the school, there is very little bullying. Any incidents of unkindness, such as kicking, are very firmly dealt with.
42. The school has good systems for monitoring and promoting attendance. Expectations are made clear in school documents and parents are asked to sign a home school agreement saying they will ensure

their child attends regularly and punctually. Parents are phoned on the first day of absence if no message has been received. The Education Welfare Officer is closely involved in trying to ensure attendance by a number of families. Certificates are awarded to those with 100 per cent attendance. The school is not undertaking any detailed analysis of attendance figures, for example by class or gender. However, it is aware that poor attendance is having a detrimental effect on the standards achieved by a number of pupils.

43. The assessment of pupils' performance has greatly improved since the last inspection and there are plans to move this aspect still further. Assessments of what children can do are detailed and helpful and they are used effectively to plan what children need to do next. Every teacher now has comprehensive lists of all assessment information that has been collected on individual pupils. These include National Curriculum tests and optional tests taken during each year. The headteacher and assessment co-ordinator monitor and analyse the information it provides. This has helped inform future planning for the school. The systems are presently being entered onto a computerised managerial system that will allow closer analysis. Conclusions from the monitoring have already helped to improve the opportunities for writing and reading and to find ways of developing better use of language. This is not yet used as fully as it could to help plan for different ability groups because the systems are still at an early stage of development. Despite this, there has been a good improvement since the last inspection.
44. Pupils' personal development is monitored informally but all adults in the school know the children well and quickly discuss concerns with other members of staff. Teachers use their daybooks to record any worries they may have about a child. The school offers good support, which enables pupils to develop into mature and sensible youngsters. 'Circle time' is used effectively to increase self-confidence and discuss strategies for dealing with problems. The youngest pupils are introduced to school with care and thought for their well-being. Many of them have already been to school and used the books and activities provided through the Early Learning Project. Very good liaison with other schools on the island supports pupils as they move on to middle school.
45. Pupils with special educational needs know that they are able to approach teachers with any problems. They feel very secure within the school environment. The assessment of these pupils is thorough and well-founded. It is based on good analytical data that is drawn together by the special needs co-ordinator. Whilst the school has not had the full benefit of outside expertise for their full entitlement the co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that analysis of problems can be carried on within the school's own systems.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Parents express confidence in the school. They feel well informed and are comfortable to approach the school with questions or problems. They feel that the school works closely with them. These positive views were confirmed by the inspection. The only reservation parents had about the school was over the extra-curricular activities on offer. The school was already planning to increase the range of clubs this term and to widen the age range of some of them. Extra-curricular provision is judged to be very good.
47. Early and effective home/school links are established in the reception classes and parents are provided with good information both before and after children begin school. Parents are encouraged to read to children and staff welcome their comments in the reading notebook.
48. The school provides regular opportunities for parents to meet the teachers and these events are usually well attended. End of year reports are well written and give parents a clear view of how well their child is doing, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, but also in the foundation subjects of the curriculum. Parents are well informed about what their children will be learning because each year group sends home a termly letter outlining the content of each subject.

The school has tried to improve contact with the parents of children who come on the bus each day, by offering a 'surgery' nearer their homes, but few parents wished to avail themselves of this opportunity. As at the time of the last inspection, the school is working hard to involve parents and consult them about its work.

49. The Friends of Eastchurch School raise considerable sums of money to support the school, as well as providing good social events for parents to attend. They have recently purchased the large playground equipment, which is making a valuable contribution to the good behaviour at lunch-times. Most parents are supportive of the school, but there are a number for whom education is not a high priority. They rarely hear their children read at home and do not ensure that they attend regularly. This is affecting the standards achieved by these children.
50. Parents whose children have special educational needs are kept fully informed of their progress. Those pupils with specific statements are given a more formal opportunity to discuss their requirements. Not all parents take advantage of this offer despite the school's best efforts. Parents do feel fully involved in the process.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. A striking feature of the school is the shared commitment of all staff to provide the best possible opportunities for learning. As a result of this, academic standards are steadily rising and very good provision for pupil's personal, social and health education has been established.
52. The main reason for the considerable improvement since the last inspection is the very good leadership of the headteacher and the way she has inspired others to share a common purpose and put pupils and their achievements first. This has been accomplished by a comprehensive evaluation and assessment of everything the school provides and the setting of challenging targets and high goals for its pupils. For instance the performance of boys in reading over the last five years has been significantly lower than that of the girls. By providing a role model Dad's Reading Club, same sex reading partners and reading material of more interest to boys the school has committed itself to redressing this imbalance and improving boys' standards before the end of the current school year.
53. Staff responsibilities, which was one of the key issues of the last inspection report, are now more clearly defined and successfully developed. The Senior Management Team has been strengthened by the recently appointed Deputy Head and Assistant Headteacher. Whilst these are new appointments significant work has already taken place in their various roles. In co-operation with the headteacher, these are driving forward improvements in areas such as staff development, the tracking of pupils' achievements as they move through the school and ways to improve them. The role of subject co-ordinators has been broadened to enable them to have a greater influence on the standards in their subjects. This has resulted in better curriculum planning which is now good and provides a wide range of learning opportunities which carefully builds new learning on what children already know and understand. Each co-ordinator has responsibility for a budget and for producing a subject action plan which is incorporated into the School Improvement Plan.
54. The most significant development is the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Records of classroom observations refer to the adherence to school policies, appropriateness of lesson plans and whether or not the teaching is promoting progress. It also identifies aspects for further staff development and professional improvement. This is now good and is beginning to have a clear impact upon standards. For example, the quality of teaching throughout the school and attainment at the end of Year 2, has improved since the last inspection.
55. The co-ordinator for the reception children and the special educational needs co-ordinator fulfil their roles and responsibilities effectively. They have a clear idea of what improvements are needed and how to achieve them. Very good teamwork between the teachers and support staff ensures

consistency between classes and the common goals are established. The shared philosophy and approach is a significant factor in the good provision for the Foundation Stage and for special educational needs.

