

INSPECTION REPORT

THE BRENT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dartford

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118589

Headteacher: Mrs C Milman

Reporting inspector: Mr John Bald
17932

Dates of inspection: 10 – 13 June 2002

Inspection number: 245199

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

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: London Road
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Kent

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr John Jarvis

Date of previous inspection: March 1998

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17932	John Bald	Registered inspector	Special educational needs	The school's results and pupils' achievements
			Information and communication technology	How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
11414	Ann Bennett	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
32136	Lesley Brookes	Team inspector	English	
			Religious education	
8002	Lionel Farraway	Team inspector	Race equality and inclusion	
			Art and design	
			Geography	
			History	
			Music	
27654	Robina Scahill	Team inspector	Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Mathematics	
			Physical education	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Brent Primary School is large. It has 436 pupils, aged four to eleven. Over nine-tenths are white, and the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average. An above-average proportion of pupils have English as an additional language, though few are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average, and includes a significant number who have serious difficulties with learning and behaviour. Most pupils joining the reception classes have reached below average standards for their age, particularly in language, literacy and communication. Many who join the school after the age of five have special educational needs. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds, but their overall social and economic circumstances are below average. There has been a very high turnover of staff in the past two years because of retirement, promotion and maternity leave. During the inspection, over a quarter of classes were taught by temporary supply teachers.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Despite difficult circumstances, the Brent Primary School is providing satisfactory education for its pupils. Standards are below average, but represent satisfactory achievement from pupils' starting points. Despite illness and high turnover among staff, teaching and the school's leadership and management are satisfactory, with good features. Value for money is satisfactory.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership and direction.
- Teaching and learning in the reception classes are good.
- There is good achievement in mathematics and music.
- Relationships are good, and the school includes all pupils in its life and work.
- Provision for special educational needs is good, with some outstanding features.
- There is good provision for pupils' personal development, and they enjoy school.
- There is a good relationship with parents and the community.
- There are very good opportunities for learning outside the classroom.

What could be improved

- Standards achieved by average and higher-attaining pupils.
- Pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy, using computers and speaking.
- Some aspects of teaching in most classes.
- The use of time during the school day.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was last inspected, in March 1998, it received a very positive report on standards, teaching, management and its climate for learning. The high turnover of staff, with the illness of a key member of the senior management team, has made it very difficult for the school to improve on this picture, particularly over the past two years. The school has improved provision for music and mathematics, and for pupils with special educational needs and behavioural difficulties. Standards in the reception classes have shown good improvement. New staff have been carefully selected, and many strengths from the last inspection have been maintained. However, the quality of teaching in some classes, and some aspects of management, have suffered, and the school is still not ensuring that

average and higher-attaining pupils are fully extended in all of their work. The school will be in a good position to make further improvements once its staffing difficulties are fully resolved.

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	D	C	E	E
mathematics	D	C	D	C
science	E	B	D	C

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Standards improved between 1998 and 2000, and the school received an achievement award in 2000. There was a sharp fall in 2001, particularly in English. The school has taken action to raise standards in English, and work seen during the inspection showed satisfactory improvement, though standards remain below average. Standards in mathematics and science during the inspection were below average, but standards in mathematics showed a good level of achievement from pupils' starting points. The results of 2001 national tests in Year 2 were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' work during the inspection showed some improvement on these results, but standards are still below average and vary too much between classes.

Throughout the school, pupils reach good standards in music. Standards in other subjects are broadly similar to those seen in most schools in Years 2 and 6. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve good standards, and those with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their learning needs. Pupils in the reception classes learn well, and reach broadly average standards, except in communication, language and literacy, where standards are below average, particularly in speaking and in the early stages of writing. These standards are higher than at the time of the last inspection.

Results fell well short of the school's targets in 2001. Targets for 2002 were set at a much more demanding level, but the school is making satisfactory progress towards them. Overall, pupils are achieving satisfactory standards by Year 6.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school and are willing to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Most pupils behave well, but some need a strong lead from their teacher to enable them to concentrate and work properly.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils readily form friendships and learn to accept responsibility. They are sensitive to each other's feelings, values and beliefs.
Attendance	Broadly average, with little unauthorised absence.

