

INSPECTION REPORT

SANDGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Folkestone

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118505

Headteacher: Mrs H Tait

Reporting inspector: Mrs H Bonser
22870

Dates of inspection: February 19th-22nd 2002

Inspection number: 230714

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Coolinge Lane Folkestone Kent
Postcode:	CT20 3QU
Telephone number:	01303 257280
Fax number:	01303 251422
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Murrells
Date of previous inspection:	March 15 th –16 th 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22870	Hilary Bonser	Registered inspector	Religious education.	The school's results and achievements; Teaching and learning; Leadership and management.
11575	Catherine Fish	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development; Care and welfare of pupils; Partnership with parents.
14997	Valerie Emery	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; art and design; music; equal opportunities.	Personal spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
12367	Anthony Green	Team inspector	Information and communication technology; history; physical education.	Curriculum learning opportunities.
1638	Michael Renouf	Team inspector	Mathematics; design and technology; special educational needs	
28014	Peter Buckley	Team inspector	Science; geography.	
4436	Michael Weller	Team inspector	English; English as an additional language.	

The inspection contractor was:

Serco QAA Ltd
Herringston Barn
Herringston
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 9PU

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33 Kingsway
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Sandgate Primary School is a community school that draws most of its pupils from the Sandgate area of Folkestone in which it is situated. The school is larger than average in size, with 412 boys and girls from 4 to 11 years of age. Pupils' attainments on entry to the school are above average overall, although the full range of attainment is represented. At present, there are 23 per cent of pupils on the register for special educational needs, which is similar to the national average. One per cent of pupils has statements of special educational need, which is below average. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds, many of which are advantaged. However, the variety is not reflected in the number of those known to be eligible for free school meals, which is below average. Two per cent of pupils speak English as their second language and seven per cent come from ethnic minority groups. Almost all of the current teachers have been appointed in the two years since the last inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Sandgate Primary School is now a good school with many strong features. Standards in English and mathematics in particular, but also in science, have risen rapidly in the last two years because the quality of teaching is good. This means that pupils achieve well overall by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6. Pupils behave well and are very keen to learn. The headteacher, governors and staff work together very well as a team to improve standards for all pupils and are fully committed to continuing this. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English and mathematics are now high and all pupils do well because of further improvements in the good quality of teaching.
- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership, working very closely and very effectively with all staff and governors to overcome weaknesses and to bring about rapid improvements in teaching and the standards of work.
- The school cares very well for its pupils, providing very good support and guidance for them; together with the very good relationships between all members of the school community, this makes a strong contribution to pupils' very positive attitudes towards school.
- The school promotes pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well, successfully encouraging them to behave well, to get on well together and to work hard.
- The school provides a very good range of relevant learning opportunities that help to interest pupils and motivate them to learn.
- Skilled learning support assistants provide very effective support for pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- Continue to improve standards in science, which are not yet as high as those in English and mathematics.
- Improve standards and pupils' achievements further in those subjects where they are satisfactory at present.
- Make more effective use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning across the curriculum.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 2000, when it was found to no longer require special measures. There has been good improvement in the two years since that time and the school has responded well to the issues then noted. In particular, those weaknesses relating to standards and leadership in English have been transformed into strengths of the school. The quality of teaching has been further improved. A rigorous and ongoing programme of monitoring and support, together with a well-focused programme of in-service training has helped to bring this about. There have been good improvements in assessment procedures in English and mathematics and the way that teachers use the information to inform

planning, although there has not been time yet to develop this fully in other subjects. The school improvement plan is now an effective tool for raising standards further. In addition, the national literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented well and consistently. There have been significant improvements in the learning opportunities and environment of the school, contributing to the positive attitudes of pupils, which are now very good. The increasing impact of these changes can already be seen in the considerable improvements in the achievements of pupils across the range of attainment and in a rapid rise in standards over the last two years. There is a strong, shared commitment in the school to continue to raise standards and the quality of teaching and learning. The school is very well placed to make further improvements.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 were well above average in English, and average in mathematics and science, when compared with all schools nationally. Compared to those of similar schools, they were average in English, but below average in mathematics and science. These results show a rapid improvement over the last three years, rising more quickly than the national trend. Although results in mathematics fell back last year, they still represented very good achievement for this group of pupils, in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 2. Results at the end of Year 2 in 2001 also showed very good improvement since the last inspection. They were in the top five per cent nationally in mathematics and well above average in reading and writing compared to all schools. Teachers' assessments in science indicate that standards were average in science.

Pupils now achieve well overall. Standards on entry to the school are above average. Children achieve satisfactorily and standards remain above average overall by the time they leave the reception classes. Past work and lesson observations show that standards currently at the end of Year 6 are well above average in English and mathematics and average in science. This is because the full impact of recent improvements in science has not had time to impact on standards at the end of Year 6. Nevertheless, these boys and girls are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment at the end of Year 2. Standards in information and communication technology and in history are also above average. They are average in all other subjects. Inspection evidence shows that standards at the end of Year 2 are above average. These differ from the test results of last year, because of differences between the two groups of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well. The school is likely to exceed the challenging targets set for this year.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils enjoy coming to school, they are enthusiastic, eager to learn and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good throughout the school both in lessons and at play.

Personal development and relationships	Very good overall; very good relationships between all adults and pupils in the school. Pupils act responsibly.
Attendance	Good; above the national average.

The way in which pupils work together, show interest in their work and respect for others, whatever their level of need, is a particular strength of the school. All adults in the school provide very good role models for them. The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils in lessons were never less than satisfactory and good or better in four out of five of them.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
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.

The overall quality of teaching is good and has improved further since the last inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. As a result, pupils now learn well in many lessons throughout the school. This, in turn, has led to improvements in standards and in the achievements of all pupils. Teaching is now good in English, mathematics and science, where it was satisfactory before. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are taught well. Teaching was also good overall in the lessons seen in information and communication technology, art and design and geography. It was satisfactory in religious education and physical education. In design and technology not enough teaching was seen to make a judgement on its quality. In history and music, where lessons were seen mainly in Years 3 to 6, it was very good in history and good in music. The quality of teaching is good overall in the Foundation Stage, in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6.

The school now meets the needs of all girls and boys well, including higher attaining pupils. In well taught lessons across the school, teachers plan work thoroughly, use skilful questioning to involve all pupils and use a good variety of methods and resources to give pupils well matched, challenging and interesting activities. As a result, pupils of all abilities concentrate well, work hard and make good progress. What sometimes made the difference between these lessons and those that were satisfactory, were the expectations teachers had of what pupils could do and how well they kept pupils focused on exactly what they should be learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good overall; a wide range of relevant and stimulating learning opportunities that interest and motivate pupils well.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good across the school. Pupils are supported well by the learning support assistants. The provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs is very good in the special arrangements and close support provided for individuals.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good; through good support pupils have full access to the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural	Very good overall; very good for spiritual, moral and social development; good for cultural development.

development	
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well; a strong emphasis on promoting pupils' self esteem contributes very well to their personal development.

The curriculum is enriched especially through the very good links with the community, a good number of very well-used visits and visitors and a very good range of extra-curricular activities. The school works well in partnership with parents and this also makes a strong contribution to pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good overall; outstanding leadership by the headteacher, very well supported by the deputy headteacher and by very good teamwork between all staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well; they are taking an increasingly active and effective part in the management of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good; a rigorous programme of monitoring and support has contributed strongly to improvements in standards and teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Financial resources are used very well to support the school's priorities and all other resources are used very purposefully.

The headteacher has built a strong and cohesive staff team, enabling a rapid and sustained improvement in standards. The school works well to apply the principles of best value when making decisions. Staffing levels are very good overall. The very good number of well-trained support staff contributes very well to pupils' learning. A satisfactory level of resources and sound accommodation are used well to create a stimulating learning environment for pupils.

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 enjoy coming to school. • Their children are well taught. They are expected to work hard, do their best and they make good progress. • The school is well led and managed. • The school is approachable and responsive to their views and concerns. • The children are well behaved and the school helps them to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information they receive about how well their children are doing. • The amount of homework given. • The closeness with which the school works with them.

Inspectors agree with all of the positive comments made by parents. The general information parents receive was found to be very good overall, but the quality of the reports sent to parents could give more detail about how children are doing. Inspection findings also show that the school tries very hard to work closely with parents and provide good opportunities for parents to meet with and talk to teachers. The amount and quality of homework is satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, based on average points, were well above average in reading and writing and very high in mathematics compared to all schools nationally. Teachers' assessments in science indicate that standards were average. Compared to schools of a similar context, results were well above average in reading, above average in writing and very high in mathematics. This showed a very good improvement from the results of the previous two years. At the end of Year 6, in comparison to all schools, results were well above average in English and average in mathematics and science. Compared to schools of a similar context, they were average in English but below average in mathematics and science. However, these comparisons with similar schools, which are based on the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, should be interpreted with caution as they may give a misleading indication of pupils' achievements. Research carried out by the school, using the Child Poverty Index, indicates that significantly more pupils are eligible for free school meals than those who claim them. The performance of boys, compared to the national picture, has been slightly better than that of girls over the last three years.
2. These results also show a rapid improvement, especially in English, since the time of the last inspection, rising from average in English and below average in science in 1999. In mathematics, results rose from above average to well above average in 2000, but fell back to average in 2001. Nevertheless, this still represented very good achievement for that particular group of pupils, as their performance at the end of Year 2 had been well below average. Particularly noticeable in the improvements has been a significant increase in the numbers of pupils reaching the higher level 5 in all three subjects. However, in science the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level 4 remained below average.
3. Children's attainments on entry to the school, from observations and from analyses of the baseline assessments, are above average overall. Children achieve satisfactorily overall in the Foundation Stage. By the time they leave the reception classes, the majority exceed the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and personal, social and emotional development and meet them in the other areas of their learning. There have been a number of different teachers in the reception classes during this year as a result of unavoidable staff absences but the school is working hard to minimise the impact of these. In the lessons seen the overall quality of teaching was good and children were making good progress.
4. Past work and lesson observations show that standards at the end of Year 2 are above average in reading writing and mathematics and average in science. Pupils of all levels of attainment now achieve well because they are taught well. Differences in standards between national tests last year and the inspection judgements arise from differences between the two groups of pupils rather than a falling back of standards. At the end of Year 6, standards are well above those expected in English and mathematics and pupils achieve well. Standards are average in science. This is because there has not been enough time for the full effect of recent and ongoing improvements to be seen in Year 6. Boys and girls are achieving well overall in relation to their prior attainment, as a result of good teaching and their progress is more consistent than that described in the last report.
5. These dramatic improvements in standards since the last inspection have been brought about by the very good leadership and management of the school. This is reflected in the good quality of teaching, which is remarkably consistent, especially in English, mathematics and science, considering that almost all of the present teaching team has been appointed in the last two years. In English and mathematics especially, standards have been raised though a strong and successful focus on fully challenging pupils of all levels of attainment and providing work in lessons that is well matched to pupils' differing needs, helping them to achieve well. The

effective way that pupils are grouped according to their attainment has also contributed to this. Other factors include the increasing impact of the effective and consistent implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies and the good use the school is making of initiatives, such as booster classes, for pupils in need of additional support. The very effective support of skilled learning support assistants has a positive impact on pupils' learning in lessons. The good behaviour and very positive attitudes that boys and girls have towards their work also contribute to their achievements. As a result, the school is likely to meet the challenging targets set for this year, as part of their wholehearted commitment to continuing to raise standards.

6. In English, pupils now achieve well overall in relation to their prior attainment. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Teachers provide a good number of opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to practise their speaking and listening skills through discussion, role-play and drama. Consequently, by the time they leave the school, pupils listen very attentively to their teacher and to each other. They make thoughtful contributions to sustained discussions, building on each other's ideas. Standards in reading are above average at the end of Year 2 and well above average at the end of Year 6. This is partly because phonics and key words are taught in a consistent, well-structured way and teachers monitor and support the progress of individual pupils very carefully. Pupils are enthusiastic readers, and show a good understanding of what they read. Standards in writing are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Teachers make good use of opportunities in other subjects to extend the range of pupils' writing. Most teachers do not yet make enough use of information and communication technology to promote pupils' language skills.
7. Standards in mathematics are above the expected levels by the end of Year 2 and well above them at the end of Year 6 in all aspects of the subject. Pupils achieve well in relation to their previous attainment. This is a direct result of improvements in the quality of teaching and the effective implementation of the national numeracy strategy with the associated staff training. Teachers also make good use of their assessments to plan work that is matched well to pupils' differing needs. The good variety of ways in which teachers help pupils to learn contributes well to their good achievement. In general, the use of information and communication technology to support pupils' developing mathematical skills is not yet fully developed. Pupils make good use of their numeracy skills in other subjects, for example, when drawing timelines in history and measuring in science.
8. Standards in science are broadly average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Scientific enquiry is a particular strength. Pupils of all levels of attainment are now achieving well. This is a result of good teaching and recent improvements, such as better assessment procedures and the well-matched prompt sheets for investigative work, although it is too soon to see the full impact of these factors on standards at the end of Years 2 and 6. In some lessons teachers do not ensure that pupils use precise scientific terms and do not emphasise the knowledge gained from experiments sufficiently.
9. Standards in information and communication technology are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching. Considerable improvements have taken place in the subject in the last two years, including the provision of a computer suite and in the confidence and skills of teachers. Although teachers make good use of the suite to improve pupils' skills in the subject, not enough use is yet made of the suite or of computers in classrooms to support pupils' learning in other subjects.
10. In religious education, standards are in line with expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. They reflect well on their own experiences, helping them understand better the ideas and beliefs of others. However, some teachers of older pupils do not have high enough expectations of pupils' knowledge of world religions or give higher attaining pupils sufficiently challenging written work.
11. By the end of Year 6, standards are average in art and design, geography, design and technology, music and physical education. As yet, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in these subjects, are not consistently as high as in the core subjects and information

and communication technology. One reason for this is that in the last two years the school has focused strongly and successfully on raising standards particularly in English and mathematics. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their previous attainment at the end of their reception year. Standards are above average in history and pupils achieve well because teachers use their good subject knowledge well in a good variety of challenging activities, including a wide range of visits and visitors, to enthuse and interest the pupils.

12. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well overall and make good gains in their learning, relative to their prior attainment. They make good progress towards their individual targets, which are usually precise. They also make good progress in lessons as a result of carefully planned, well taught work and very good support from skilled learning support assistants. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve well in Years 1 and 2 because there is specialist support provided by the county Language Support Service and because the National Curriculum for English and the national literacy strategy are appropriate for early language learners. In Years 3 to 6, while most pupils also achieve well, the progress of the most recent arrival is hindered, as the school has been unable to obtain the specialist teaching needed from the Language Support Service. Higher attaining pupils now achieve well, especially in English, mathematics and science, because of well-matched challenging work and increased opportunities to extend their skills. No significant differences in the achievements of boys and girls were noted during the inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. At the time of the previous report this aspect was judged to be good overall. This positive picture has been built upon well, and some elements are now very good. Pupils are eager to come to school and this is demonstrated by the high levels of enthusiasm they show in all the school has to offer and in the very positive approach they have to their lessons. Nearly all parents say that their children enjoy coming to school.
14. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work. They are good or better in more than four out of five lessons. In nearly half of all lessons it is very good or excellent. There is little variation across the school. In lessons, the enthusiasm of all pupils is shown by the good levels of interest in what the teacher is saying, their keenness and eagerness to answer questions and the way they listen well to both other pupils and to the teacher. Pupils pay good attention to what is being said and this enables them to settle to their work quickly without needing constant clarification. For example, in a Year 5 history lesson, the pupils were taking part in an archaeological 'dig'. Their task was to use the pictures of objects found to discover what they told them about life in the Indus Valley four thousand years ago. Because the teacher had explained very carefully what they were to do and they had listened very well, they were able to settle quickly, work eagerly and willingly and became fully engaged in the task set for them. They are proud of the work they do in lessons and like to talk to adults about it and share it with them.
15. Pupils' attitudes to the other activities that go on in school are very good. They especially enjoy the wide range of after school activities, primarily for older pupils, that include entertaining sessions on juggling. Pupils are very keen to explain to adults what they are doing around school, for example, their work in tending the courtyard garden. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language also have very positive attitudes towards the school and towards their own learning. They mix well with other pupils who are very supportive of them. One pupil in Year 6 volunteered to talk in the school assembly about the Chinese New Year.
16. Behaviour in and out of the classroom and in the playground is good. This is because the pupils know what is expected of them and they try hard to reach these expectations. Most parents say that behaviour is good and that this is also remarked upon when the pupils are away from school, for example on the Year 6 trip to the Isle of Wight. A few pupils do experience difficulties with their behaviour. Generally they respond well to the additional support system that enables them to take a positive part in modifying and controlling their own behaviour. Teachers use a

very consistent approach to behaviour with all pupils and this helps pupils to respond positively. The school and pupils acknowledge that there are incidents of bullying, but pupils know what they should do; pupils spoken to say that matters are sorted out quickly. The presence of peer mediators in the playground means that pupils have other pupils to whom they can refer any problems. They have a positive effect on the quality of playtimes. Pupils are trustworthy; there is no need to lock away equipment because pupils know that it must not be interfered with. Year 6 pupils are trusted to be in the library at breaks. There was one exclusion last year.

17. Pupils' personal development is good. They are expected to take responsibility from the time they enter the school. From the reception classes upwards, pupils engage eagerly in the day-to-day running of the classroom and school. As they get older, they take on more responsibility. For example, pupils in Year 5 help the reception year children at lunchtime. Year 6 pupils act as buddies for the new reception year pupils when they first start school, having acted as guides showing parents around the previous year. Older pupils are reading partners for younger pupils; this initiative has good benefits for both sets of pupils. A school council, currently only for Year 3 to Year 6, was set up last term. This is already having a positive effect on pupils' personal development and sense of responsibility. During the inspection, the meeting covered topics involving the school environment, including the playground that needs refurbishing, behaviour and bullying. Pupils expressed both interesting and informative views on these aspects. Comments by older pupils particularly show a very mature and responsible attitude, with thoughtful insights into concerns and possible problems. Parents at the meeting commented on how pleasant it was to be with the pupils and this was borne out by inspection findings. Pupils are polite, courteous and very willing to initiate and engage in interesting conversations. They develop more independence in their learning as they move through the school; they are often reminded that they have to make their own decisions about how they can achieve something. However, there was no evidence seen of individual or groups of pupils working fully independently in lessons, for example, in the library. Personal development is very well celebrated in the weekly 'Gold Book' assembly, devoted solely to recognising personal rather than academic achievement. Pupils enthusiastically applaud the efforts and successes of others.
18. Relationships across the whole school community are very good. This is because adults always take time to talk to pupils about any concerns, and to praise them for positive actions and achievements; this is a school where children come first. Pupils respect adults and most of the time, each other; adults act as very good role models in this. Pupils work well together and cooperate and collaborate as they need to. They listen to each other's opinions and, whilst not always agreeing, accept what they are saying. Pupils respond well in classes to reminders from the teachers that all pupils' views are respected and valued. Assemblies are well used to reinforce the need for pupils to treat others as they would wish to be treated themselves.
19. Attendance is above the national average. However, the level of unauthorised absences was also above average last year. This was due partly to a recording error in the registers; this has been rectified. Some unauthorised absences were due to parents not giving the school an appropriate reason for their child's absence. Both absences and lateness are monitored well and appropriate action is taken by the school and the headteacher.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

20. The school has successfully addressed the weaknesses in teaching noted in the key issues at the time of the last inspection. As a result, since then, there have been further improvements in the good quality of teaching and pupils learn well in many lessons. This has had a considerable impact on the improvements in standards and pupils' achievements as they move through the school, and continues to do so. The quality of teaching was good or better in nearly four-fifths of the lessons seen. It was very good, and at times excellent, in nearly a quarter of them. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The consistency of the overall quality of teaching is particularly remarkable as most of the teachers have been appointed since the last inspection. A key factor in this has been a rigorous and ongoing programme of monitoring and support, together with a very well planned programme of in-service training. Particular improvements have been made in teachers' subject expertise and in the way that teachers provide challenging and

interesting work for all pupils, whatever their level of attainment, especially in English, mathematics and science. These were particular areas for improvement in the last report. Improvements in the quality of planning also provide better continuity of learning for pupils.

21. Teaching is now good across the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and in information and communication technology. This very consistent picture makes a key contribution to the good achievements of pupils in these subjects. Teaching was also good overall in the lessons seen in art and design and geography, although in these subjects and in science it is too soon to see the full impact of this and other recent developments on standards and achievement at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Teaching in religious education and physical education was satisfactory. In design and technology not enough teaching was seen to make a judgement on its quality. In history and music, where lessons were seen mainly in Years 3 to 6, it was very good in history and good in music. The quality of teaching is good overall in the foundation stage, in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6.
22. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are taught well throughout the school, helping pupils to achieve well and to make good and at times very good progress in many lessons. One reason for this is that teachers have worked hard to implement the national literacy and numeracy strategies effectively and consistently. They have been helped in this by very good guidance from the subject leaders and by making good use of external training. This helps them, for example, to use their good subject knowledge well in questioning and intervention to extend pupils' skills and understanding. In a well taught literacy lesson for lower and average attaining pupils in Year 2, the teacher made very good use of a well-chosen text and laminated pictures to interest pupils and help them to improve their skills in descriptive writing. She targeted skilful questions well to help pupils extend their initial responses and to include pupils of all levels of attainment. She explained the purpose of the writing task well, making it quite clear exactly what she would be looking for when marking their work. This focused pupils very well and they settled quickly to their tasks, concentrating carefully. As they worked, and again at the end of the lesson, she made effective use of pupils' work both to reinforce teaching points and to elicit good suggestions for improving it. In a very well taught mathematics lesson for Year 3 higher attaining pupils, the teacher used his subject knowledge very well to help pupils learn and use specific mathematics terms accurately. He made good use of pupils' strategies and errors to help them improve their skills in adding two digit numbers quickly.
23. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well throughout the school. Class teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator prepare the targets for pupils and these are based, where relevant, on the provision outlined for them in their statements. Learning support assistants provide very good support in helping pupils to meet their targets in the work that is set for the class. The specific support for pupils with statements of special educational need is very good. The learning support assistants know these pupils well, maintain daily records and give the pupils good feedback on how they are doing. Pupils with English as an additional language throughout the school receive very good focused support in smaller groups both from the class teacher and from the learning support assistant. Pupils at an early stage of learning English follow specially designed programmes, in addition to any available specialist teaching. The special educational needs co-ordinator has given good guidance to the Year 6 teachers on a range of teaching styles to be employed for an older pupil at a similar stage, particularly using visual reinforcement. The support is effective and these pupils contribute appropriately to class discussion.
24. In many lessons, there are strong features that contribute to the very positive attitudes pupils have towards their learning. Teachers manage their pupils in a very consistent and positive way. This is based on the very good relationships and mutual respect between all staff and pupils throughout the school. Teachers help pupils to meet their high expectations of behaviour and attitudes to work by creating a calm and purposeful atmosphere in lessons. They have a thorough knowledge of individual pupils that they use sensitively to support them and to promote their self-esteem and personal development. Teachers work in close collaboration with their learning support assistants. They brief and deploy them very well, so that their skilled and valued support has a very positive impact on pupils' learning. Many good examples were seen of

teachers using effective questioning techniques to both consolidate and extend pupils' learning, ensuring, for example, that boys and girls of all levels of attainment were equally involved. In many lessons, teachers use a good range of strategies to keep up a brisk pace and sense of urgency, for example, by using time targets effectively. As a result, pupils listen well and work hard. In most lessons, they settled very quickly and sensibly to group activities, showing how very well they can concentrate and co-operate with each other.

25. The good variety of teaching strategies that teachers use in many lessons reflects the way that they are taking into increasing account the different ways in which pupils learn. This means that they are more responsive to their needs and promote their learning more effectively. Teachers also take care to choose resources and contexts for pupils' learning that will interest and motivate them. Drama and role-play is often used effectively in lessons to enhance pupils' learning. In a very well taught literacy lesson for Year 1 pupils, the teacher assumed the character of Jack, from Jack and the Beanstalk, to increase their understanding of the story. The teacher developed the relevant questions asked by pupils skilfully, with answers that encouraged pupils to think about whether Jack was a hero or a villain and who was in the right. Pupils were so captivated by this that one even asked when their teacher was coming back!!
26. The impact of such features on pupils' rate of learning was illustrated in a very well taught geography lesson for Year 6 pupils. The teacher planned the tightly structured lesson very well. Combined with his very good management of the pupils, this meant that a brisk and purposeful pace was kept up throughout. He shared the lesson objectives well so that pupils knew exactly what they should be learning. Rapid fire questioning about why people might want to visit mountain areas involved boys and girls equally. He made very good use of a large computerised display to keep pupils' attention tightly focused on key questions. Quick variations in activities - 'Two minutes to find the Alps in your atlases', - kept their interest fully engaged. The very effective support given by both the teacher and learning support assistant enabled pupils with special educational needs to participate fully in the lesson. The teacher then outlined the proposals of an imaginary company to build a ski resort. His own enthusiasm and evident enjoyment as he did this, together with his very skilful questioning, use of role-play and debate to extend pupils' ideas of the advantages and disadvantages of such a plan, kept all pupils engrossed and very keen to learn throughout. Group tasks were carefully matched to pupils' level of understanding. The high quality written work produced by the end of the hour lesson showed how effective their learning had been.
27. There was less consistency between teachers in some other elements of teaching, although examples of good or very good practice were seen. This often made the difference between satisfactory and good or very good teaching. In some lessons, although teachers had clear objectives in their planning, they did not explain these clearly to pupils. By contrast, in some very well taught lessons, the teachers not only discussed the objectives but kept pupils tightly focused by returning to them at each stage of the lesson. At the end, they encouraged pupils to evaluate their work against them, so that they knew how well they were doing. Teachers often advise pupils how they can improve their work when they mark it, but few examples were seen of teachers making effective use in lessons of the individual short-term targets agreed with individual pupils to help them focus on their specific areas for improvement.
28. Many very good examples were seen of teaching in the whole class sessions at the beginning and end of lessons, with very clear expositions and well matched, challenging questions. However, during group activities in a number of lessons, including some for literacy and numeracy, teachers used their time in giving general support to several groups or individuals, rather than using the opportunity to give focused teaching to a specific group, as in the most effective lessons.
29. Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils' work in the core subjects, which are reflected in the good planning and the challenging activities set for pupils of differing levels of attainment. Teachers make appropriate use of the good assessment procedures in English and mathematics, in particular, and increasingly in science, to focus their planning. This has contributed significantly to the improvements in standards and pupils' good achievement in

these areas. However, in several of the other subjects, where assessment procedures are at an early stage of development, there is much greater variation in teachers' expectations. This was evident in some lessons and in past work. It is one reason why pupils' achievement over time is satisfactory rather than good in most of these subjects, in spite of making good progress within some lessons. There is also some inconsistency over the precision with which teachers both model and encourage pupils to use key vocabulary and terminology.

30. Teachers help pupils to develop their information and communication technology skills well. Some very good examples were seen of information and communication technology being used very effectively to support the learning objectives in other subjects, for example, in a very well taught literacy lesson for lower attaining Year 6 pupils. The impact of this in improving and applying what they had learnt about the techniques of suspense writing skills, was considerable. In general, however teachers do not make enough use of opportunities to use information and communication technology to support pupils' learning across the curriculum, including that of pupils with special educational needs.

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

31. The curriculum provision in Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6 is very good and has a positive impact on the learning by pupils across the range of subject areas and the standards achieved. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the pupils and effectively meets the statutory requirements for National Curriculum subjects, religious education and collective worship. Very good use is made of days devoted to one subject throughout the school, the local environment, visits and visitors to the school. All pupils from Year 4 to Year 6 have swimming lessons. The allocation of time for the curriculum is slightly above the national average in Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6. Throughout the school, this is used to enhance the teaching time for English, and in Years 1 and 2 for mathematics. This reflects the strong focus on these subjects in the last two years and contributes to the high standards achieved by the time pupils reach Year 6.
32. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is well planned and takes good account of the early learning goals for children of that age. The teachers ensure that all areas of learning are covered appropriately and that tasks provided for children build on the learning needed for them to reach or exceed the expected early learning goals by the end of the reception year.
33. Good emphasis is placed on the teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Good use is made of the national literacy and numeracy strategies and both are having a good impact on the high standards in English and mathematics by Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils in Years 2 to Years 6 are taught in groups, set according to their level of attainment, for literacy two days a week and numeracy every day of the week. This helps teachers to match work more closely to pupils' differing needs and contributes well to their good achievement in these subjects.
34. Policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when schemes were not in place for all subjects. In addition to the schemes for the national literacy and national numeracy strategies, schemes are now in place for all subjects based on a range of nationally produced guidance and commercially published schemes for art, physical education and personal, social and health education. The scheme for religious education is in accordance with the locally Agreed Syllabus for Kent. The use of information and communication technology to support learning in other areas of the curriculum is under-utilised. However, the co-ordinator for this subject is developing a cross-curricular scheme of work to address this issue.
35. The provision for pupils' personal, social, and health education is very good and has a very high profile within the school. It has been maintained well since the previous inspection. It is taught in accordance with the requirements of the governing body and uses a published scheme as well as schemes of work provided by the Kent Health and Education Partnership. Sex education and attention to drugs misuse are taught formally in Year 6. Provision has been well maintained since the previous inspection when 'high standards' were observed. Religious education,

science, 'circle time', where pupils have the opportunity to discuss issues relevant to their own experiences, and assemblies are also very effective vehicles for the provision, which supports the very good relationships and good personal development seen throughout the school. The school nurse gives good support to health education lessons and the 'Life Education Centre' mobile classroom visits the school annually to support work in these areas. The very effective provision has resulted in the school working for the nationally recognised 'Healthy School Award'. Concepts of citizenship are promoted well through the school council and pupils' responsibilities around the school; for example Year 5 pupils look after younger pupils at lunch times and Year 6 pupils are trained to act as mediators if any pupil has a worry or a concern. The deputy headteacher has arranged to attend a course in the near future, which will lead to the further promotion of citizenship in the school.