56. The improvement of the role of the governing body in helping to shape the direction of the school was a key issue at the last inspection. It has improved considerably during the last three years. This is due to the very good relationships that have been built up with the school. Governors are well informed about the standards and the quality of education the school achieves and are thus able to take a more active part in supporting its work. Every governor is linked to a class and joins it once each term to focus on some aspect of learning. The governors ensure that the school now fully meets all statutory requirements.
57. The Chair of Governors has a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is sensitive to its needs. He identifies the development of the school improvement plan as a major success since the last inspection. It is an excellent document which points the way forward in all aspects that affect the quality of education. It is based upon the good monitoring of the school's performance, how to face up to its weaknesses and the steps to take to overcome them. For example, in the special education needs section, the importance of access to the school for pupils with physical disability is recognised. To meet this need the school is currently formulating a Disability Action Plan to submit for funding. Should this bid fail, it has a contingency plan to include funding in the premises development budget to make sure the provision is in place before the end of the year.
58. Financial planning is incorporated into the school improvement plan. It is well linked to the identified priorities which will benefit the pupils, monitored carefully by the governors' finance committee and efficiently controlled by the school bursar. The finance committee undertake an annual self-assessment of the school's finances to compensate for the lack of external auditing. The last one was in 1992. In the current financial year, for example, a quieter learning environment for reception children has been funded and the school library re-located and refurbished. Funding designated for specific purposes, for instance to support a pupil with English as an additional language and pupils with statements of special educational needs and improve the teaching of learning in information and communication technology is spent appropriately.
59. The school is very active in its pursuit of facilities and resources to include all children in the learning opportunities it provides. There has recently been a successful bid for additional funding for information and communication technology. This grant enabled a larger screen, an easier to handle mouse and appropriate software to be purchased to make computer technology more accessible for pupils with physical disabilities.
60. Last year's school budget shows a significantly large surplus. This is mainly due to the employment over the last two years of less experienced teachers and the funding the school received for an another class during the school year 2000 - 2001. In addition, part of the headteacher and special needs co-ordinator's time was used in class teaching. The school roll has reduced significantly since those pupils moved to the middle school. The governing body, in consultation with the school, has recognised the need to maintain current staffing levels, particularly to support the large number of pupils with special educational needs, and has earmarked the money for this purpose.
61. The school makes every effort to apply the principles of best value in the use of its resources. It compares its standards with similar schools and challenges itself to improve the quality of the education it provides; for instance in the organisation of very good extra-curricular opportunities for its pupils. It makes every effort to consult everyone in the school community including parents. There is a pupils' council to make sure that their opinions are aired and acted upon. This, for instance, has recently resulted in an ornamental fish tank being located in the entrance hall to comfort ill children. It competes to keep up to date, for example, through the growing use of computer technology, uses competitive tendering procedures for significant expenditures and applies best value procedures for the purchase of resources. As part of its Eco status, it has set up pupil-

based projects to reduce the consumption of electricity and water and is examining the possibility of using alternative sources of energy such as the sun and wind. The outcome of these initiatives will form a competitive base for the provision of these essential supplies.

62. Standards are improving, pupils make good progress, the quality of teaching has improved and there is very good leadership and management. Matching this against its costs it provides good value for money. This is significantly better than the judgement made at the last inspection.
63. The standard of the accommodation is very good. Classrooms are a good size and are enhanced by lively displays. The assembly hall is also used for physical education, an information and communication technology suite and other large rooms for the library and for music, all enhance the curriculum. A separate dining hall enables good use to be made of the main hall. Outside, pupils enjoy well-marked playgrounds, with adventurous play equipment and pleasant gardens and shady places to sit quietly. There is also a large playing field. The entire site is kept very clean and tidy so pupils are encouraged to respect the environment.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. In order to further improve standards the headteacher, governors and staff should:
 - (1) Improve writing by the end of Year 4 by:
 - Providing better opportunities for all pupils to use their literacy skills to produce lengthier pieces of writing that are more challenging in content and quality
 - Increasing the demands made of the more capable pupils in their imaginative story writing so that they work harder and faster
 - Improving the quality of handwriting and presentation

(See particularly paragraphs 75 - 81 of the main report)
 - (2) Improve the level of attainment in mathematics by the end of Year 4 by:
 - Adopting a more flexible approach to the National Numeracy framework to enable teaching, particularly the oral and mental aspect, to be more precisely focused on each ability group
 - Raising the expectation of all faster learners.

(See particularly paragraphs 82 - 88 of the main report)
 - (3) Further develop the use of assessment data by:
 - Ensuring the marking policy of the school is followed consistently
 - Using the marking to develop more individual targets for learning
 - Finding ways of sharing the good assessment information to allow teachers a better understanding of previous learning and thus raise expectations of what pupils are capable of.

(See particularly paragraphs 24, 43, 77, 79 and 86 of the main report)
- In addition to those issues mentioned above the governors may wish to consider the following minor points when producing their action plan:
 - Continuing to develop attendance procedures (*paragraph 16*)
 - Further developing the training of unqualified teachers (*Paragraph 21*)
 - Making further efforts to develop the use of outside specialists (*Paragraph 23*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 62 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 25 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 0 | 20 | 27 | 12 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Percentage | 0 | 32 | 44 | 19 | 3 | 2 | 0 |

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

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | Nursery | YR – Y4 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | N/A | 307 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | N/A | 69 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Nursery | YR – Y4 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | N/A | 9 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | N/A | 110 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 1 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 47 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 38 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 6.1 |
| National comparative data | 5.2 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 1.6 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

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

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 2000 | 28 | 33 | 61 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 17 | 21 | 26 |
| | Girls | 28 | 32 | 32 |
| | Total | 45 | 53 | 58 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 74 (69) | 87 (76) | 95 (92) |
| | National | 83 (82) | 84 (83) | 90 (87) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 18 | 25 | 24 |
| | Girls | 30 | 30 | 32 |
| | Total | 48 | 55 | 56 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 79 (66) | 90 (85) | 92 (95) |
| | National | 84 (82) | 88 (86) | 88 (87) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 1 |
| Black – African heritage | |
| Black – other | |
| Indian | 2 |
| Pakistani | |
| Bangladeshi | |
| Chinese | |
| White | 246 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 12 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 20.5 |
| Average class size | 27.9 |

Education support staff: YR – Y4

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 15 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 291 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 8 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 10 |
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

| | |
|--|---------|
| Financial year | 2000/01 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 693622 |
| Total expenditure | 642026 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2058 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 14925 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 270 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 46 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 78 | 22 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 54 | 43 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 52 | 46 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 39 | 52 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| The teaching is good. | 78 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 57 | 36 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 78 | 20 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 70 | 28 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 57 | 41 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 70 | 24 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 59 | 33 | 7 | 0 | 2 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 37 | 30 | 24 | 0 | 9 |

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

65. Children enter the reception classes following their fourth birthday and assessments, undertaken soon after they start, show that, although this year's intake is better than previous years, the attainment of the majority is below average. Many children find communication difficult and their knowledge of numbers is limited.
66. By the end of the Reception Year, most children are likely to achieve the national goals in the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage and they will be able to begin the National Curriculum. In the area known as personal, social and emotional development, attainment is likely to exceed the national goals. Progress is good. In communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development, progress is very good. This is an improvement on the findings from the previous inspection where attainment and progress were judged to be sound. There is evidence from the current Year 1 that, by the end of the reception year, children are confident, mature individuals with positive attitudes to learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

67. Personal, social and emotional development is a strength. Although only in their third week in school, children are mixing amicably with others, sharing and following instructions. They are becoming more independent and can register themselves at the start of sessions and make choices about activities. They show good self-discipline, as seen in a physical education lesson, where they worked quietly and safely with thoughtful concentration. They establish positive attitudes to learning because of the sensitive ways in which staff introduce them to classroom work. Personal, social and emotional development is given a high priority by teachers who provide a wide variety of opportunities to help children work co-operatively together as a whole class, in small groups in role play situations such as the *home corner* and as pairs when going on a walk. Children have already settled well into the classroom routines and a calm working atmosphere prevails. They are confident enough to contribute their own ideas. Teaching is good. Certain activities, such as 'Circle Time' and assemblies, specifically focus on personal development and they help children to consider the consequences of actions on others.

Communication, language and literacy

68. Children are beginning the early stages of reading and writing. They already show enjoyment of stories read to them by staff because of the effective use of expression and the inclusion of the children who are encouraged to respond by making comments, predicting what might happen next and answering questions about the text. Some of them are beginning to show interest in the process of reading as they come to realise that written words have meaning and they start to recognise familiar words, including their own names. Children are just beginning to learn the sounds of the letters and some are trying to write their names by tracing over the teacher's printing. Teaching is good. They work hard to help children develop listening and speaking skills. They make sure children understand instructions and use plenary sessions at the end of lessons to check what they have learned and give them opportunities to speak and comment on what they have done. A significant factor in the very good progress made by children is the patience shown by staff who help those with limited vocabulary to organise their speech and extend their vocabulary.

Mathematical development

69. Children experience a good range of counting games and practical activities such as sorting and matching objects according to colour and number to develop their numeracy skills. Mathematics is presented in an interesting and fun way that appeals to young children as they begin to learn about

the relationships between numbers. Children are learning about numbers to ten and some count to twenty. They are developing appropriate vocabulary as they count and order numbers in ascending order. They already recognise *one* and *two*, and one boy is already developing a feel for the size of groups of numbers as he identified the larger set between those having school lunch and those who brought their own merely by hearing the number. Children are developing other mathematical skills such as judging size and height; they knew that an adult would not fit inside a model house they were building but that a child could. Teaching and learning are good because teachers use a variety of methods such as finger games, rhymes, registration activities, pictures, discussions and attractive equipment to reinforce understanding.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70. Children are beginning to develop knowledge and understanding of the world around them through science tasks such as identifying external body parts and using magnifying glasses to examine finds from an outdoor activity. They use all their senses on walks around the school's grounds to view the natural world and develop simple geography skills. They learn to control a computer mouse to move a cursor around the screen and can get a robot to make simple moves and change direction. They can use a tape-recorder. Teaching is good because appropriate vocabulary is developed that is associated with the various areas of learning. Children build, using construction toys, and they work in groups to make large three-dimensional models of a home or form of transport. Teachers provide a good range of activities to encourage curiosity and staff are alert to extending vocabulary as it is evident that children have limited general knowledge and do not have a wide range of language to explain what they see and experience. An example of this is a girl who described a *skirt* as having eyes and lips because she did not know the word *face*. Children learn to pray and reflect in short, class assemblies and they learn about their own and other cultures through nursery rhymes, music and stories.

Physical development

71. In physical development, children are already showing the ways in which they can control their bodies and use different limbs, for example, feet, hands and elbows in lessons in the school's hall. Teaching is good. In the very good outdoor provision, they can ride wheeled toys and are learning to throw and catch balls through direct teaching by staff. They identify the changes that take place in their bodies through strenuous exercise, describing the effects as *getting warm* or their heart *going up and down*. The children understand the rules for sharing space with others because of the close attention paid to safety by the teachers. They are learning to use tools such as scissors, brushes and pencils with increasing skill to present their work in a wide range of activities as they paint, glue, cut and draw.

Creative development

72. Reception children are developing the appropriate techniques in their creative development using a wide range of media such as paint, pencil drawing, dough, glue and printing. They illustrate stories they have heard and they can colour in pictures keeping within the boundary lines as seen in an activity where they put clothes on a life size outline of themselves. Teaching is good. Paint mixing skills are used to improve pictures. Children develop techniques for cutting safely and accurately because of adult supervision. Children are willing to express their preferences and use their imagination as seen in an activity using a big box to make a model.
73. The quality of teaching in the reception classes is never less than good and in around a third of lessons it was very good. There are no significant weaknesses. The strength of the teaching is reflected in the good progress made by children which is better than expected. Lesson planning is good and teachers are clear about what they expect children to learn. The curriculum is planned with great care with particular attention paid to using the detailed and useful assessments of what children can do in order to move them onto the next level of learning. The work is structured carefully so

that children make progress in small, manageable steps in suitable activities that make learning enjoyable. Relationships are very good and this helps children feel secure and willing to try new experiences. The reception teachers and support staff work very closely as a team and this leads to consistency between the classes. The teachers are knowledgeable about the needs of young children and show a lot of patience and sympathy with those experiencing difficulties. They have particularly good expertise in managing children. As a result, children develop sound listening skills and their concentration levels improve. The Foundation Stage Curriculum is fully implemented and all children are included in all activities with very good support for those with special educational needs and for the child who is learning to speak English.

74. The co-ordinator of the Foundation Stage of learning is a very competent leader who has worked hard to implement the early years policy for the school and secure foundations are laid for the National Curriculum. She is clear about how to carry out the priorities identified to improve the quality of education for the age group. A noteworthy development is the very good outdoor play provision which gives children a wide range of opportunities to enhance their physical skills.

ENGLISH

75. Standards are much improved since the Year 2000 National Curriculum tests when they were at low levels when measured against all schools and against similar schools. Standards in English among the current seven year olds show that the majority are on course to reach the national average by the end of the infant stage. Attainment overall in speaking and listening, reading and writing is average. Some of the children with special educational needs make such good progress that they exceed the expected achieve in the National Curriculum tests because of the very good support they receive from staff and the careful attention paid to assessing their needs. The previous inspection found attainment in English average overall so standards are at least being maintained. Taking into account the low starting point of many children, progress is good. The school places a high priority on the teaching of literacy and is working hard, with some success, especially in reading, to raise attainment.
76. Children leave the school at the end of Year 4 and standards among the current nine year olds show that they are on course to reach the nationally expected levels in speaking and listening and reading but they are below them in important aspects of writing. The previous inspection found attainment to be in line with national expectations overall but identified weaknesses in writing. Standards have been maintained in all aspects except writing where they are still weak. Boys do not perform as well as girls because there are significantly more of them on the school's register of special educational needs. There is a weakness in the provision for the faster learners as they do not produce the amount and quality of work that they are capable of. Progress is sound in all aspects of English except writing, where it is unsatisfactory.
77. The seven year olds are confident enough to talk about their work with adults, read aloud and offer opinions on their likes and dislikes although they are still extending the range of their vocabulary. The more capable ones are happy to address the whole class. They read fairly fluently and have memorised a useful list of words in common use that they recognise in texts. When faced with unfamiliar words they use their knowledge of letter sounds and families of words to spell out the sounds and can, therefore, usually read the words independently. The faster learners are beginning to read confidently and with expression. The slower learners read more hesitantly but, generally, understand the text. The school has introduced a spelling scheme that links reading and writing and this is having a positive impact on standards as it reinforces the spellings and sounds of words in a variety of situations and gives children useful clues. Children can write in sentences using capitals and full stops. They can answer simple comprehension questions by searching in their reading books for the answers. Children make good progress because teachers plan tasks using assessments of what children can do to set targets such as *learn ten new spellings by half term* to move them forward. There is a lot of high quality support for those with special educational needs and they do