36. As well as the school nurse, visitors to the school also include parents to support reading, members of historical groups, a science theatre, the local vicar and lay preacher, members of the local fire brigade and from the railways to talk about safety and instrumentalists from the Kent Music School. Sixth form students from the Folkestone School for Girls teach games after school. All these visitors make a very good contribution to the life and work of the school and enrich the opportunities provided for the pupils.
37. The provision for equality of access and opportunity is good. All staff are very aware of the issues and many good examples were seen in lessons of ways that teachers vary their methods of teaching to meet pupils' differing needs more effectively and that all pupils are fully included. Good attention is given to this in all school policies and considered in the decisions made for the school community. All aspect of school life are open to boys and girls, irrespective of their level of attainment, background or culture. Both staff and pupils are valued by all and visitors are made to feel very welcome. The quality and care put into the school environment reflects the pride in the school felt by all the staff and its pupils.
38. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good across the school. Pupils with special educational needs are taught with all other pupils, and class teachers are responsible for planning the work for them. This work is well matched to their needs, within the planned work for the whole class. The school places a strong emphasis on including all pupils in all activities, and providing support to help them take advantage of the curriculum. Learning support assistants provide them with very good help to enable them to do their best in all areas of the curriculum. At the end of each school year, progress is reviewed and helpful early targets set for the start of the new term. The provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs is very good in the special arrangements and close support provided for individuals. Pupils with English as an additional language are well provided for overall. Through good support, they have full access to the curriculum. The school takes every opportunity to celebrate different languages and cultures and pupils are invited to share these.
39. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good and enriches the curriculum. Teachers give freely of their time to provide a very good range of clubs. These are beneficial to the very large numbers of pupils who take part enthusiastically. Sports activities include football, netball, basketball, karate and a general sports club, which includes rounders and athletics. Other activities include mathematics, creative writing, choir, juggling, drama, dance, art, craft and gardening. In support of the school's good provision for equality of access and opportunities, not only are clubs open to Year 5 and 6 pupils but a number are specifically open to pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4. For example, a sports club is organised by pupils from the Folkestone School for Girls for Years 3 and 4 and gardening, art, craft and sports clubs are open to Year 2 pupils.
40. Very good use is made of a range of visits to support subjects. For example, Year 6 pupils visit the Imperial War Museum and Science Museum, Year 5 visit a local sports centre for an activity day, Year 4 visit Dover Castle, Year 3 visit Port Lympne Zoo, Year 2 visit the Sea Life Centre and Year 1 visit Dover Museum. Good use is also made of the immediate environment. For example, Foundation Stage children visit local shops to support work in mathematics and older pupils visit the local church and the old school building in the High Street to support work in geography, history and religious education.

41. As well as the extra-curricular activities offered, the school organises themed days and themed weeks, which also enrich the curriculum. For example in mathematics, science and art. Year 5 and 6 pupils take part in a two-night visit to Lille, North France, and Year 6 a three-night visit to the Isle of Wight. All of these opportunities contribute very well to pupils' personal development, their interest in their work and enthusiasm for school.
42. The school has developed very good links with the local community that are of benefit both to itself and for those involved from outside. The school has very good links with the Sandgate Society; members are prepared to come in to school to talk to pupils about local history and the local environment. A local shopkeeper is very supportive in allowing the younger pupils to practise their money skills in his shop. He helps them wrestle with the right coins and the correct change. Visits are made to the local church to find out how it functions and the vicar comes in to school regularly to take assemblies. As part of their social development, pupils visit people in the local retirement home to sing, take harvest festival gifts and to show off, for example, their Easter bonnets. The deputy headteacher has been instrumental in persuading a play equipment company to use the school as an example of what can be done in a playground. This means that they will match funds raised through various means by the school; costed plans are currently awaited for pupils to view and decide upon. Other links include the 'Drugs Bus', the fire, police, dentist and railway services and the 'Kick Theatre' that focuses on different issues, the most recent being on personal, social and health topics.
43. Links with partnership institutions are good. The school has very good, mutually supportive links with the private playgroup that shares the same site. The private after school club is run from the same building making it easy for pupils to attend. There are plans to develop better links with other nurseries and playgroups both locally and within the town. Links with all the secondary schools used by parents for the next stage of their children's education are good. A common day is arranged for pupils to spend time in their new schools in the summer term. In addition, the school provides work experience for pupils from a local secondary school. Students from the Grammar School come down in their free periods to hear pupils read; those spoken to enjoy the experience. The school has good links with a local beacon school that have been useful in the areas of planning and in the development of information and communication technology.
44. The provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall and has been maintained since the last inspection. The school's ethos strongly promotes tolerance and respect for self and others. It is now well established in the school and is still improving. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. A key strength is the way in which the high quality school assemblies are used. The school comes together to explore carefully planned issues and reflect together on the impact on their lives. A good example of this was the 'Good Samaritan' story, which was used to identify and explore the good qualities of their friends. Pupils were asked to reflect on such qualities as kindness, thoughtfulness and love, which they had identified as good qualities in friendship and try to promote these as their own qualities in their lives. Pupils are very much encouraged to think about themselves as special pupils with exceptional qualities. Another good feature is the positive climate in the school where mutual trust is an expectation. There is a promotion of awareness and understanding of their own and other's beliefs, in order to live in harmony with one another. Within the school community there are small number of pupils from a wide variety of cultures. These are well supported and integrated very sensitively into the whole school.
45. All staff provide very good role models and evidence of concern and compassion are part of this. All pupils are treated with respect, their views are taken into account and their individual needs are met by all staff with courtesy and concern. An older pupil was asked to see the head teacher, for example, and was warmly praised and thanked for a particular contribution he had made to the school community. Pupils have regular opportunities to explore the values and beliefs of other cultures, through religious education for example. Additionally, there are well-planned opportunities across the curriculum to explore different beliefs and the impact they have on people's lives. The Year 6 pupils were exploring Mayan textiles for example. They investigated the use of pattern in order to understand the significance of some patterns used in

terms of their influence on the lives of the Mayan people. They discovered deer and lightning symbols and reflected on the importance of these in the lives of the people.

46. Very good provision is also made for moral development. The school places great emphasis on the promotion of a very clear moral code through its 'Golden Rules', which reinforces consistent messages. These are clearly stated as 'Everyone's happiness is important.' and 'Everyone deserves a taste of success,' in all aspects of school life. Each class negotiates a set of rules and these are clearly displayed. Personal targets are displayed very attractively on the tails of kites in the main corridors. Weekly 'Golden Book' assemblies celebrate pupils' achievements, such as 'an honest and helpful attitude', and promote and reinforce the strong values of the school. During one such 'Golden Book' assembly, when a situation was being dramatised as a person being 'special' or 'not special', one Year 2 pupil was applauded by saying 'I think you are being mean, everyone is special'. It was a clear indication of the confidence to act consistently and in accordance with the pupil's own principles by expressing his views. The good role modelling by all staff makes an important contribution to moral development. All staff demonstrate support for each other. Honesty, integrity and compassion are all common qualities. The ways in which pupils are treated, encourages them to take responsibility for their own actions and to understand that they are accountable.
47. Provision for social development is another very good area. There is a strong sense of community, which is fostered by the promotion of common and inclusive values by all who work in the school. Teachers encourage pupils to work co-operatively through paired and group activities. They play in teams and take part in school productions and events, as well as class presentations and assemblies. Additionally, responsibilities are offered for running stalls and games at the Christmas Fayre, for example, and at the Summer Sizzle. The school council, with representatives from each class, has important responsibilities within the school. The council members represent the views of others and negotiate issues and problems identified by the pupils and staff. They have a voice and views that are heard and respected. Their contributions for the development of the outside play area is an example of this. Pupils are asked for ideas for fund raising for charitable events and given responsibilities for carrying them out. An important task for Year 5 pupils is to meet the parents of the children who are coming into the reception classes in the Summer term. They answer questions about the school and show them around. When the reception children come into the school in the autumn term, the Year 5 pupils look after these younger children, having already made themselves known to their parents. Within each class, including those in the reception class, a range of responsibilities are allocated to pupils. Taking the register to the office and tidying the class library are such examples of this.
48. Pupils' cultural development is good. One of its best features is the provision of a wide range of experiences. Drama is an important feature of this and is well provided in the curriculum. After school clubs are extensive and there is a 'Master' class for higher attaining pupils in art. Pupils also have the opportunity to belong to the choir. Links with theatres, music festivals and local artists are other good provisions. Pupils are provided with appropriate opportunities to develop an understanding of issues relevant to life in a multi-cultural country through religious education, in particular where they study a range of religions and the associated customs. Where it is appropriate, the school uses to its own community to celebrate other cultures and this is dealt with sensitively. For example, Chinese and Indian parents were visitors to the school to talk about their customs. Additionally, there are many good examples in the well-presented displays around the school, of the teaching and celebration of other cultures. A very attractive display giving information about the celebration of the Chinese New Year and others displaying Aztec masks and Mayan textile patterns are such examples of this. The school highly values its whole community. The ethos of school, and its commitment to the promotion of 'Everyone deserves a taste of success', recognises and nurtures the particular gifts and talents of its pupils. It is constantly monitoring the success of what is provided and constantly striving to improve its provision.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

49. This is a school where children come first. The school provides very good support for their personal development, because ensuring that children are happy is the highest priority, as this then enables them to fully engage in the life of the school. There are very good procedures in place to promote pupils' health, safety and welfare. All staff in the school work very hard to provide an open, happy and supportive environment in which pupils can flourish.
50. The school's procedures for child protection are very good. All staff have received training in the last six months in this area and they are reminded of the need for vigilance annually as a matter of course. The school also provides very good support for the few pupils who are looked after in the community, providing very effective links with their carers and with the relevant outside agencies. Pupils' health and safety are promoted very well by a range of good policies and procedures. Regular inspections take place of equipment, alarms and appliances and regular fire drills are held. A very good number of staff are trained in first aid. Accidents are all conscientiously recorded and reported to parents where necessary; parents are expected to acknowledge receipt of any such letter. Parents at the meeting said that the school responds very well to any accidents and is very caring of the pupils.
51. The school has good procedures to monitor attendance. The school keeps a careful and regular eye on patterns of absence and records the level of holidays taken by pupils. Any requests for time off in excess of ten days is referred to the governors and only authorised in exceptional circumstances. The school regularly monitors registers for lateness and appropriate action is taken. Absences for which no appropriate explanation has been received are followed up by the headteacher, either by letter or a personal approach.
52. Procedures and policies for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating bullying are very good. There is a clear code of conduct based on Golden Rules and this is underpinned by a system of positive behaviour management. The system is used consistently throughout the school, with teachers using the strategies very effectively. They sensibly remind pupils regularly of the system, particularly in classes where problems might occur. Pupils experiencing particular difficulty in controlling their behaviour are very well supported by a system that allows them to access a senior member of staff quickly, if they need to. Very good records are kept of behaviour and, because the pupils are so well known to teachers and other staff, a close watch can be kept on patterns and improvement. The school places a strong emphasis on trying to eliminate bullying and the headteacher seeks the support of pupils through the school council, peer mediators and assemblies to remind pupils that they must all strive to make sure that others are happy.
53. The support and guidance offered to pupils to help their personal development are very good. All staff give very good caring support to the pupils. This includes the headteacher and deputy headteacher who go out of their way to talk and listen to pupils and to commend them on their personal successes. There are many systems in place that promote personal development such as the house system, peer mediation, 'buddy' systems and the school council. Circle time is also used in all classes. Personal and social targets may be set by teachers, along with targets for English and mathematics, and pupils also set themselves personal targets that are discussed and reviewed regularly with teachers, either in groups or as individuals. Progress in personal development is not formally recorded, but annual reports to parents do give good details about pupils' attitudes and personal development and discussions within classes ensure that this development is focused upon. The 'Gold Book' assembly each week is used to acknowledge solely success in personal development. The school has plans to make playtime better for pupils by introducing pupil play leaders; a good innovation already in place is the opportunity for pupils to take part in indoor play at lunchtime.
54. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good overall. A key issue from the last inspection was to continue to extend teachers' expertise in assessing pupils' work and in using the information to guide their planning. There is much improved planning for assessment opportunities and different levels of attainment in the core subjects in particular. Teachers record assessments at the end of units of work in all subjects, except design technology, and these are shared with pupils.

55. The best practice has been developed in the core subjects of English and mathematics where assessment procedures are good. There has been a detailed analysis of pupils' strengths and weaknesses in national tests and in their ongoing school- work. This is used to inform curriculum planning well, for example to focus on non-fiction and non-narrative writing in English. The senior management team tracks the progress of different groups of pupils very effectively. A wide range of assessment information is gathered, including a variety of standardised tests, pupil profiles and targets and results from national assessment tasks. This provides a very clear idea of pupils' progress and teachers use the information appropriately to set end of year targets for pupils in terms of their expected National Curriculum levels, as well as individual curricular targets. This contributes well to their good achievements.
56. The information is also used effectively to identify individuals or groups of pupils in need of additional help, which is then provided, for example, through booster classes or the additional literacy strategy, or those in need of further extension activities. There are effective moderation procedures in English to ensure consistent understanding of standards. Teachers can refer to a portfolio of pupils' writing that contains examples of different attainment levels and types of writing. Similar portfolios have been developed for history and science in Years 1 and 2. The progress of pupils with special educational needs, higher attaining pupils and those with English as an additional language towards the targets in their individual education plans are also monitored carefully by class teachers and learning support assistants.
57. The school is currently developing assessment procedures in other subjects, using the improved understanding by all teachers of the assessment process and how it can be used to raise attainment and inform curriculum planning. There are already good examples in history and information and communication technology. The early stage of development in other subjects is reflected in the way that some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can do and do not challenge average and higher attaining pupils fully in the tasks that are set. Although good examples of this were seen during the inspection, past work shows that pupils are often given the same task.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

58. The good improvement that was identified in the previous report has been maintained. Responses to the questionnaire and comments from the parents who attended the meeting show confidence in the school and a good level of support for it. Parents are happy with most areas of the school, particularly the fact that their children like coming, that it is well led and managed, and what the school expects from their children. They also like the fact that it helps their children to become mature and responsible and the good behaviour that is achieved. Nearly a quarter of parents feel they do not receive sufficient information particularly about how their children are doing in school. A few parents are concerned about the amount of homework received and the closeness with which the school works with them. Inspection findings agree fully with all the positive comments made by the parents. General information provided for parents is of very good quality overall. However, the reports that parents receive on their children are very variable in quality, with some providing very little useful information at all. Homework is judged to be satisfactory in quality and in the way in which it supports pupils' learning. The school provides a good number of opportunities by which it can work closely with parents. Details are provided here and elsewhere in the report.
59. Parents are kept very well informed about what is going on in school in the weekly newsletters they receive. They are easy to read and cover a wide range of events and issues. Letters to parents show a determination on the part of the school to keep parents informed, for example, over staffing issues, and to pre-empt any difficulties, such as the language used in some of the texts for English lessons. However, annual reports for parents about their children are variable in quality. The best give good details in all subjects, with more emphasis on English, mathematics and science, of what pupils are able to do and what they understand and can use. There are some reports, however, that give very brief details in all subjects and occasionally only refer to what pupils have studied and experienced. Targets are not set within reports, although areas for

improvement are sometimes indicated. Parents are kept well informed about what their children are learning by a letter sent home by the pupils. This involves the children in either personalising a letter produced by the teacher or by them discussing in class what they will be learning and then writing their own letter home. This is a very good initiative because parents are often more likely to read what their children have written, than a printed letter from the teacher.