better than expected. Most children begin to use appropriately shaped printing although letters are not always consistent in size and spacing. The school is focussing on handwriting and there are signs of improvement in presentation.

78. The nine year olds can speak clearly and express themselves reasonably coherently but they are still limited by their narrow vocabulary. Staff compensate for this skilfully by asking questions that help children to organise their thoughts and extend their language. Children are more competent at speaking than writing. Most nine year olds understand what they read and can answer questions about the text. They are interested in books and read at home. They have a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words and the faster learners read fluently and with expression. They know how to carry out research on, for example, *The Romans*, in the school's library and when they have found the relevant page in a book, through the use of the contents and index sections, they can skim and scan the text for the information they need. Spelling skills are improving well through the introduction of a new scheme and regular classroom sessions that link reading and writing. Some important aspects of writing are weak. Children are reluctant writers and they are unwilling to persevere with an activity that they find difficult. When faced with comprehension questions that require written answers, many children display a lack of enthusiasm and engage in time-wasting tactics such as frequent pencil sharpening. Their story writing lacks imagination and their handwriting and presentation are untidy and careless. Those who are supported by staff because they have special educational needs make better progress than the more capable children who do not work hard or fast enough. Progress in imaginative story writing and handwriting is unsatisfactory. Children are learning the necessary skills of grammar and punctuation through regular teaching sessions but they are unable to apply the skills learned in literacy lessons to extended passages of independent writing. Expectations for faster learners could be raised.
79. The quality of teaching is good overall in the infant classes. It never falls below sound and is sometimes very good. It makes a significant contribution to the good progress made by the infant children. In the junior classes (Years 3 and 4), teaching is sound overall; it is occasionally very good and occasionally unsatisfactory. In most classes, teachers are very skilled at teaching the basics. They plan lessons carefully making effective use of assessments to decide what children need to do next and they provide tasks that build steadily on children's previous learning so that they make progress. They mark children's work regularly and make helpful comments which guide children to improve their performance. There are good examples of this in Years 1 and 2 where the teacher has pointed out what needs to be better. Homework supports and extends the work in class. Most teachers are knowledgeable about the subject and they provide a wide range of suitable resources to keep children interested. Those with special educational needs are targeted for specific help from support staff who work closely with teachers to help the children make good progress towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans. In the infant classes, the teachers' enthusiasm for the subject is infectious and the children respond with pleasure and pride in their work. The weaknesses in the teaching of writing in the junior classes are because expectations are not high enough and insufficient demands are made of the more capable children in both the content and quality of their writing.
80. The National Literacy Strategy is in place and is working effectively to raise standards. Teachers ensure that children use literacy skills in other subjects such as history, religious education and geography. This is having a positive impact on reading and spelling but the children in Years 3 and 4 need more opportunities to apply the skills learned in the literacy hour across the curriculum in extended pieces of writing. There is insufficient evidence of the use of information and communication technology in English.
81. The co-ordinator for English is new to the school but has already made an impact on the school's library which has been relocated and reorganised. She is well aware of the areas which need improving and is making plans to address them. She is active and enthusiastic and has the necessary leadership qualities to develop the subject and raise standards.

MATHEMATICS

82. Results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 have consistently improved since the time of the last inspection when they were well below the national average. They are now close to the national average and in line with those of similar schools. Almost all children by the age of seven attain the expected level for their age in all areas of numeracy and mathematics (number, space, shape, measure and data handling). The most recent National Curriculum tests show a greater number of children are now attaining at a higher than expected level. Children in Year 3 and Year 4 attain the expected standards for their age although, in some classes, there is some weakness in achievement in numeracy and the attainment of a minority of faster learners. Approximately a half of the children in Year 4 are on the school's register of special educational needs of which a third joined the school in the last two years which explains why there has been an apparent decline in standards since the end of Year 2.
83. The school has almost a third of its pupils on the register for special educational needs. A significant number of these children do extremely well to reach the lower level of the expected standard for their age and almost all of them make good progress. This is a testimony to the good quality of teaching and classroom support. There is a significantly greater number of boys than girls with special educational needs which accounts for the better attainment by girls in the National Curriculum tests.
84. By the age of seven most children have a sound knowledge of place value to 100 and faster learners can solve problems using numbers to 1000. They are keen and enthusiastic in oral sessions and show increasing aptitude in mental calculations in work such as counting in tens and subtracting from 10. They know the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes and show they can measure accurately. For example, in the Year 2 classes, when using standard centimetre units to measure curved surfaces. They know how to gather information and represent it on block graphs. Older children are beginning to use mental strategies such as rounding numbers up when calculating mentally and are generally more secure in their understanding of place value, for instance the significance of a decimal point. In some classes, they are less motivated in oral sessions mainly because of the difficulty in teaching mental processes in classes with a very wide range of ability. This results in some weakness in a minority of higher attainers. For instance not all of these children in Year 4 can quickly and accurately recall addition and subtraction facts for each number up to 20, which is one of the Year 3 numeracy objectives.
85. The using and applying of mathematics is sound across the school. For example in the use of counting and subtraction in a Year 1 number game and measuring skills when making crowns in Year 2. In Year 3, children are confident when applying their knowledge of coin values when finding the smallest number of coins needed for a large sum of money and the using of data handling skills to investigate how pupils come to school. In discussion, Year 4 children show they can apply their understanding of fractions to find parts of numbers and amounts of money. Numeracy is also used regularly in other subjects. For instance in map grids in geography, finding the beat value of musical notes, working out life spans from gravestone evidence, measuring force and friction on slopes of differing degrees in science.
86. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good. Almost all teachers have good subject knowledge and are technically competent in teaching basic skills. For example, in the very good lessons teaching children how to measure a curved surface in Year 2. Planning is very good and children are always made aware of what they are expected to learn. Many lessons challenge and inspire the children. For instance by the use of familiar things such as apples and lollipops in Year 1 and through the pace of the teaching of the lesson about coin values in Year 3 and, in some classes, by the setting of time targets for completing tasks. However, although work in almost all lessons shows high expectations in the level at which it is pitched, the amount of work some of the faster learners are expected to produce is not always clearly defined. The management of children and the

use of support staff is very good. Classroom assistants are very well briefed by teachers and show good skills in supporting learning, especially that of children with special educational needs. In a Year 4 lesson, this was shown when an appropriate small step by step procedure enabled children with special educational needs to learn how to round up numbers in the nineties to 100. The discussion and questioning techniques were particularly good. Children's work in lessons is thoroughly assessed and this information used efficiently in planning future work. Marking across the school is not always consistent although in some classes it is used very effectively to encourage children and point the way forward. Most physical resources such as measures and shapes are used well. Information and communication technology is not used regularly or widely enough to support learning.