60. The school provides regular formal opportunities for parents to meet with teachers; there is also a good number of open evenings that enable parents to see what their children are doing in their lessons. There are numerous informal opportunities for parents to meet teachers throughout the year, as well as the possibility of daily contact. Parents of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language share in discussion of their children's work at regular intervals, and are invited to formal reviews of their children's progress. Parents at the meeting particularly commented on the availability of the head teacher or class teacher to meet them at any reasonable time, and also that telephone calls are returned. Very positive comments were also made about the approachability and kindness of the teachers. Whilst formal meeting between parents and teachers are well attended, other opportunities for parents to learn about what is being taught are poorly attended; this may hamper the ability of parents to involve themselves in their children's learning as fully as possible. Most parents sign the home-school agreement.
61. There are a good number of parents who help in school, mostly by hearing reading and those who do this feel very welcome and appreciated. The deputy headteacher talks parents through the best way of helping those pupils they hear. Parents input at home through hearing reading and helping ensure that homework is done is good and is particularly good when children are first learning to read. The school recognises how fortunate it is in having the support of the Parent Teacher Association. It runs events for both social and fund raising reasons. The most recent event was a ball that was heralded as a triumph, both financially and socially. The considerable sums of money raised each year have been used very well to help the school in the setting up of its new computer suite, purchasing books for the library and for decorating the school.
62. The school does not yet consult formally with parents about the development of the school. However, the school has recently appointed a Family Liaison Officer. This is a good initiative to promote even better links between home and school and to build relationships with all parents that will benefit their children. Her role is to provide support, information and education services to parents of children attending the school and to investigate concerns raised. In discussions with her, it is evident that she already has an impressive array of interesting initiatives to further the involvement of parents and others in the life and work of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

63. The overall leadership and management of the school is very good. There has been a good response to the key issues identified in the previous report two years ago, as well as effective continuing improvements in these and other areas. In particular, those relating to standards and leadership in English have been transformed into strengths of the school. Further improvements have been made in the good quality of teaching, which is now remarkably consistent, especially in the core subjects, given that most teachers have been appointed in the last two years. This consistency has been brought about by a rigorous and ongoing programme of monitoring and support, together with a well-focused programme of in-service training that has made good use of expertise from within and outside the school. Judicious and well-planned appointments, in spite of recruitment difficulties common to the area, have also contributed to this. The national literacy and numeracy strategies are also implemented well and consistently. The increasing impact of these changes can already be seen in the considerable improvements in the achievements of pupils across the range of attainment and in a rapid rise in standards overall in the last two years. The school focused initially and appropriately on English and mathematics. Consequently the more recent developments in science, have not yet fully impacted on standards at the end of Years 2 and 6. In addition, there have been further improvements, for example, in the positive attitudes of pupils, which are now very good. Important factors contributing to this have been the significant improvements in the learning opportunities for pupils and the stimulating learning environment that has been successfully developed.
64. The headteacher, very ably supported by her deputy, provides outstanding leadership. Her role in creating and maintaining a very effective, positive climate for change, in motivating and enabling the staff team, gaining the confidence and support of parents and securing the full commitment of all to school improvement has been a critical factor in the rapid and successful improvements made. The response of the staff to this, through high-quality teamwork, mutual support, sheer hard work and the dedication of all to improving the quality of teaching and learning for pupils, has, and continues to be excellent. A very clear, common sense of direction and purpose is shared and supported by the whole school community. It is focused strongly and successfully both on raising standards and pupils' achievements, including all groups of pupils, irrespective of their levels of attainment, gender, background or culture, and providing a high level of care and support for them. The very good relationships, teachers' very good knowledge of pupils, the way they promote self-esteem and recognise achievements of all pupils are some of the many examples of how the school's aims and values are seen in practice daily. This makes a strong contribution to the good personal development, the very positive attitudes and good behaviour of the pupils.
65. The middle management team that has been formed over the last year is already beginning to contribute well to the leadership and management of the school. The presence of the key stage leaders and assessment co-ordinator on the team enables them to monitor curriculum developments effectively. This is because they maintain an overview of the whole school as well as of their own year groups, to use in planning school improvement with the headteacher and deputy. The presence of the business manager on the team contributes well to the effectiveness of her role in strategic planning. The subject leaders for English and mathematics, in particular, use their expertise to very good effect in raising standards and pupils' achievement. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. All subject leaders are taking increasing responsibility for developments in their subjects. They monitor teaching, as well as planning and the outcomes of pupils' work. Although several of the middle management team and subject leaders are relatively inexperienced and new to their roles, their effectiveness is rapidly increased through meticulously planned support and training programmes. Newly qualified teachers, for example, shadow an experienced co-ordinator for a year before taking over the role, which also provides continuity of approach. It results in very effective delegation of responsibilities which involves and enables all teachers, contributing to the very strong sense of teamwork and commitment to school improvement.

66. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils with English as an additional language is led, organised and administered very well by the co-ordinator. As a result, pupils' needs are identified at an early stage, and their targets are reviewed regularly and the support they receive helps them to achieve well. The governing body carries out its responsibilities very effectively. A governor with particular expertise in special educational needs visits regularly, discusses the provision for these pupils, and reports appropriately to the governing body. The school does everything it can to support pupils with English as an additional language. Learning support assistants are deployed effectively to give one-to-one or small group support.
67. The determination and capacity of the school to raise standards further, by improving the quality of teaching and learning, is seen in the focused use of the performance management process. This is linked very effectively to the key priorities on the school development plan. It is also linked to well-planned in-service training. The school uses available initiatives such as this to maximum effect for the benefit of pupils. It is also proactive in taking part in other national and local initiatives, such as the Healthy Schools Award and Local Learning Groups to develop and share good practice with other schools. The headteacher is adept at managing the additional bureaucratic demands, arising from the effective implementation of national initiatives and developments, such as performance management and the literacy and numeracy strategies. This helps to ensure that they do not become a burden on individual teachers or divert attention from overall school improvement. She uses a variety of strategies for this including the good use of information and communication technology, very good delegation and, for example, the effective employment of a business manager. One of the key factors in the rapid improvements in standards and the quality of education since the last inspection has been the systems that the headteacher has put into place to support a very rigorous approach to all aspects of monitoring and evaluation. A well-structured pattern of lesson observations has been set up involving the headteacher, deputy, middle management team and subject leaders. The subsequent discussions and action points agreed with teachers have already contributed well to improving the quality and consistency of teaching and learning.
68. Increasingly good use is now made of performance data to track pupils' progress through the school. Test results in mathematics and English have been carefully analysed to identify weaknesses in the curriculum or in the achievements of particular groups of pupils so that appropriate remedial action is taken. This year, for example, analysis of the progress of younger pupils has led to adjustments in the way that children are admitted into the reception classes. Results are also used to identify higher attaining pupils who are not achieving as expected, as well as those pupils in need of additional support through booster classes or, for example, the additional literacy strategy or 'Springboard' mathematics. The detailed analysis of performance in English and mathematics and science is used for teachers to set challenging end of year numerical targets for each pupil in their class, upon which their class targets are set. As yet this has not been extended to science. The assessment information system now in place is making the use of such information more time efficient and adaptable.
69. Since taking up her post nearly three years ago, the headteacher is increasingly involving all staff and governors in reviewing all aspects of the school in order to identify strengths to build on and priorities for improvement. These form the basis for the school improvement plan. It provides a very clear, well-prioritised agenda to support ongoing improvements in standards, teaching and all other areas of the school. It is costed well and closely linked to performance management needs and the planned provision for in-service training. Staff and governors are very clear about their roles and responsibilities for action, monitoring and evaluation and fully committed to them. This is a good response to the weaknesses noted in the last report.
70. Governors are very committed and supportive of the school and carry out their statutory duties very well. The partnership and teamwork between staff and governors is clearly evident and contributes very well to the common sense of purpose. Most governors have been appointed since the last inspection, with many of them having no previous experience of the role. However, they have received very effective, ongoing training from one of the experienced governors, including, for example, observing lessons in pairs, as well as external training. As a result, and

under the guidance of the highly skilled and knowledgeable chair of governors, they are taking an increasingly active and effective part in the leadership and management of the school. Governors are linked to key areas of the curriculum and several work regularly in school. All of this, together with detailed information from the headteacher, has helped to inform their very clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and of what is needed to continue to take it forward. It is also enabling them to develop aspects of their role, such as strategic planning and monitoring and evaluation, in a structured and pro-active way.

71. The quality of financial planning and management is very good and the efficient business manager makes a good contribution to this, for example, by identifying and securing additional sources of funding. The school improvement plan is used very well to determine the best use of the funds available to the school, including funding for special educational needs and for school improvement. This has addressed a weakness identified at the last inspection. Governors consider and question carefully the use of the funds available to them. There has been an appropriate and effective focus on increasing the provision of learning support assistants and administrative staff, and on improving the administrative accommodation. A substantial overspend has been rectified through thoughtful planning. The large carry forward at the end of the last financial year was to meet planned expenditure, for example, on the new computer suite. Principles of best value are applied well to any spending decisions. Financial administration is good. Financial planning is supported well by regular meetings of the headteacher, the business manager and the finance administrator. All financial activities are supervised closely, and the headteacher and governors receive regular and frequent reports on the budget. The school responded promptly to the recommendations in the last auditors' report, and arranged a follow-up check on the action taken.
72. Teachers use information and communication technology well for recording their curriculum planning and for tracking pupils' performance in English and mathematics. Some teachers have facilities for making computerised presentations in classes, and the new information and communication technology suite enables whole-class teaching through the use of computers. The business manager is contributing well to the school's developing use of new technology for management purposes.
73. Sufficient teachers, suitably qualified and well balanced in their total experience, are deployed effectively. There is a higher than average number of well qualified and experienced learning support assistants who provide skilled, very effective support for pupils' learning, including those with special educational needs and for children in the reception classes. The school secretary, finance administrator and the business manager provide helpful, efficient support. The school is well supported at lunchtimes by the mid-day meals assistants, who, as all other staff, provide very good role models for pupils. The cleaning staff maintain the buildings well. Overall, the accommodation is sound, well cared for and displays provide a very attractive and stimulating learning environment. This contributes to pupils' good attitudes and interest in their work. The level of resources is satisfactory overall and good in English and science. They are used well to support pupils' learning. The new information and communication technology suite is well equipped and makes a significant contribution to pupils' standards in the subject.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In the context of the school's many strengths, the governors, headteacher and staff should address the following matters in their action plan in order to raise standards and the quality of education further:

- a) Continue to raise standards in science, which are not yet as high as those in English and mathematics, by*:
- establishing an appropriate balance between investigations and acquiring knowledge;
 - ensuring the outcomes of investigations are used to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding;
 - greater insistence and precision in the use of scientific language.

(See paragraphs 4, 8, 63, 111, 114 and 116.)

- b) Improve standards and pupils' achievement further in those subjects where they are satisfactory at present by*:
- ensuring all staff have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve;
 - developing and implementing appropriate assessment procedures to enable teacher to plan suitably challenging work consistently, especially for higher attaining pupils;
 - providing more opportunities for older pupils in particular to reinforce and extend their learning through written recording.

(See paragraphs 10, 11, 29, 57, 118, 128-9, 131, 151, 156-7 and 162.)

- c) Make more effective use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning across the curriculum by*:
- providing more planned opportunities for pupils, including those with special educational needs, to use their good skills in other subjects;
 - making more use of classroom computers as well as time in the computer suite to support pupils' learning across the curriculum.

(See paragraphs 9, 30, 34, 98, 110, 138, 146 and 163.)

**The school has already identified these areas for development.*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	77
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	47

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	16	42	17	0	0	0
Percentage	3	21	55	22	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	412
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	27

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	92

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Year 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	38	22	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	37	37	38
	Girls	21	21	22
	Total	58	58	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97(85)	97(93)	100(90)
	National	84(830)	86(840)	91(90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	38	38	34
	Girls	22	22	21
	Total	60	60	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100(83)	100(90)	92(85)
	National	85(84)	89(88)	89(88)

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

Attainment at the end of Year 6

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	24	34	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	18	20
	Girls	31	27	31
	Total	50	45	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (80)	76 (81)	86 (83)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	20	20
	Girls	30	30	30
	Total	50	50	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (76)	85 (80)	85 (80)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	5
Indian	4
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	380
Any other minority ethnic group	21

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	352

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	14.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	16.4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	743,538
Total expenditure	677,019
Expenditure per pupil	1,643
Balance brought forward from previous year	5,458
Balance carried forward to next year	71,977

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	412
Number of questionnaires returned	172

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	31	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	41	5	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	62	1	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	49	13	3	1
The teaching is good.	55	36	4	1	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	41	20	5	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	30	4	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	35	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	40	44	12	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	62	33	3	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	49	3	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	41	8	2	7

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

74. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Two reception classes are taught in classrooms that are well resourced and imaginatively arranged in areas that make delivery of a wide and appropriate curriculum, an important feature of the good provision. No judgements were made about the foundation stage in the last inspection.
75. Children enter the reception classes on a part time basis in the autumn of the academic year in which they are five. A well planned programme, including home visits, introduces the new children and their parents to the school and ensures that good relationships are quickly established between the school and its families.
76. Children in the reception classes benefit from good teaching overall and because of this they are learning well in many lessons. Teaching varies overall from satisfactory to very good. The good and very good teaching provided means that the children's achievement from the time that they enter the school is at least satisfactory. Progress in lessons is often good but sometimes drops to satisfactory. This is because there is a variety of teaching styles among the teachers who teach these children. Where the teaching is good, children are organised well and there is a good pace to the activities provided. Teachers ensure the full attention of the children before giving them instructions and a result of this learning in the activities that follow is good. Where the teaching is very good, the expectations of the teacher are higher. Additionally, there is a time at the end of the lesson where the teachers assess the children's learning, by asking the children to explain what they have been doing. In the satisfactory lessons, although the planning is good and a good range of practical activities are planned, as a result of joint planning, the pace of the lesson is slower and the children learn at a satisfactory rate. This is mainly because the organisation of the children is slower and the teachers do not always ensure the attention of all the children before they talk to them. As a result of this, the pace of the lesson drops and not all the children know what they should be doing.
77. All teachers have high expectations of children developing independence and promote a successful flow to self-chosen activities after their teacher directed activities are completed. The partnership between all teachers and other adults who help in the class, is exceptionally good. Helpers are very well informed and provide a good support to the groups with which they work. This means that the children have good opportunities to learn well in small group activities. A good example of this was the group activity where children were practising their early handwriting skills. Very clear instructions were written and carried out by the helper for each letter. The children were in the early stages of writing with correct style to enable them to join their letters and were making good progress. Although the computer is sometimes used for group activities, overall this is an under used resource. The reception classes have experienced a number of different teachers during this year as a result of unavoidable staff absences and although much of the teaching seen during the inspection was good and children were making good progress, overall their achievement during the year is satisfactory.
78. Children enter the reception classes with above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. By the time they are ready to enter Year 1, they are at a level that exceeds the early learning goals in communication language and literacy, in mathematical development and in personal, social and emotional development. There are particular strengths in reading. In all other areas, children are on course to meet the standards of the early learning goals for children of this age.

Personal, social and emotional development

79. Children achieve well in their personal and social development because of the good teaching. The teachers provide an attractive, welcoming and secure environment that helps young children to settle quickly and feel part of the school. Children observed were quick to respond to class

routines and as a result of this, even the very youngest children organise themselves and work very well independently of the staff. They show confidence and relate well to each other and to all adults in the classroom. Children are developing a good level of independence by regularly choosing and organising their own activities. This is particularly evident after group work in literacy and numeracy lessons. Children take care in dressing and undressing themselves independently and in their personal hygiene. They take on class responsibilities quickly and undertake jobs such as tidying up and taking registers to the office. Children quickly learn the rules of the classroom behaviour and understand the need to take turns.

80. Teaching in this area of learning is good and as a result of this children develop well, becoming independent, sociable and eager to learn. The teachers and the learning assistants provide a wide range of practical activities that successfully promote children's development in a variety of settings. For example, there are frequent opportunities for children to work alone or in small groups with construction resources, play maps or the role play area. Children's self esteem is developed very well as all staff value each child's contributions. Activities such as the 'Sandgate Hospital', in the role play area, help to develop their imagination, at the same time encouraging children to play co-operatively. Staff set a very good example for children to follow. They work together as a team and as a result the children see the value of co-operating with each other.

Communication, language and literacy

81. Most children are likely to be above the standard expected, in this area of learning, by the time they enter Year 1. The reception classes provide a rich learning environment in which children can develop their written and oral skills. All adults take every opportunity to develop their skills in discussion, sharing books and providing writing opportunities. For example, all adults role model clear speech when responding to children, helping them to speak clearly and correctly and there are designated reading and writing areas with a range of suitable resources. Children enjoy listening to stories and are quick to understand that text has meaning. Books are regularly shared, both individually and as a whole class and children are quick to identify favourites such as 'We are going on a bear hunt', which is the current favourite. Many labels and instructions are clearly displayed around the classroom and children are encouraged to read these. Parents give good support to their children, hearing them read regularly at home and helping them to learn groups of words which occur regularly in their reading. Children make good gains because a variety of methods, games and activities are used to help them to read and write, learn their sounds and write their letters correctly. For example, a very attractive reading tent is prominently situated in the classroom. Elements of the national literacy strategy are used well to prepare children for the National Curriculum. Children experience, for example, whole class reading of big books, talk about the text and then complete relevant group activities.
82. The teaching in this area of learning is good and the curriculum is planned well for the teacher and other adults to work with small groups of children to give good support to the development of reading and writing skills. For example, in one lesson the teacher was focussing on helping children to attempt to write their short sentences, while another helper was overseeing the correct early formation of letters to establish joined writing. Children are encouraged to use word banks as well as developmental writing and the teacher works with the children assessing and scribing work for individual children. Many children have learned to use initial sounds to help them in their readings and writing, but final sounds of words are not yet fully established.

Mathematical development

83. This area of learning is taught well and children are on course to exceed the early learning goals when they enter Year 1. Day to day use of numbers in counting familiar objects in the classroom is well established. As a consequence of this, children already count reliably to at least 30 and are learning to say and use numbers to 15. Most can recognise small numbers without counting. They have a good understanding of '1 less' and '1 more' and 'how many all together' and they are starting to use this knowledge in every day situations. Most children are confident in adding two small numbers together, but are not yet ready to add three numbers. The good teaching provides a wide variety of practical activities to reinforce learning, such as the

collection of teddy bears which children have assembled in the classroom. They use these well for establishing their comparative language, such as larger, smaller, big, bigger, biggest, or small, middle sized and largest. The children enjoy these practical activities and generally learn well as a result of their involvement.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

84. By the time children enter Year 1, they meet the expected standards for this area of learning. Overall the teaching is good and children experience a wide range of activities that excite and interest them. The good teaching, which the children now receive has not yet impacted on standards and their achievement is satisfactory over the time that they are in the reception class. Children note the changes in the seasons and answer questions such as 'Why are the leaves appearing on the trees?' They are encouraged to sort and investigate. A good example of this is investigating and sorting materials. Children were asked to sort materials into wood, paper, glass and metal categories. Although most were confident with wood and paper, many found it difficult to distinguish glass from metal. Children gain an appropriate understanding of their own cultures and beliefs as well as an awareness of others. For example, during the inspection they learned about the Hindus praying at home and reflected on the importance of family ties in the Hindu religion. Although many were able to relate this to the importance in their lives of their own brothers and sisters, not all could make the connection between the two.

Physical development

85. The teaching and children's achievement in this area of development is satisfactory. Children have appropriate opportunities to develop their fine motor skills as they handle small tools such as pencils, crayons, paint brushes, glue and scissors. They frequently put together and take apart construction equipment and play with small creative toys. Regular planned times in the hall provide a structured time to use the apparatus. For example, they travelled over, under and through the large apparatus by using their hands and feet. This was a good link to the positional language being learned by pupils. A good feature of the provision for this area of learning is the good variety of wheeled vehicles for outdoor play, which has been acquired. Children use these regularly and have an opportunity to push, pull, scoot and pedal on individual and paired vehicles. The children enjoy outside physical play and play well together. The lack of markings and creative resources do not extend this play beyond learning basic skills and control. The school already has plans to address this.

Creative development

86. Teachers plan the curriculum well and there are regular planned opportunities for music, play dough, paint, collage and a range of materials. The teaching and achievement of the children are at least satisfactory and also sometimes good. They make imaginative collage houses for example, when they have sorted materials. In the role play area they act out hospital life and take their babies to the 'baby clinic'. The good provision of story boxes enlivens stories such as 'We are going on a bear hunt' with small creative toys in the 'Cave Story Box'. Here, children play together happily and co-operatively in role, developing both their imagination and their skills to co-operate well. Not all teachers show the value they place on these activities by joining in and extending the play sufficiently. Regular opportunities to sing simple songs from memory and to explore simple sounds with percussion instruments are an important part of the creative provision. Children learn to recognise repeated sounds, match sound patterns and build a repertoire of songs that they remember by heart, for example 'Goldilocks'.

ENGLISH

87. Standards in English have improved significantly over the last two years. In 2001, results in national tests at the end of Year 2 were well above average for both reading and writing. Results at the end of Year 6 were also well above the national average. Lesson observations and scrutiny of past and present work during the inspection show that that standards at the end of Year 6 are well above average and above average at the end of Year 2. The difference in standards in Year 2 this year is due to variations between the particular groups of pupils. Boys and girls, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
88. Attainment in speaking and listening is well above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils in all classes speak out clearly and confidently, including pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language. They listen attentively and critically to the teacher and to each other, posing their own questions when appropriate, and responding appreciatively to each other's efforts. Year 1 pupils posed lively questions, for example, to the teacher role-playing Jack in 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. Year 2 pupils developed and sustained their own versions of a story they had read from the point of view of different characters. They were also able to act out parts of traditional fairy tales they have read. Year 6 pupils were able to engage in a sustained discussion on features of suspense writing. Individuals referred to thought maps to remind the rest of the class what had been previously decided. Some could give examples of techniques authors employ from other texts they had read, while all responded enthusiastically with constructive criticism to their classmates' own initial attempts.
89. Attainment overall in reading is above average at the end of Year 2. Reading standards in Year 1 are high but there is more variation in Year 2, due to differences in the year groups. High attaining pupils read fluently and independently with clear understanding from both fiction and non-fiction. Some lower attaining pupils although reading from simpler texts can recount stories, read aloud with some expression and persevere and spell out words they initially find difficult. Others are not able to work out meaning from the rest of a sentence, or they guess words without trying to use letter sounds. By Year 6, reading standards are well above average. All pupils enjoy reading, read regularly and independently. They can express likes and dislikes and make judgements on characters. Even lower-attaining pupils show some appreciation of nuance. High attaining pupils tackle quite challenging texts with demanding vocabulary. Pupils of all levels of attainment know how to find information from texts using the index, headings and employing skimming and scanning skills. Pupils achieve well in reading across the school.
90. Attainment overall in writing is above average and pupils achieve well throughout the school. There is a good range of opportunities in all years for writing of different types and for different purposes. There is some particularly ambitious writing in Year 1, where high attaining pupils are already using adventurous sentences and story structures. There is less evidence of very high achievement at this stage of the year in Year 2. The higher attaining pupils are beginning to write fluently and vary their sentences. Their use of full stops, capital letters and handwriting are all improving. Average and lower attaining pupils are beginning to write in sentences and to sequence stories and factual writing clearly. However, lower attaining pupils still need to develop their handwriting with clearly distinguished capital and smaller letters. There is evident progress throughout Years 3 to 6. By Year 6, pupils are writing fluently with increasing accuracy and interesting sentence variation. They are beginning to organise their writing clearly into paragraphs. Higher attaining pupils use precise vocabulary and assured sentence structures as, for example in this time travel story: 'The courtiers' sole topic of conversation seemed to be Henry's infatuation with a beautiful girl called Anne Boleyn ... Tim sensed that Henry was determined to marry Anne at all costs.' Average and lower attaining pupils are less accurate and less consistent in their writing, but still write with some imagination, particularly narrative, description and poetry. For example: 'The Autumn days become short and cold/The wind howls through the trees/The leaves begin to fall and freeze/ The summer dies and loses the fight for life/And Autumn gains its prize.'
91. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6, with some

examples of very good or excellent teaching. Particular strengths include the quality of teachers' planning and preparation; the choice of stimulating shared texts as models for pupils' writing; support for pupils' differing needs; the quality of discussion in many lessons and the use of a wide repertoire of teaching styles including role-play and drama. In a Year 1 class, all pupils were captivated by the teacher's expressive reading of Raymond Briggs' 'Jim and the Beanstalk' and all joined in a variety of actions to reinforce punctuation. The teacher had made her own big book so that all pupils could share the text and pictures. Pupils of all abilities and a pupil with English as an additional language could all make comparisons and contrasts between the giant in the traditional Jack and the Beanstalk story and the giant in the Raymond Briggs story. This was made possible by the provision of pictures and prompt sheets, and the effective deployment of a support assistant and support teacher. In differing attainment groups pupils all constructed sentences that described the giant. The class teacher and support staff all challenged pupils to use adjectives imaginatively and precisely. For example, the giant was described as 'bald and stubbly'. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were stimulated to retell the story of 'The Hunter' by choosing models of animals and characters in the story from a story bag. Where teaching is less effective, some teachers need to extend pupils' vocabulary further, building on pupils' own choice of words.

92. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 shares similar qualities. A particular strength lies in the planning of a coherent series of lessons around a shared text or genre so that pupils' reading explicitly informs their writing. Consequently, pupils in Year 3, writing their own versions of fables, were able successfully to imitate some of the structures and cadences of fables they had previously read. For example, one boy started his fable: 'In a land seasons away where only animals lived was an isle named Sampetra'. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher demonstrated how mood is conveyed through descriptive settings in 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe'. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher effectively used the context of the shared text the pupils were reading, Philip Pullman's 'Clockwork', to discuss word roots and affixes using Pullman's phrase 'inflammatory oxidosis' as a starting point. In the majority of lessons, pupils are set intellectual challenges to which they respond well. For example, high-attaining boys in Year 6 visibly rose to the challenge that a suspense writer has power over his readers. Where teaching is less effective it is sometimes because the teacher does not have as high expectations of the quality and presentation of completed work. Sometimes the teacher is being too ambitious and attempting too much in one lesson, or because the balance of activities is not quite right. For example, some teachers need to leave more time within a lesson to fully develop a writing activity. There is also a need on some occasions for the teacher to ensure that shared texts for reading or writing are fully visible to all pupils and make sure that in some year groups teachers have the same.
93. The impact of the good, and at times very good or excellent, teaching is reflected in the pupils' attitudes and behaviour, which are very good, and in the effectiveness of their learning. In most lessons, pupils listen attentively and respond enthusiastically. They respond particularly well when a less effective aspect of their learning is presented as a problem to be shared and solved. For example, Year 2 pupils working on improvised plays identified as a difficulty that they all wanted the same part. They were asked to solve it themselves, which they did by voting or using a dipping rhyme. A few over-reliant Year 6 pupils still expecting to be told what to write were told, 'You're the writer. You decide', a strategy that forced them to take responsibility for their own learning and to look again at the reading models they had been offered. Most pupils sustain concentration and use dictionaries, thesauruses and word-books independently.
94. Provision for developing pupils' literacy skills is very good and extends well beyond the daily literacy hour. The school has adapted national recommendations for speaking and listening and is applying them across the curriculum. The drama co-ordinator has produced a draft scheme of work for the use of drama across the curriculum. All pupils in Years 1 and 2 receive one discrete lesson of drama per week while teachers in Years 3 to 6 are encouraged to use drama techniques as part of their teaching and learning repertoire. The drama co-ordinator demonstrates a range of drama techniques to his colleagues through the weekly drama club for pupils. As a result, pupils are benefiting from learning through drama and speaking for a range of purposes in a number of subjects. For example, in a numeracy lesson pupils' learning was

being reinforced as they demonstrated their understanding of mathematics in role as question master and participants in a quiz show.