87. Whilst most teachers are familiar with the National Numeracy Strategy and apply it effectively, the lack of knowledge of how to teach numeracy was a significant weakness in the one lesson when teaching was of poor quality. In this lesson with Year 3 children, the expectations, the pace and challenge in the teaching was far too low for this age group. The three-part lesson structure is soundly established but, in the light of the many children with special educational needs in the older classes, a more flexible approach in teaching oral numeracy needs to be investigated. Teachers find it very difficult to engage all children during this session when there is such a wide range of ability. Teachers use clear questions at the end of lessons to find out what children have learnt and understand and to develop mathematical vocabulary. For example in the Year 2 hat making lessons investigating why some of the hats were too small and too big.
88. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership in the subject. She is well informed about standards, how well children are progressing and weaknesses such as the use of ICT. She has made sure the subject is well resourced and has drawn up an improvement plan which highlights the way forward. For instance in strategies aimed at improving mathematical vocabulary, the attainment of boys and the faster learners. A very good system of tracking the attainment of children as they move through the school is in place and regular assessment provides consistent evidence for setting targets. Through the monitoring and evaluation she has been able to influence and improve the quality of teaching which has had a measurable impact upon the levels of attainment and particularly on the national test results in Year 2.

SCIENCE

89. By the end of the Infant Stage, pupils' attainment is average when compared with standards expected nationally for pupils of this age. This is an improvement from the last inspection when standards of attainment were below national expectations with no pupils reaching the higher levels. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4, pupils are reaching standards, which are within the accepted range for their age. They are in line to achieve the nationally accepted standards at the end of Year 6.
90. Standards overall in science are satisfactory. The findings of this inspection indicate that standards in the infants are improving with pupils making at least good progress in their learning. This reflects the good quality teaching, high expectations of learning and the teachers' good understanding of the needs of pupils. In a Year 1 class, pupils learn about healthy eating and know that vegetables and fruit are important for good health and that sugar can harm their teeth. Pupils in the current Year 2 discuss their foods in terms of vitamins, proteins and carbohydrates explaining that different foods are important for health, growing and energy. They describe their investigation to identify the taste of food, recording their findings on a bar chart. By the end of the infant stage, pupils know about electrical circuits that all components must be connected before the bulb will light. When investigating material changes they learn about solids and liquids.
91. Learning is at least satisfactory in lessons in the juniors and often it is good. Pupils in Year 3 develop their understanding of a fair test when they suggest how to investigate the hardness of

materials. When comparing the growth of bones, pupils in current Year 4, know what is meant by *fair test* but are not able to say why it is important to their investigation. Records show that Year 4 pupils learn more about the human skeleton and its function and can identify the major bones in the body. When looking at a range of habitats, they begin to use an identification key to name minibeasts. Samples of work indicate that satisfactory progress is made in the different areas of science and that the work is suitable for their age, building well on previous learning. In their work about forces, Year 2 pupils know that push and pull are examples of force and suggest how changes in a force can make a car travel further and faster. Year 3 pupils investigate the forces between magnets, use *repel* and *attract* correctly, and use measurement to find out the strength of the force of different magnets. By the end of Year 4, a *newton* is being used as the measurement of force.

92. Throughout the age groups, pupils use their investigative skills in all aspects of science. For example in Year 4, when learning about friction, pupils compare the movement of a rubber down a slope covered with different textured surface. In their classroom they investigate the change of temperature on a winter's day and record their results on a line graph. In Year 3, when learning about tooth decay, various liquids are tested to decide which can cause decay. Records of pupils' work show that when all pupils in the class undertake the same investigation, few opportunities are identified to enable the faster learners to further develop their enquiry skills. Where the investigations have a very formal structure, older pupils have less opportunities to ask their own questions, make decisions about their investigations and present their own findings in different ways. The school is addressing this point and with the new science policy and scheme of work is well placed to use the nationally agreed guidance to plan opportunities for all pupils to do as well as they can in this aspect of science.
93. Very good support is given to pupils with special educational needs within the science lessons. The use of searching questioning, and encouraging reinforcement of information by learning support assistants help pupils to understand their work as well as possible and take a full part in the activities in the lessons.
94. Overall the quality of teaching is good but it is stronger in Years 1 and 2 than in Years 3 and 4. Planned activities are sometimes too complex in the juniors for the pupils' level of understanding and consequently their progress in learning is then only sound. It is always satisfactory and seventy-five per cent of the teaching is good or better. This is an improvement on the last inspection. Very good teaching in Year 1 enables pupils to do very well. The teaching captures the interests of the class through the wide variety of well-planned activities as they learn what animals need to stay alive. The lesson moves at a good pace, holding the attention of the pupils as they follow the story, share their ideas with partners, suggest their own thoughts about what a tiger eats, before becoming actively involved in their own tasks. Well-paced lessons have a strong impact on progress in learning. Throughout the school, science lessons are well prepared and pupils are managed well. Teachers subject knowledge is generally good. Assessment of science is good. The school, works closely with the Middle School and very good records are passed when the pupils transfer at the end of Year 4.
95. Relationships in science lessons are good. Infants share ideas and collect information politely, making sure everyone responds to their survey. Learning to work together in their investigation, taking turns and sharing the materials is an important part of the lesson in the juniors. Attitudes to work are acceptable or better. Pupils concentrate on their tasks, respond well to their teachers and younger pupils are highly motivated and enthusiastic.
96. Very effective support for literacy is found in the science lessons in Year 1. Teachers share the story of *The Tiger who came to Tea* with the children, encouraging them to think about what the tiger ate and their own favourite healthy food. They happily read aloud together the list of tiger's favourite food. Later, pupils in both lesson use information books to find out about the food of other animals.