95. All teachers plan for opportunities for extended writing across the curriculum. There are good examples of arguing a point of view in geography; the diary of a Victorian parlour maid in history; or clearly sequenced and paragraphed, formal, observational accounts of science experiments. All permanent teachers and teaching assistants have received training to support spelling and for progression in phonics and the national additional literacy programme. This is clearly having a beneficial effect on pupils' improved spelling and writing skills.
96. Support for reading is very good. Pupils still needing help are given regular one-to-one support from teaching assistants, local secondary school pupils, parents and other adults. Regular small group guided reading sessions take place outside the literacy hour. The range of types of reading attempted: fiction, poetry and non-fiction, is very good. Older pupils, in particular, demonstrate effective study skills. In their topic work they can demonstrate very effective reading, selecting, processing and presenting information in a different format.
97. The leadership and management of English are very good. At the last inspection, held two years ago, a key issue was to continue to raise standards of attainment in English and to improve the leadership of this subject. These have been successfully accomplished. The head teacher and deputy head teacher took on the co-ordination of the subject. They drew up a clear improvement plan, virtually all of which has been implemented. It serves as an effective model for curriculum management for any subject. Both the head teacher and the deputy have a very clear idea of where the strengths and weaknesses are in different years. They both give in class support, or they teach whole groups, ensuring that high attaining pupils are extended or that pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language are supported appropriately. They deploy themselves flexibly so that they can cover where there is teacher absence and provide extra support where progress needs accelerating. Two teachers have been trained ready to take over as co-ordinators with sufficient non-teaching time for liaison, planning and monitoring across the school.
98. Teaching and learning are regularly monitored and all teachers receive constructive feedback. This has contributed well to the consistency of approach, as has the common planning format. The English curriculum is comprehensive and coherent with detailed schemes of work, not only for reading and writing, but also for speaking and listening and drama. Apart from the literacy hour, additional time is used very effectively to provide opportunities for progression in phonics, spelling in Years 3 to 6, guided reading, extended writing and drama. The marking of pupils' work is detailed and pupils have a clear idea of how to improve. Pupils' ongoing work and strengths and weaknesses in national tests have been carefully analysed and used to inform future planning. Resources have been developed. Sets of stimulating guided reading books, both fiction and non-fiction have been built up. Library resources have been improved considerably over the last two years. This has impacted on pupils' enthusiasm for reading. All permanent teaching staff and teaching assistants have benefited from effective national literacy strategy training. One area still requiring development is planning for more opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology within the literacy hour.

MATHEMATICS

99. National test results overall have risen rapidly in the last three years, and there is no evidence that the dip in 2001 at Year 6 indicates a trend. In Year 2, standards of attainment, including in numeracy, are above average, and these reflect those seen at the last inspection. At Year 6, standards are well above average, and have improved since the last inspection. Pupils enter the school with generally above average attainment. In the current Year 2, pupils' attainment is not as strong as other year groups, but their good response to the very good challenges set for them mean that they are achieving well. By Year 6, pupils have continued to raise their performance in mathematics during their time in school, and their achievement also is good. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language achieve as well as other pupils.

100. Teaching for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is very good, and promotes pupils' interest, effort and understanding. In Year 1, the very good teaching in one lesson encouraged pupils to explore two-dimensional shapes well. The tasks were matched very well to the needs of different groups, and there were good opportunities for pupils to investigate and go as far as they wanted. As a result, some middle attainers, for example, made a hexagon and an octagon, showed them confidently to the class and described them accurately. Other pupils in Year 1 were exploring three-dimensional shapes, and some were confident with the terms such as tetrahedron. Most understood cube, cuboid, pyramid, cone and sphere, and were able to identify and talk about examples of them. In Year 2, the school's attention to providing a wide range of learning opportunities enabled pupils to explore and learn about fractions very effectively. Pupils described fractions to the teacher, clapped rhythms to help consolidate their learning, benefited from a short video input, used a fraction board, and a computer in turn, and worked independently on fraction charts. The good ethos for learning led some pupils to sub-divide their fraction grids and to colour in yet smaller random sections to arrive at an overall quarter or half of the whole grid shaded in.
101. Numeracy is taught very well, with the use of whiteboards for pupils to record their individual answers, songs with calculations built into the words, and timed mental challenges. By Year 2, the lower attaining pupils are beginning to recognise the equivalence of, for example, $5+5$ and 5×2 , count on in 2s, add different coins and select coins to match a given total. They are able to place numbers accurately on a blank line, and know small numbers that are more or less than a given number. Higher attainers know multiples of 10, 2 and 5, can double numbers, add units to two-digit numbers, carry out simple multiplication, calculate the change from £1, and identify some properties of shapes.
102. In Year 3, the very high standards attained by these pupils in tests at Year 2 in 2001 are generally built upon appropriately, although there have been some changes of teachers and there are variations in the challenge of the work. Some of the most able pupils found the work they were doing was easy. They were ordering numbers, including adding and subtracting additional numbers before ordering, but they met a suitable challenge in the extension work that was provided. Pupils in Year 4 were partitioning multiplication sums, but needed more teaching of the method, as many were not carrying it out successfully. However, discussion with the pupils showed they had a good understanding of number, and with a little extra guidance were able to record accurately. Pupils in the higher set were confident with the 2 and 6 times tables, and, while they did not know $9 \times$ multiplication facts readily, were generally able to work them out and understood what they were doing. In Years 5 and 6, pupils were learning about written problems at appropriate levels. They analysed the text, using guidance notes where they needed to, and showed overall above average levels of attainment. The learning in most of these lessons was good as a result of the careful explanations provided by teachers, the opportunities for pupils to describe the methods they had used, and the match of work to different groups within classes that had already been set by attainment.
103. By Year 6, most pupils are rounding and ordering large numbers, such as figures recording the areas and populations of different countries, carrying out long multiplication, ordering, adding and subtracting fractions, and finding their decimal equivalents and percentages. They explore the distinctive features of shapes, parts of circles, and calculate accurately the areas and perimeters of rectangles, triangles, hexagons and parallelograms. Many can construct and measure angles accurately, use the language of angles, such as acute, obtuse and reflex, readily and correctly, and have worked with angles in a triangle and around a point. Previous work in the year has also included ratios, proportions, coordinates in all quadrants, square numbers and symmetry.
104. Numeracy continues to be taught well in Years 3 to 6. A variety of games promote quick thinking and the involvement of all pupils on most occasions, for example, where one pupil acted as function machine and other pupils had to deduce what individuals were doing in their heads with the numbers they were given to get to a declared result. On one occasion the pace of the mental work was a bit slow, and on another occasion too many pupils were not taking an active

part, or only those with their hands up were selected to respond.

105. Teachers provide opportunities for numeracy skills to be used and consolidated usefully in other areas of the curriculum, such as when using timelines in history and pie charts in geography, and when measuring in science and design and technology. In information and communication technology lessons, pupils extend their understanding, for example, of fractions when dividing and quartering shapes, and learn to handle data on spreadsheets.
106. The overall quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is very good. Across Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching is more varied across the greater number of classes, but overall it is good. Despite some variation in teaching quality, it is never less than satisfactory, and some teaching for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is very good. It has contributed well to the much improved standards by the time pupils leave school, but there is scope for some further improvement to help meet the school's aspiration to raise the performance of all pupils further.
107. The strengths in teaching are evident across the school. Classes are very well managed. Relationships between all adults and pupils are very positive, and this establishes a good ethos for learning that pupils respond to well. All teachers support pupils well, but in the junior classes, teachers tend to circulate and support pupils generally and do not routinely focus their attention with particular groups. While the support thus provided is helpful, there were occasions when the progress of some pupils would have been faster if the teacher had sat and taught a particular group. There was scope for such groups to be working to a more precise learning objective within that for the whole class.
108. From Year 2 onwards, pupils are set by ability for their mathematics lessons, although there is significant overlap between the two groups in each year. Teachers plan the work together for their groups, based well on the national numeracy strategy, and this enables them to provide pupils with similar experiences, and to discuss and ensure challenges are pitched at the correct levels for different pupils. Marking is regular and often includes points for improvement or indicates an intention that the teacher will discuss a point with the pupil. Most work is well presented, and pupils' workbooks show progress across the school year.
109. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are supported well. Learning support assistants from both classes in each year group work with the lower sets, and provide good support to the lower attainers. They use good mathematical language, and ask good questions to help pupils to think and make progress. In some cases, there are several additional adults in the class, making the level of support very good.
110. The co-ordinator is leading the subject very well, and observes teaching, scrutinises samples of pupils' work, and evaluates standards in pupils' workbooks. The results of tests are analysed carefully, and the implications for teaching are discussed and shared. The coordinator has used this to draw up a good action plan aimed at further improvement. The priorities in the plan accurately identify the need to improve the use of information and communication technology in the subject, which is limited, and to raise the standards achieved by the lower attainers. There is scope for widening the range of strategies by which these targets might be achieved. At the moment, work in information and communication technology tends to be the teaching of specific skills, and mathematics lessons, as such, are not taught in the computer suite. More focused teaching within lessons would support the progress of lower attainers, alongside the effective springboard programmes and booster classes that are provided. A mathematics club for older pupils provides good opportunities for pupils to extend their investigative skills.

SCIENCE

111. Standards in science seen during the inspection in Year 2 and Year 6 are average and reflect the level of attainment by pupils in national assessments in 2001. However, with continued good teaching and recently introduced initiatives, pupils may well exceed these levels by the end of the school year. Progress in the lessons observed was good and pupils achieve well, but there has been insufficient time for this to impact on standards and raise them to above average. Pupils with special educational needs, supported by experienced learning support assistants are fully included and achieve well.
112. From the lessons observed, samples of work provided by the school, discussion with the subject co-ordinator and pupils, all aspects of science; life and physical process, and materials and their properties are covered well and there is a strong emphasis on teaching scientific enquiry and investigative skills. Pupils record their work well, by writing, drawing and they use their numeracy skills to communicate information through tables and block graphs, but there is little evidence of the use of information and communication technology.
113. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils explored the sources of light. They were quite clear about alternative lighting during a power cut, and settled to work quickly sorting pictures into common sets. Higher attaining pupils were challenged to decide their own criteria for sorting pictures and some were initially uncertain as where to place a mirror. Resources were well prepared for Year 2 pupils to classify foods into groups and challenging questioning by the teacher encouraged them to think carefully about high-energy foods and a healthy diet, but little time was given to them to reach conclusions.
114. Year 3 pupils settled well to recording the investigation into magnetic forces they had completed in the previous lesson. Prompt cards focused pupils' recording from, 'What they wanted to find out', through a series of question to their conclusion. From discussion, pupils were clear about making prediction and fair testing, but needed to be prompted to use 'attract' rather than 'sticking together'! Year 5 pupils enjoyed investigating electrical circuits and understand the properties of conductors and insulators. They worked well together in their groups, discussing fair testing. For example, some higher attaining pupils were beginning to understand that, while passing a current through a fork, which acted as a conductor, it was also acting as a resistor and the brightness of the bulb changed, according to how far the current travelled through the fork. In this lesson, some lower attaining pupils were well supported by the learning support assistant with good questioning to encourage them to discuss fair testing. Year 6 pupils discussed in groups the different factors that affect the rate at which a solid dissolves, following an introduction by the teacher that focused pupils attention on the importance of having a 'control' in an experiment and how it is used. The quality of the investigation was good, and pupils recorded their results well but there was insufficient time to draw out the main conclusions in the plenary.
115. The provision for science has been significantly improved since the last inspection in a number of ways. Two co-ordinators, both with expertise in science have been recently appointed. Resources have been improved in quality and quantity, centrally stored and boxed according to units of study. A scheme of work clearly identifies what is to be taught to each year group and is supported well by investigative prompt sheets for pupils of differing levels of attainment. Teaching is monitored to identify areas for support and improvement and there are new procedures for assessing pupils.
116. The teaching of science is good across the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are well supported by the co-ordinators in their planning in year groups, and the pupil's assessment record placed strategically in the front of each science exercise book. The use of these recently introduced assessment records needs to be used rigorously to inform future planning so that work is matched more closely to pupils' needs. Teachers recognise and use scientific vocabulary, but do not always insist on its use by pupils. The introduction of 'key vocabulary' in planning would add further emphasis to this. Teachers manage their pupils well, make science interesting and maintain a good pace. This has a clear impact on pupils learning

and their good progress in lessons. Class organisation allows opportunities for pupils to work together collaboratively to plan and discuss their work and this contributes well to their social development. Teachers question pupils to assess their understanding and use their teaching assistant well for this purpose too. Plenary sessions are well managed, but often they are rushed due to the length of time taken 'investigating' and although pupils have enjoyed the process of predicting and fair testing, their conclusions, in terms of understanding scientific principles, are not always secure. To raise standards, teachers must ensure that pupils understand the outcomes of their investigations and that they acquire sound scientific knowledge. Pupils enjoy science and respond enthusiastically, particularly to investigative work, visitor such as 'Force Theatre' and visits to the Science Museum. These contribute positively to pupils' cultural development.

ART AND DESIGN

117. In the lessons seen and from the work that is well displayed around the school, standards are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. However, there is evidence from past work that some pupils reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
118. In the lessons observed, teaching and progress made by pupils were good. The school is focusing on raising the profile and standards of art. The good provision of clubs for Years 1 to 6 and the identification and provision for gifted pupils in art is part of this development. This good provision and good teaching in art has not yet had time to impact on standards and achievement during the time pupils are in the school is at present satisfactory.
119. In the lessons seen, the teaching was good and pupils were encouraged to explore and share ideas. For example, in Year 1 pupils were experimenting with different shades of colour using primary colours and learning well. They used these shades of colours to print pleasing patterns. Several good examples of studying the work of famous artists were in evidence and this aspect is covered and taught well. In Year 2, for example, pupils studied the style of Monet and then produced their own pictures using a range of materials well, indicating that the learning had been good about this artist. Pupils in Year 5 were able to create icons of their own, having studied the work of Andy Warhol. Pupils study the features of different styles of art and use these in their own work. A good example of this was the features of murals. Pupils explored a range of ideas by looking at a wide range of good examples provided by the teacher. The pupils used their ideas well to plan their own designs. Good links are made with other cultures through art. An example of this is the study of Mayan textiles in Year 6, where pupils were investigating the use of patterns in order to understand the significance of some of the patterns used. Good discussion is promoted through using a wide variety of photographic material provided by the teacher. Pupils were interested and well-motivated because of the interest promoted by the good knowledge of the teacher and excellent photographic material, and learnt effectively. Work on display around the school is particularly impressive and gives a strong message about the high value placed by the school on art and design. In many lessons there was a particularly good partnership between the class teacher and learning assistants and they gave valuable support to group and class activities, enabling better progress to be made in the lesson. There were no links seen with information and communication technology during the lessons seen. Almost all teachers help pupils to use their sketch books effectively to plan work and record ideas. There was little evidence of pupils being encouraged to evaluate their work and make improvements.
120. The co-ordinator provides good and enthusiastic leadership. She provides advice and support for colleagues both in their planning and by working alongside them in the classroom. Assessment procedures are being developed but are not yet fully established.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

121. Only one lesson, for pupils in Year 5, could be observed in the inspection. Judgements about attainment are based on that lesson, evidence of pupils' previous work on display and in their

workbooks, the scrutiny of teachers' planning, and discussions with teachers. These show that standards are broadly average by both Year 2 and Year 6. The high standards seen in some work at the last inspection were also evident, and the school has maintained the overall quality of pupils' work since the last inspection. The achievement of pupils is satisfactory across the school.

122. The work seen reflected the sound range of activities planned for the pupils, with work covering mechanisms, structures, foodstuffs, electrics and textiles, with opportunities for pupils to design and make, for example, vehicles, moving toys, puppets and money containers. Pupils in Year 1 had made vegetable salads, and had investigated cutting up or grating a variety of vegetables, and had arranged them carefully on a plate. In Year 3, pupils have designed canopic jars, linked to work in history on ancient Egypt. They had labelled their diagrams appropriately and carefully, introducing individual features.
123. A later stage in the designing and making process was evident in Year 4, where pupils had evaluated musical instruments they had made. Pupils recorded how they had made them, commented on how they had functioned, and suggested ideas for improvement. Pupils also have good opportunities to draft their ideas, even if they are not pursued to the prototype stage. For example, one pupil had drawn up a partly viable design for lights around a skateboard, so that it could be used in the dark. Pupils in Year 4 have made a range of purses and wallets. This was done after looking at different money holders. Pupils have thought ahead about their work by designing their own money holders, drawing up appropriate diagrams and plans, and making test pieces of stitch work as necessary. After making their containers, pupils evaluated their products thoughtfully.
124. In the lesson seen in Year 5, pupils, who had not made musical instruments previously, were at an early stage of assembling instruments from recycled materials. Many were finding difficulty in joining the materials, but were working enthusiastically on this stage of the project. A good discussion enabled pupils to comment on changes they had made to their designs as they worked, and to evaluate how construction was proceeding.
125. In Year 6, the particular work on display, which pupils had completed before the inspection, was of an above average standard. Pupils had made slippers, and the display gave evidence of good teaching, with pupils being taken carefully through the process of identifying the requirement, analysing designs, drawing up a design brief, investigating possible solutions, designing and making a prototype, producing a finished product and evaluating the work at different stages. Pupils had taken real slippers apart to investigate their construction, and made good paper prototypes of their own designs. Pupils in Year 6 have also investigated shelters, and made and tested models of different types of shelter.
126. Across the school, pupils' literacy skills are used and consolidated usefully in the range of writing undertaken, such as labelling, note making and the writing of evaluative accounts. Mathematical skills in measuring and in drawing plans are used effectively at various times.
127. Too little teaching was seen to arrive at a secure overall judgement about the quality of teaching, but the lesson seen and the work undertaken by pupils indicate that it is at least satisfactory overall, and clearly good on a number of occasions. Most of the work seen was at an appropriate level for the ages of the pupils, but the above average performance of pupils in some other subjects suggests that they may be capable of higher standards in this subject.
128. An interim co-ordinator is managing the subject suitably, and a new co-ordinator is scheduled to take over leadership of the subject. They are working together well to improve the provision and standards in the subject. The new co-ordinator is a specialist in the subject, and has already started auditing resources and extending links with a secondary school. The school is keen to raise standards, and there is a well-judged action plan to support this. It includes the improvement of assessment procedures, which are currently undeveloped and unsatisfactory. As a result, while teachers are pitching the work for classes at appropriate levels, in line with the school's scheme of work, there is not an effective enough system for ensuring that the

challenge for groups of pupils, or for individual pupils, is matched to what they were or were not able to do previously. There was no evidence that information and communication technology makes a contribution to work in the subject, and the action plan also includes attention to developing work in the control of devices by computers.

GEOGRAPHY

129. The school's balanced scheme of work ensures that there is wide enough coverage of the subject so that pupils' geographical skills are developed systematically. By the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are broadly average and similar to those at the time of the last inspection. Pupils enjoy geography and make good progress in lessons especially when discussing issues, but there is insufficient recorded work to consolidate pupils learning, especially by the older, higher attaining pupils, and therefore achievement over time is only satisfactory.
130. Year 1 pupils know that Britain is made up of four countries and can locate them on a map. They appreciate travel through the travels of 'Barnaby Bear', his passport providing a discussion point as to whether it is needed to travel to Wales. Most Year 2 pupils know the main countries of North Africa and can talk about physical features such as deserts and the river Nile, and make comparisons with Britain. They were enthusiastic in finding pictures to produce a page of a brochure advertising an area. Year 3 pupils can identify the main feature of Canterbury as their local study and contrast it with the Yorkshire Dales National Park. In a lesson on the code of conduct in the latter area, the teacher asked pupils to list what they expected in the code before showing it to them and then considered the code from the view-point of a rambler and a ranger. Before considering the advantages and disadvantages of village life in India, pupils looked at developments in Folkestone. McDonalds was considered a benefit, its main disadvantage being the amount of litter it caused, although one thoughtful pupil was more concerned that they often got the orders wrong! Cards depicting village life in India were given to pupils in groups for them to decide on the good and bad features, was another good example of teachers using a range of strategies to interest pupils. In a Year 6 pupils investigated the effects of tourism on a mountain location. They debated the issues very sensibly, listening particularly well to each other and giving counter arguments. Very good use of information and communication technology in showing the unspoilt alps and a high density resort and, the opportunity for role play and debate contributed to high quality learning.
131. The teaching of geography is good overall in the lessons seen. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are well planned with teachers very aware of the importance of discussion in helping pupils give informed judgements. Teachers often start the lesson by sharing the learning objectives and generate a good question and answer introduction. Good use of learning support assistants, particularly in group discussions, to support pupils with special educational needs, is an important feature of many lessons. Pupils are assessed at the end of each unit of study, but this is not well used to inform future planning. Use is made of pupils' literacy skills, through for example, the persuasive writing in the Year 6 lesson and their numeracy skill in work on co-ordinates, but generally the amount of recorded work is limited, and some work particularly, of the lower attaining pupils, is unfinished. Information and communication technology is used but not systematically embedded in the scheme of work. Visits and visitors to the school and, for example, the planned Europe Day in May 2002, make a contribution to the subject and to pupils' cultural development
132. The co-ordinator, recently appointed, has a clear understanding of the future development of the subject, through more detailed medium term planning to support teaching, the monitoring of pupils' work to assess teachers' expectations of pupils of differing levels of attainment, along with the challenge to the higher attaining pupils and the need to continue to monitor teaching.

HISTORY

133. During the inspection week, it was only possible to observe one lesson in Years 1 and 2. All other lessons observed were in Years 3 to 6. Therefore, judgements in Years 1 and 2 are based on limited observation of lessons, teachers' planning, assessment records and discussion with

teachers and pupils.

134. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards in history are above average. They have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils achieve well. Their attitude to the subject and behaviour in lessons is generally very good. They are able to recall well their work in history lessons and are developing a good understanding of chronology and historical facts. By Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of the difference between primary and secondary sources. They are able to research information from books, pictures, photographs, videos and first hand visits. Very good use is made of visits and visitors to the school to make the subject more relevant for pupils. However, the use of the school library for independent research is underdeveloped.
135. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about teaching in Years 1 and 2. However, in the one lesson observed, about the life of Grace Darling, teaching was very good and resulted in very good learning and excellent attitudes and behaviour by the pupils. The deputy headteacher also made a very good contribution to the lesson by dressing as Grace Darling and, in character, telling her life story and of how she saved nine shipwrecked sailors. The pupils were totally convinced that she was Grace Darling, and empathised with her heroic deed and asked pertinent and searching questions. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is very good and results in very enthusiastic learning and good achievement over time by the pupils. The subject knowledge of teachers is very good. One example of this was seen in an excellent Year 6 lesson about the development of road and rail transport in Sandgate. The teacher's very good use of photographs of the locality in the Victorian period and his own enthusiasm for the subject, enthused pupils to discuss and question the changes over time and whether or not they were changes for the good. Also, the learning support assistant's own knowledge of the area added considerably to the discussions. Pupils were eager to look at photographs and books available and to evaluate the sources. Worksheets were well matched to pupils differing levels of attainment, which ensured excellent progress in the lesson. The use of assessment opportunities by teachers to inform future planning is underdeveloped.
136. In Years 4, 5 and 6 teachers are beginning to use an inquiry and skills development approach to history well, rather than simply imparting facts to pupils. This helps to develop the very good interest in history by pupils. The co-ordinator aims to develop further this approach throughout the school. In a very good Year 4 lesson observed, pupils questioned the accuracy and motives behind Holbein's painting of Anne of Cleves. In a very good Year 5 lesson, pupils acted as archaeologists to study photographs of remnants found in the Indus Valley in order to make informed guesses and deductions about life in the Indus Valley.
137. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are fully included. Their work is well matched and they are given good support by learning support assistants when appropriate, and so achieve well. In the scrutiny of pupils' work, there was good evidence of the breadth of coverage of the subject. By Year 6, work is well presented and shows an extensive knowledge by pupils.
138. The co-ordinator is new to the post but worked alongside the previous co-ordinator for a year. As a result, she has a clear understanding of the strengths of the subject and the areas to develop, which she has highlighted in her development plan. She has produced a comprehensive scheme of work based on a nationally produced scheme. Resources are satisfactory but there are a limited number of artefacts. The use of information technology to support the subject is underdeveloped. However, Year 6 pupils were observed using a presentation program to produce animated graphics about the Victorians and Year 4 pupils were observed learning to use the Internet so as to be able to research work on Tudor life and times. Very good use is made of planned visits and visitors to the school and adds considerably to pupils' knowledge and interest. For example, pupils visit the Dover Museum, the Imperial War Museum, Dover Castle, the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch railway and Sandgate High Street. Members of the local historical society and a group who teach history through the medium of art also visit the school. Appropriate timelines are displayed in classrooms, which support pupils' numeracy. Literacy is supported well through many opportunities for pupils to discuss their work with each other and

the teacher and the many opportunities to record their work. Teachers use displays well to celebrate work in history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

139. During the inspection week, all lessons observed were held in the computer suite. Little direct teaching was observed in classrooms. It was only possible to observe one lesson in Years 1 and 2. The majority of lessons observed were in Years 3 to 6. Therefore, judgements at the end of Year 2 are mainly based on the scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and assessment records and discussion with pupils, teachers and the co-ordinator.
140. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards in information and communication technology are above average. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well against their prior attainment. Overall, their attitude to the subject is good and they generally behave well in lessons. The new computer suite is having a positive impact on the raising of standards, as whole class lessons can now be taught, which ensure pupils have the skills needed to use computers and the programs. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection in standards, resources and the role of the co-ordinator.
141. By the end of Year 2, pupils confidently log-on, use the mouse to open files and folders, select from an on-screen menu, delete and insert letters and words, save and print their work. They know that information can be obtained from television, video, tape, CD-ROMS the Internet and the large interactive whiteboard in the suite. Scrutiny of pupils work show that pupils use the computer to word-process, produce block graphs or favourite fruits, combine imported clip art pictures with text and use an art program to draw shapes and pictures. In a good Year 2 lesson observed, pupils in the higher attaining mathematics set selected 2-dimensional shapes from an on screen menu, which they then divided into halves and quarters and coloured-in using the colour-fill icon. This developed their skills in manipulating the mouse and in making appropriate selections from an on-screen menu. The lesson also contributed well to their mathematical understanding.
142. By the end of Year 6, pupils confidently log-on, manipulate screen icons using the mouse, select items from an on-screen menu, import clip art pictures, search the Internet and use the 'drag and drop' features of a program. They use the keyboard well to word-process their text, change the font style, colour and size and import pictures to enhance the text. For example, Year 6 pupils were observed word-processing stories in literacy in the style of suspense writing. The text also included importing different styles of headings for the title. Pupils are also presenting their work using computer generated slides. For example, in a good Year 6 lesson, pupils experimented with a number of effects to present a series of slides to introduce their topic on the Victorians. They manipulated text and pictures so that the text swirled in and out of view and individual letters and words were programmed to appear and disappear on the screen in a sequence. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils use the interactive whiteboard well to demonstrate their work to each other. Year 6 pupils were also observed demonstrating their work from their computer, which was linked to all the other pupils at their own computers. Pupils demonstrating from the whiteboard or computers show a good awareness of demonstrating to an audience. However, there was no evidence of pupils using a scanner or the digital camera to enhance their work or of combining text, images and music. In assemblies, Year 6 pupils also work the tape recorder, the CD player and the over-head projector with confidence.
143. It is not possible to judge the overall quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2. However, in the one lesson observed teaching was good. The teacher's subject knowledge was very good and the task challenged the pupils. This resulted in very good interest and behaviour by the pupils and good learning. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good overall. In half of the lessons observed in the suite the quality of teaching was very good. The good teaching is a result of good knowledge of the subject by the majority of teachers, staff training, which has improved teacher confidence in using the suite, and the development of the computer suite and the large interactive whiteboard, which allows for whole class teaching of skills. At the time of the inspection, the interactive whiteboard had only been in use for three weeks. Many of the

teachers had used it only once or twice before. It is a testament to the hard work and good subject knowledge of the teachers that they used the whiteboard with confidence and also encouraged Year 5 and 6 pupils to actively use it. Pupils are taught about new programs and skills with an initial demonstration to the whole class. This gives them a clear understanding of how the program works and the aims of the program.