97. During the same lessons, collected information about favourite food is entered onto a simple database on the computer and the printed block graph is interpreted successfully towards the end of the lesson. Very few opportunities to support the teaching and learning in science through the use of information and communication technology are currently identified. In some data collection activities, there are missed opportunities to develop the use of the computer to improve progress.
98. Visiting theatre groups, ornithologists and environmentalists enhance the school's work in science and widen the pupil' experiences of the world around them. The school's Eco-status and the work of the Green Club give a high profile to caring for the environment of the school and beyond. Valuable support for the school's work in science is provided by yearly visit of the Life Education Caravan. These give valuable first hand experiences that help enhance pupils' understanding.
99. The management of the subject is good. The newly appointed co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject. She has clearly identified her own personal development needs and her priorities for science throughout the school. Procedures for the monitoring of pupils' work and progress are well established. A programme to monitor the quality of teaching is planned.

ART AND DESIGN

100. Only two lessons of art and design were seen during the inspection. No lessons could be seen in the infant classes. Evidence from a record of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and teachers and from teacher's planning suggests that attainment is typical of that expected by pupils at the end of Year 2. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4, pupils reach standards that are in line with national expectations for their age.
101. Throughout the year groups, pupils have many opportunities to experience working with different media, and develop their skills using a suitable range of materials and processes. They study the work of various artists such as Picasso, Paul Klee and Gustav Klimt and work with a visiting artist and craftspersons, such as an engraver and calligrapher. All aspects of the art and design statutory requirements are now planned. Opportunities for pupils to experience three-dimensional work, which was criticised at the time of the last inspection, have been improved. For example, younger pupils work successfully with clay to make tiles and minibeasts. Sketchbooks are beginning to be used to record ideas and develop skills in observational drawing. Good links are made with the work in other subjects for example the work in pastels representing Tudor houses in Year 4 and the observational drawings of skulls in science.
102. Pupils make acceptable progress throughout the age groups. Year 2 pupils express their enjoyment of their portrait work inspired by Picasso. They talk confidently about their own impressions of his work, refer to his life as an artist and discuss how their own work was produced. In the classroom display, their portraits have recognisable facial characteristics in the style of Picasso and show how well they had responded to the artist's work. Whilst discussing their work, pupils in Year 4 were able to show their understanding of the use of various paint media to create differing visual effects in their work, changing the texture of their images. They are proud of their work, enthusiastically describing their use of watercolours to achieve their chosen effects in their representations of different landscapes.
103. As lessons were only seen in one year group, an overall judgement on the quality of teaching cannot be made. Teaching was good in the lessons seen in Year 4. Learning was well managed and activities well planned. Clear precise questioning encouraged pupils to study Tudor portraits closely, using their historical knowledge, before carefully sketching pencil portraits in the same style. Good expectations, support and encouragement enabled pupils to sustain their concentration and consider improvements as they worked.

104. Many activities enhance the work in art and design. During Environment Week pupils make detailed observational drawings of many aspects of the village. On National Art Day all pupils experienced a wide variety of art and design activities including painting, drawing, collage and sculpture. During the Year of the Artist, Year 1 pupils benefited from working with local artists on the beach creating three-dimensional sculptures from materials they had found. An after school Creative Club provides opportunities for older pupils to experience calligraphy and the work of artists such as Jackson Pollock.
105. Since her appointment, the strong and enthusiastic leadership of the co-ordinator has widened the planned teaching opportunities and experiences for pupils throughout the school. She has successfully begun to involve the work of local artists and has a very clear understanding of her priorities for the improvement of standards in the subject. Good guidance is now provided through the subject policy and the new scheme of work, which, together with the expertise and advice of the co-ordinator, will further develop confidence in the teaching of art and design. Monitoring of pupils' work is established and a programme to monitor the quality of teaching throughout the school is planned. An increased range of some materials is needed to widen pupils' choices, particularly the range of pencils for drawing and sketching. Although some information and communication technology opportunities are included in the work of the subject, the full potential of the software and the Internet has not yet been explored. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

106. It was possible to see only two lessons during the inspection. Evidence of standards in design and technology was also drawn from discussions with teachers and children, an analysis of subject planning and a record of pupils' work. Standards are average by the end of Year 2. By the time they leave the school, pupils achieve standards that are in line with those that are expected nationally.
107. Concerns raised in the last inspection report have been successfully addressed. Recent improvements in the subject planning ensure that all aspects of the programmes of study are included and pupils now have opportunities to experience the use of a wider range of tools and materials, especially in food technology. Pupils are able to develop their ideas, plan, design, and make many different products, and are encouraged to suggest improvements to their work. Photographic records of pupils' work show that the activities are now more equally focussed on both designing and making.
108. In Year 2, pupils consider their repeating patterns, develop cutting and joining skills to make a special coat for Joseph, selecting suitable materials and recording the changes they might make to improve their coat. Designing and making a fruit salad in Year 1 and a healthy sandwich in Year 2 are part of a Healthy Eating topic closely linked to work in science. In the infants, younger pupils use salt dough and clay in the work. Whilst in Year 4, pupils use mouldable materials to make money containers to their own design. Products are also linked to the seasonal celebrations in school such as designing and making Easter biscuits.
109. The quality of teaching overall was good in the lessons seen although over time it has been satisfactory because of the smaller range of activities that have been undertaken. In a Year 1 food technology lesson, the pupils did very well because of the teacher's clear understanding of the needs of her pupils, together with very well planned challenging tasks. Through very good teaching, the pupils understand that hygiene is important when handling food, and learn to prepare food by grating, peeling, cutting and juicing a variety of fruit and vegetables, successfully developing skills to be used when designing and making their own fruit salads.
110. Good teaching in a Year 3 lesson provided opportunities for pupils to begin to plan and design their own packaging to hold small sweets. A well-planned lesson and clear explanations helped the pupils

to consider the many aspects of their design, such as the shape of the container and the importance of attracting the customer's attention to their product. Pupils responded well to the task, discussing their ideas and working with interest and concentration.

111. The subject is very well managed by the co-ordinator who works hard to support her colleagues. She has a clear understanding of the needs of the subject. The standard and progress of pupils' work is now carefully monitored and recorded and she has begun a programme to monitor teaching. Together with the new policy and scheme of work, these measures effectively support the school's efforts to raise the standards of its work within the subject. However, too few opportunities are as yet planned for the use of computers as part of pupils' designing and making activities.

GEOGRAPHY

112. Geography has a high profile within the school. Not only is it included formally in lessons but the school is also heavily involved in environmental projects. Despite the good opportunities that exist pupils standards are below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. This is because most pupils in the school have very limited experience of the outside world and their general knowledge is poor. This was demonstrated in one Year 3 lesson when the teacher asked pupils to explain where France was. One answer given indicated that the pupil did not realise that Great Britain was an island and thought it was over a bridge. Pupils in this class were also not clear about the difference between a country, a county and a place. Despite the good teaching that was taking place pupils had difficulty understanding the concepts involved.
113. Teaching centres around trying to enhance the knowledge of the world and developing better language skills specifically associated with geography. Planning is good and is appropriate to the needs of pupils at the school. Pupils benefit from a wide range of first hand experiences such as walks around the village and outside speakers. These are all helping to improve their understanding. Teachers use basic skill teaching well. They highlight specific vocabulary that will be learnt and reinforce this through the discussion sessions. Most lessons involve a high degree of practical work and the pupils take pride in what they are doing. They enjoy their lessons and are well behaved. As a result, the pace of lessons is good and a lot of work is completed. Work is marked but often this only involves praise rather than specifically developing geographical understanding. Pupils find difficulty in retaining knowledge and using their own experiences to develop understanding. This means that they only make sound progress in learning.
114. The co-ordinator is conscientious and has a good grasp of the direction the subject should take. A comprehensive file is kept that provides information about standards and progress. Not enough has yet been done to develop the assessment of the subject although there is a portfolio of work and some specific assessment tasks. Resources are adequate and are enhanced well by the use outside visits and visitors. Improvement has been maintained since the last inspection.

HISTORY

115. Standards are below that which is expected nationally by the end of both Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils do not have a good knowledge about events and people and the older pupils have difficulty putting historical time in sequence. In one lesson, the younger pupils had a very good talk given by the chair of governors. This involved the use of old toys. The pupils found difficulty in understanding the different materials that were used at the turn of the century and why children had such a small range of different things to play with during the Second World War.
116. Older pupils have a basic understanding about how it was different travelling, for instance, during Tudor times and that it would take longer than now. However, the concept of time is not fully understood despite there being some good time lines in the classrooms. They have difficulty in

retaining the information they are given and consequently in using it to develop better understanding.

117. Pupils start school with a low degree of background knowledge about history such as where their parents and grandparents fit into a timescale. As a result, the good teaching does help to enhance their knowledge and some basic understanding so that progress is sound though the school. Teachers try hard to use concrete examples that invite questions and help to stimulate interest. In this they are successful. The activities are interesting and informative and pupils can recall with excitement the visits they have made and what they have found out. These topics and themes are developed well during class lessons and the resulting written work is good. However, most of the information is at an elementary level. During class discussions the teachers work hard to use expressive language and encourage the pupils to do likewise. This helps build better a better vocabulary. By the time pupils reach Year 4 they have a much improved ability to express themselves. ICT has not been used sufficiently well to enhance work in the subject. Pupils have had little opportunity to use research on CD ROMs or to find out information from the Internet as the ICT suite and Internet access and software have only recently been acquired.
118. The co-ordinator has a good view of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and has developed a good improvement plan to move the subject forward. Resources are good and there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

119. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards that are in line with the national expectation. They can use a mouse, open and close programs and can undertake some very simple word-processing. This is inhibited by their lack of good keyboard skills. However, in discussion pupils talk about changing the character of their writing by changing fonts and colours. They can draw simple pictures using an art package and can fill in the spaces with floods of colour. Manipulative skills are good. The finished pictures seen in one lesson were colourful and had good thought put into how they were being devised. Pupils are able to find out information and use it to help them in other work. They are beginning to make some informed choices about the work they are doing. These skills are all at a level that might be expected of their age.
120. By the end of Year 4, some skills have moved on so that pupils' progress has improved. However, most of this improvement has been too recent so that overall, pupils' attainment is below that which might be expected nationally. In discussion, these pupils are able to talk about exciting work they have done this term but said that they had not used the machines on a regular basis during last year. Consequently, the skills that they have are still at a somewhat elementary level. They have little experience of manipulating data using spreadsheets and did not know that they could use this type of program to help them make mathematical calculations of their choosing. This is the level that might be expected for their age. Pupils throughout the school are well aware of the possibilities of ICT within other areas of the curriculum and have used computers to help them with their history, geography and science. This has not yet been fully exploited to use the full potential of the technology. Since the new computer suite has been finalised and working pupils do now get a regular opportunity to develop their skills more consistently and this is helping to improve the standards.
121. Progress in learning is sound through to Year 2 but is unsatisfactory to the end of Year 4 overall. This is because, until recently, pupils have not been able to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in a systematic way over a period of time. In the lessons seen during the inspection, the quality of teaching and learning was at least satisfactory and often good. Teachers plan work well using the new national guidelines for the subject. This is ensuring that skills are built upon in a progressive way and pupils are able to learn new information and consolidate what they already know. Teachers have sufficient subject knowledge to teach the programs they are using and when

questions were asked of them were able to sort out the problems. This is an improvement from the last inspection. The school is aware that more needs to be done to increase the confidence of teachers and they will be undertaking a training programme in the near future. This is part of a lottery-funded opportunity (NOF).

122. Teachers have tried to develop work that gives pupils the opportunity to see how computers can be useful in everyday life and they have been successful in this. The discussion part of the lesson allows the pupils to learn a new skill and the practical task they are set usually involves a connection to a theme or topic that is being studied. Pupils are very keen, interested and highly motivated in what they are doing. There are no instances of poor behaviour. Support assistants are used to help develop the skills of the less able or special needs pupils who greatly benefit from their support.
123. The newly appointed co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that the computer suite was fully functional at the start of this term. In this he has been successful. When all the software has been installed the machines will be capable of delivering all the strands of the subject to all pupils at the school. In addition, each classroom has access to further machines although these are not yet used as fully as they might. Other resources are available. The reception children were successfully using a floor robot to programme different movements. The quality of teaching for this was very good and the children learnt very well.
124. ICT now fully meets the requirements set by the National Curriculum, which is a great improvement since the last inspection when it was highlighted as a key issue for improvement.