144. In a very good Year 4 lesson observed, the teacher introduced pupils to the Internet. A well-paced introduction and a clear demonstration of how to use the search engine was given. This meant that pupils were quickly using the World Wide Web to find information on subjects of personal interest, such as life in Roman times, the wives of Henry VIII, dolphins, whales and the pop star Britney Spears. By introducing the web through an activity very relevant to pupils' individual interest, the teacher could then progress to the next stage of learning, which was for pupils to research information to support their Tudor history topic. Not all teachers monitor that pupils who work with a partner have equal access to the keyboard and mouse.
145. Teachers' personal use of computers is generally good overall and sometimes very good. For example, in a number of lessons, teachers effectively use computer generated slide presentations to develop teaching points. In an excellent Year 6 history lesson, the teacher used a presentation projected from a laptop computer to give the objectives of the lesson and to show Victorian photographs of Sandgate. In a very good Year 5 lesson, using a design program, the teacher's very good subject knowledge meant that he was able to use the interactive whiteboard with absolute confidence and could react quickly to pupils' questions, errors, misconceptions and misunderstandings. This ensured very good pace and very good learning by the pupils who used the program to draw a detailed plan of the school. The majority of teachers also word-process their planning. The use of assessment to inform planning is underdeveloped. The subject makes a good contribution to the spirituality of pupils. For example, Year 6 pupils were clearly impressed as they watched their presentations about the Victorians. Pupils were often heard to shout, 'Wow', when a new image appeared on screen in an unusual way.
146. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and build effectively on their prior understanding. The suite is beginning to provide opportunities for pupils to use information technology across the curriculum. Some very good examples were seen of this to support learning in English, mathematics and history. However, in general this is still underdeveloped and there is very little evidence of computer-generated work in pupils' books, on display around the school and on display in the suite. Few pupils were observed using classroom computers in lessons to support work in other subjects. In two classes faulty computers meant they could not be used at all. The Year 6 residential visit to the Isle of Wight includes a large number of physical and outdoor activities, which support information technology and mathematics. For example, pupils use sensors to monitor pulse rates before, during and after strenuous exercise and plot the results and graphs. Results from sporting activities, for example, archery, are added to spreadsheets, which the pupils then interrogate. The new computer suite is having a positive impact on the raising of standards, as whole class lessons can now be taught using a projected image for all to see. This ensures that pupils have the skills and knowledge to use computers and the programs.
147. Since the previous inspection the suite has been opened and the quality of computers has improved. The computer to pupil ratio is just in line with the national average. Unfortunately, the windows in the new suite means that despite having window blinds the projected image on to the large whiteboard is not always clear to see when the sun is shining. The suite is also designed with individual bays for each computer. This makes it difficult for some pupils to see the whiteboard and for teachers to see pupils. At the time of the inspection the colour printer was also faulty, which meant that pupils work printed in black and white did not have the same impact than if it had been printed in colour. The co-ordinator had already identified these issues as teething troubles for a new suite, which are to be addressed.
148. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic and has clearly identified the strengths of the subject and the areas for development. She is ably supported by a colleague who gives very good technical and skills support. She has had the opportunity to monitor teaching and

learning and has fed back to teachers in order to improve their teaching. She has carefully selected the provider for a national training initiative in information and communication technology that matches the needs of the staff. She also ensured that the school purchased the best value equipment for the suite. Parents have generously supported fund raising activities, which resulted in £7500 being given towards the development of the new suite. Access to the Internet is via a filtered system that ensures that pupils can only access appropriate web sites. Parents are made aware of the rules governing Internet access and have to sign an agreement before their child can use the Internet. A teacher is presently developing an informative school web site, which he hopes will be on line by summer 2002.

MUSIC

149. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils reach average standards in music. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they show obvious enjoyment in their music. No specific judgement was made about the subject in the last report, except that the quality of singing might be improved. Singing in assemblies during the inspection was of at least a satisfactory quality. Pupils sing with enthusiasm, tunefully and confidently. Improvements have been made in the structure of the curriculum. The subject now has guidelines, a secure scheme of work and a degree of specialist teaching, all of which contribute well to the good teaching seen and the good progress made in lessons. These improvements are fairly recent and have not yet had time to impact on the pupils' standards.
150. Only one lesson was seen in Years 1 to 2, but from planning, the provision and good quality teaching in Years 3 to 6, overall teaching in music is good. By Year 2, pupils understand how symbols represent sound and they are starting to explore how they can evaluate and make their work better. They both analyse and compare sounds and demonstrate appropriate control when playing untuned percussion instruments. In Year 3, pupils are developing an awareness of how different musical elements can be used to describe and represent such things as animals. Good teaching inspired pupils to imagine that they were going on a safari and to use the instruments creatively to represent the chosen animals. Good attention was paid to developing pupils' evaluation skills by listening to each other's performances. In Year 4, pupils were challenged by the teacher to try to sing a 4 part round, but were not fully successful. The last part of the lesson was used effectively for pupils to evaluate their progress and to find out how they might improve in order to achieve the performance. Teachers think carefully about their choice of music to teach the skills and this motivates and interests the pupils. The choice of a Robbie Williams song motivated Year 6 pupils to investigate the lyrics and choruses of popular songs. They identified key repeated phrases. Because they were interested and listened well, they were able to demonstrate that they had learned well through answering questions clearly, being able to identify the introduction, lyrics and chorus.
151. Co-ordination of the subject is good, providing good support for those teachers who lack confidence and musical ability. A choir meets weekly, but there are no other musical extra curricular activities. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and are based on objectives for topics from national guidance. However teachers do not, as yet, make full use of these to adjust what they teach to pupils of differing levels of attainment. Good plans have been formulated to make good links with information and communication technology as the co-ordinator also manages this subject. As yet, these have not been implemented.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

152. During the inspection week, it was only possible to observe one games lesson in Years 1 and 2. Dance, games and swimming lessons were observed in Years 3 to 6 but not gymnastics. Therefore, judgements in Years 1 and 2 are based on limited observation of the physical education curriculum, teachers' planning, assessment records and discussion with teachers and pupils.
153. By age of Year 2 and Year 6, standards overall are average. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily. In the one lesson observed in Years 1 to 2, pupils

controlled a ball appropriately. By the end of Year 6, pupils are able to perform, with suppleness, control, accuracy and safety, a range of basic skills such as throwing, catching, balancing and travelling in a variety of ways and directions. They generally work well in teams and understand the tactics and rules of a variety of attack and invasion games. For example, in a very good Year 6 hockey lesson, pupils used hockey sticks well to attack and defend a goal mouth. Standards in swimming are above average with nearly all pupils able to swim 25 metres and the majority more than 100 metres.

154. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2. However, in the Year 1 lesson observed, teaching was sound and pupils made satisfactory progress. The quality of teaching at Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall. However, in one lesson observed teaching was good and in another very good. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and manage pupils well. They set a good example to pupils by dressing appropriately and leading by example. They ensure that all pupils dress appropriately and that earrings are removed or taped over for safety. Lessons include the essential elements of warming up and cooling down. In the good and very good lessons teachers ensure that there is good pace and that pupils have the opportunities to constructively evaluate each other and improve their skills from the comments made. This often makes the difference between a satisfactory and a good or very good lesson. In the well paced lessons pupils are encouraged to create imaginative dances or to improve their skills in a game. No overall judgement can be made about swimming lessons at the public swimming pool in Folkestone. These are taught by instructors at the pool, who are supported by the teachers and teaching assistants. However, pupils are set appropriate and challenging tasks, which inspire pupils to feel confident in the water and to make good progress in lessons. Teachers are safety conscious whether teaching in the school hall or on the playground. For example, during an outdoor throwing and catching lesson a pupil slipped. The teacher blew the whistle and all pupils immediately stopped their activities and stood still, whilst she ensured that the pupil was not injured. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils with special educational needs. Pupils with a statement of special needs are given very good support.
155. All lessons start with an appropriate warm up session. In many lessons skilful questioning from teachers help develop pupils' understanding of the effect of exercise on their bodies. For example, in a Year 4 dance lesson observed the teacher began with a vigorous warm-up, which also included pupils counting their pulse rate before the exercises and then again afterwards. Pupils' attitude to the subject is often very good. Their behaviour is generally good. For example, in a Year 6 dance lesson, the pupils watched a short extract from a silent Laurel and Hardy film. Pupils then worked in pairs, to a variety of music that accompanied silent films, to produce a dance sequence of active and proactive movements. The challenging task, the quick pace of the lesson and the enthusiasm of the class teacher and learning support assistant ensured that the objectives were well met by all pupils. They were eager to demonstrate their sequence and did so to applause from their peers and constructive evaluations. Where behaviour and attitudes are satisfactory, it is often because of a lack of challenge or an inappropriate activity. For example, in a Year 4 dance lesson, the music stimulus did not match the task set and the up-tempo music led to some immature behaviour by some pupils.
156. The school uses a published scheme as a basis for planning. This helps pupils to develop their skills systematically. The main playground and hall are adequate in size and there is a large field. There is a very good range of extra curricular activities, which includes football, netball, basketball, athletics, karate, and dance. They are very well attended. An after school sports club for Years 3 and 4, which includes rounders and athletics, is run by sixth form pupils from the neighbouring Folkestone School for Girls, as part of their 'A level' sports science studies. It is well supported by pupils and teachers oversee the club. A sports club is also organised for Year 2 pupils. The use of information and communication technology to support the subject in school is underdeveloped. However, pupils make good use of computers and sensors during the residential visits to the Isle of Wight. For example, they use personal sensors to monitor their pulse rates when exercising rigorously and use spreadsheets to interrogate scores in sporting events. Resources are satisfactory overall. However, line markings on the hall floor and in the playground have faded and there is a need to improve the provision of suitable large apparatus

for the Foundation Stage. The subject contributes well to the spiritual, moral social and cultural development of pupils, for example, through team games, dance and extra-curricular activities. The use of assessment to inform planning, especially to target the higher attaining pupils, is underdeveloped. The co-ordinator has been in post for just five weeks but already has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the subject, which are highlighted on her development plan.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

157. Evidence from lessons seen during the inspection, together with discussions with staff and pupils, scrutiny of planning, displays and previous work indicate that standards are broadly in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Boys and girls achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. However, there is little evidence of above average standards, because teachers do not have consistently high enough expectations of pupils and do not give challenging enough work to higher attaining pupils, in particular. This was especially evident in some classes in Years 3 to 6. Standards are similar to those described in the previous report.
158. By the end of Year 2, pupils are familiar with the stories of some of the key figures in different religions, such as Rama and Sita, Moses and Jesus. Some higher attaining pupils retell the story of David and Goliath in some detail, while lower attaining pupils record the main events pictorially. They show a sound understanding of the symbolism of light in the celebration of festivals such as Divali, Christmas and Hanukkah. They can explain the main features of religious ceremonies, such as baptism and Shabbat. By the end of Year 6, pupils know many of the stories from the Old and New Testaments and can explain, for example, the significance of Easter in Christian beliefs. They consider the reasons for celebrations such as Wesak, the main beliefs of Buddhism and how these influence the way that its followers lead their lives. They can draw out a few similarities between different religions and reflect thoughtfully on the importance of prayer and meditation in these. They have a superficial knowledge of some of the festivals and practices of Islam, Sikhism and Judaism but confuse the religions to which these belong. One reason for this is that the limited opportunities for written recording in several classes does not enable pupils to reinforce and extend their learning sufficiently.
159. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall, with some that was good. A well taught lesson for Year 4 pupils about Mother Theresa illustrated several of the good features seen. The teacher used a good variety of activities and time targets well, which helped to maintain pupils' interest and keep up a brisk pace. She used skilful questioning to help different groups of pupils interpret and extract information from well-chosen photographs so that they were able to give a good number of reasons for why Mother Theresa is regarded as a special person. The teacher used good questioning to sharpen up pupils' thinking. For example, when one pupil suggested, 'She helped lots of people', she responded with, 'Let's be more specific, which groups did she help?' The teacher had high expectations of pupils, which were underpinned by good classroom organisation and challenging tasks that were well matched to pupils' differing levels of attainment. She briefed and deployed the learning support assistant well, enabling her to provide very effective, skilled help to a group of lower attaining pupils, so that they participated and contributed fully to the lesson. She used the end of the lesson very well to encourage pupils to apply and build on what they had learnt in the lesson to discuss the difficult and challenging question, 'Does happiness come from what we own?' Pupils gave a number of thoughtful views, such as, 'No, because Mother Theresa was helping and knew she was warming people's hearts up'. Pupils' learning was enhanced in most of the lessons seen by opportunities such as this to discuss their views in small groups and as a class.

160. A particular strength in all lessons was the way that teachers modelled good listening skills very well and used carefully structured and targeted questions to help pupils to clarify their ideas and feelings. For example, in this way, in a Year 5 lesson, the teacher successfully helped pupils to articulate and extend their initial ideas and to give reasons for their views of why certain colours might be used at different times of the Church year. Teachers make good use of drama and role-play to help pupils explore their ideas and increase their understanding of concepts such as fairness and justice and the impact of actions on others. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher made good use of this to help pupils relate their own experiences to the Christian values taught through the parable of the 'Prodigal Son' and in a way that also promoted their moral development very well. The very good relationships between pupils and teachers mean that pupils of all levels of attainment are confident in sharing their ideas and feelings, secure in the knowledge that both teachers and their peers will value and respect what they have to say. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in understanding and expressing their thoughts and emotions as they move through the school. This makes a very good contribution to their personal and spiritual development, for example, in fostering respect for the values and beliefs of others and in forming their own.
161. In some lessons, teachers extended the understanding of higher attaining pupils well in oral work with challenging questions and followed this up with appropriately demanding tasks. However, scrutiny of pupils' past work this year shows in most classes the same written tasks were given to all pupils, irrespective of their level of attainment. One reason that some teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils or set challenging enough work is that assessment is underdeveloped in the subject and consequently they do not always take sufficient account of pupils' previous learning. In some less effective, although satisfactory lessons, teachers missed opportunities to link pupils' own ideas and experiences to religious values and beliefs.
162. There is some inconsistency in the use that teachers make of opportunities in the subject to reinforce or extend pupils' literacy skills. Some good examples were seen, as in a Year 5 lesson, where the teacher used a discussion about how colour can reflect moods to also reinforce pupils' understanding of similes and metaphors. Some teachers use the subject well to give pupils extra opportunities for extended writing or writing in a variety of forms. A good example of this was seen in a well-taught Year 1 lesson. The teacher had captured pupils' interest very well in an introductory session about special events in their lives and given them good opportunity for reflection to organise their thoughts so that they knew exactly what they wanted to write. As a result, they settled with enthusiasm, worked very hard and expressed their ideas well, either in fluent sentences or appropriate captions according to the task set, completing a considerable amount of good quality writing in the time allowed. However, in many classes, the amount of written recording of some older pupils, although varied in form, is limited in amount and does not match the quality of the oral work evident in some lessons.
163. The co-ordinator has carefully planned the curriculum to ensure that it covers the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Visits to the local churches and from their Christian ministers and members of the local community of other faith traditions, such as Buddhism, make a useful contribution to pupils' learning. As yet, pupils have not had the opportunity to extend their experience through visits to places of worship of other religions that they study. Not enough use is made yet made The co-ordinator has recognised the need for teachers to make more use of information and communication technology to further increase pupils' knowledge and understanding and to develop assessment procedures in the subject. She has begun to address these areas through her current action plan. Assemblies often include themes that support topics in religious education lessons and teachers make good links with these.