MUSIC

125. Children in both the infant and junior sections of the school are working within the National Curriculum levels expected for their age and they are on course to reach the national targets by ages seven and nine in music. Singing is particularly good and the nine year olds exceed the nationally expected levels. Progress is good throughout the school. This is an improvement on the previous inspection where standards were at expected levels and progress was sound.
126. In Year 2, children are learning to play untuned percussion instruments and they can maintain a rhythm by clapping or beating time. They can identify soft and loud sounds and whether they are pitched high or low because of good listening skills. They sing tunefully, even when unaccompanied, and are developing a sense of melody and phrasing. They are beginning to identify notation such as *high or low C* and they are using the correct vocabulary for the subject. They can compose simple patterns on chime bars.
127. In Year 4, children's singing is a strength. They sing sweetly using techniques they have learned for breathing to phrase melodies. They can combine tuned and untuned instrument playing with voices to produce a fine performance of the song *Land of the Silver Birch* of which they were rightly proud. They are encouraged to judge their performance, for example, by recording it, and look for ways to improve. They appreciate the need for co-operation in group music-making activities and are willing to rehearse.
128. Despite one unsatisfactory lesson in a Year 3 class, teaching is good overall throughout the school and sometimes it is very good. This is an improvement on the previous inspection where teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory in a third of lessons. Teachers are clear about what children need to learn and they know what to do to help children reach the required standard. Music resources are good and they are used effectively. A significant factor in the teaching, which is having a positive impact on attainment, is the teachers' expectations which are high. The demands they make are showing children what they are capable of and, as a result, children are proud and pleased with their performance. The unsatisfactory lesson was because the teacher was inexperienced and unclear about what children were expected to learn. Music skills are not only taught in weekly music lessons but opportunities are taken to teach them in assemblies and school clubs such as the choir

and recorder groups. The subject makes a positive contribution to the provision for spiritual and cultural development as children sing hymns, listen to the work of famous composers and enjoy workshop sessions with, for example, an Indian musician.

129. The co-ordinator is new to the school but is very competent and she is clear about how to develop the subject. The headteacher makes a significant contribution to music as she led the subject in the absence of a co-ordinator. It is her drive and interest that has raised standards in singing.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

130. Children at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 reach standards in line with the expected level for their age which is similar to the attainment reported at the last inspection. A minority of older children attain above this level in gymnastics and games. Children with special educational needs also reach expected levels and there is no difference between the achievement of girls and boys.
131. Children work enthusiastically in games and dance. They show increasing skill in throwing, catching, aiming and bouncing balls. They are beginning to understand the importance of rules in the simple games they make up. Most are confident when performing for others and work hard to improve their skills after watching other children demonstrate. In dance, they show much interest when exploring a range of movements in response to music and words. In a Year 2 class the interpretation of dot, dash and squiggle both independently and in pairs, added creative learning to the physical activity. Children in both of these lessons have appropriate levels of mobility and agility and are able to sustain physical activity for a suitable level of time.
132. Children in Year 4 respond well to challenges in gymnastics. They work hard during the warm up session, listen carefully, answer enthusiastically when previous work is discussed and try hard to improve their performance. Most show sound levels of body control in balance and shape activities and in the sequencing a range of these movements. A few, mainly girls, achieve high standards in the way they retain good body form during these movements. A feature of the Year 4 games lesson is the development of strategies for playing simple games. Children are physically challenged by sustained activity and mentally challenged to find the most efficient way of competing. Many became aware that accuracy is as important as speed when playing games. Most children show satisfactory games skills, but a significant number of children achieve at above this level, particularly in controlling a bouncing ball and passing it accurately.
133. Overall the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and in the lessons seen was very good. Most teachers have sound knowledge and understanding of teaching physical education, for example, in their reference to the importance of exercise for health during quieter moments in lessons. Lesson plans are very good; aims of the lessons carefully explained to children and very good use is made of pupil's demonstration to improve the performance of others. Lessons inspire children, for instance in the dance lesson when they were challenged to conclude their work on dance shapes in a much slower tempo. Resources and time are used effectively to make sure that lessons have the highest possible level of worthwhile activity. For instance the Year 2 games lesson saw children were purposefully engaged for the whole of the lesson.
134. Children are well managed and there are high expectations of involvement as was evident for instance in the gymnastics lesson. Lessons content is well thought out so that, in addition to new skills, children acquire new knowledge such as strategies for playing games which were learnt during the Year 4 games lesson.
135. Leadership in the subject is very good. The subject has been significantly developed since the last inspection. The profile of physical education has been raised by teacher's participation in the Top Games, gymnastics and dance training. Teaching has been monitored and the weakness identified, the shortness of actual pupils activity time in lessons, has been addressed. This is the main reason

why teaching and learning are now much better but the developments have not yet had time to significantly impact on the standards that are being achieved. Resources are generally good but the improvement plan recognises the desirability of additional gymnastics equipment.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

136. Children's progress and achievement in standards in religious education at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 have improved since the last inspection and are now in line with the expectations of the Kent agreed syllabus. Teaching time is appropriate, curriculum planning is good and statutory requirements are being fully met. The subject now makes a good contribution towards the provision of moral, social, spiritual and cultural development.
137. By the end of Year 2, most children can name the important events in the Christian Church's year. They understand the significance of Good Friday and Easter Sunday and the episodes to which they refer in the life of Jesus. They have read well known stories from the Bible such as The Good Samaritan and most are able to explain why Jesus told the story. They have learnt about how some famous Christians, such as Florence Nightingale, applied their Christian beliefs during their lives. Through lessons about Judaism they have begun to learn about other important religions and cultures. For example, that the Jewish Bible is called the Torah.
138. Children in Year 3 and Year 4 develop a wider understanding of religious celebrations through lessons about baptism and marriage. They know some of the history of Christianity and Judaism through the study of Bible stories from the Old Testament such as the Ten Commandments, Moses, David and Joseph. Awareness of other important faiths is taught through artefacts and interesting displays based upon, for instance, the Hindu faith. They have some understanding of the meaning of Saint through the study of how people such as St. Cuthbert used his Christian beliefs to improve the life of others. A good feature of work by Year 3 is the project based upon All Saint's Church, Eastchurch. This has included study of its history, architecture, artefacts and churchyard. The latter led to the application of numeracy in calculating life spans from gravestones and the development of spirituality as children were given the chance to express their feelings about life and death.
139. Both the quality of teaching and the progress children make is good. Teachers show sound subject knowledge in the way lessons are presented and planned. In the lessons observed with three different age groups, the building of new learning upon what children already knew, understood and could do was clearly shown. For instance, the simplicity of the Harvest Festivals with Year 2, Year 3 work on a Christian marriage ceremony and Year 4 investigative work finding out about what Jesus was like as a person. The interest of children was aroused in all the lessons by relating them to children's own experiences. For example, the recognition of familiar fruits and vegetables, recollections of children who had been a bridesmaid or been to a wedding and the characteristics of children in the class. Through the good quality of teaching children learn about thanksgiving, the importance of vows and the human qualities that Jesus displayed. In two of the lessons teachers took the opportunity to apply and develop literacy skills, through questioning and discussion, the writing of prayers, reading and researching accounts of the life of Jesus.
140. The key issue in the last inspection report regarding implementing the locally agreed syllabus, more appropriate planning and consistent opportunities for spiritual development have been fully met. The co-ordination of the subject has been very effective in raising the confidence of teachers, making sure an appropriate curriculum is in place, lessons are planned to support learning, resources are in place and learning is relevant to the ages of the children. An assessment policy is presently being developed and there are plans to make more use of information and communication technology.