Pupils new to the school settle in well. The school includes pupils with behavioural difficulties very well, while minimising interference with other pupils' learning. Behaviour in the playground has recently improved following the introduction of new equipment and activities. Racial harmony is excellent.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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 teaching of English is satisfactory. The best is very good, but there is too much variation in the quality of teaching between classes. The teaching of mathematics is good. It is well organised and makes good use of national guidance. There is, however, too little effective teaching of literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects across the school.

Teaching in the reception classes is well planned, and gives pupils an enjoyable and effective start to school. The school has had to work hard to sustain satisfactory teaching in the main school in the face of the high turnover of staff and illness. Some temporary supply teachers were teaching their classes only for the week of the inspection. Well over half of the teaching is good, with very good teaching in individual classes and subjects, notably music. However, in some classes, pupils' work over the year shows that there have been weaknesses in marking and homework, and the pace of work in some lessons during the inspection was too slow. Pupils' learning reflects these inconsistencies in teaching, and higher-attaining pupils are not working to full capacity in a significant proportion of lessons.

Specialist teaching of pupils with special educational needs is excellent, and these pupils are supported well by teaching assistants in lessons. Pupils with English as an additional language are well taught. Overall, teaching meets the needs of all of the pupils to a satisfactory standard.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Suitable breadth and balance, but provision for literacy, numeracy, and the use of computers across subjects is not well enough developed. Very good opportunities for learning outside the classroom.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good, with some outstanding features. Pupils' learning and behavioural needs are carefully assessed, and work is well designed to meet them.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils' needs are carefully assessed, and effective additional teaching is provided. Older pupils with English as an additional language often reach above average standards.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good moral, social and cultural development, particularly in pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures and in teaching the difference between right and wrong. Provision for spiritual development and reflection is satisfactory, and often good in assemblies.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good for pupils' health and safety and wellbeing. Arrangements to assess and track progress are satisfactory, but are not used consistently enough to provide guidance or set targets for improvement.

The school has a good partnership with parents, and an exceptionally good relationship with parents of pupils who particularly need help and support. Provision for these pupils' personal development is very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides strong and effective personal leadership, but some aspects of management have suffered because of the high turnover of teachers and from staff illness.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well. Governors give clear direction, with a balanced commitment to high standards and the inclusion of all pupils in the life of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school uses all available data, including additional voluntary tests, to give it a clear idea of its strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school allocates resources well to educational priorities, and makes effective use of additional grants.

The school has sufficient, qualified teachers on its staff but has had to rely heavily on temporary supply teachers over the year because of illness. The buildings provide adequate accommodation, and there are good grounds, including a small swimming pool. The school has sufficient resources for learning, including good resources for teaching reading.

The school has set up good management systems, but staff shortages have interfered with their operation, particularly in improving teaching and in tracking pupils' progress in all subjects. Provision for mathematics and music is managed well, and there is excellent management of provision for special educational needs and for the inclusion of all pupils,

including those with behavioural difficulties. The school understands and applies the principles of giving and obtaining best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children like school and make good progress.• The school provides good help and support.• Teaching and management are good.• There are good opportunities for learning outside lessons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staffing.• Information for parents• Behaviour• Homework

Parents made many more positive than negative comments to inspectors, and they were often warmly expressed. Inspectors found that children like school. They agreed with parents' praise for learning opportunities outside lessons, and for the quality of the school's support to them and their children. However, they found that teaching, learning and management had been hit by staffing difficulties at the time of the inspection. Inspectors shared parents' concerns about the staff shortages during the inspection. They found that behaviour was not managed well enough in a minority of lessons, and that the quality of homework and of annual reports to parents needed some improvement.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The standards reached by children joining the reception classes vary from year to year. They are currently below average, but a little higher than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils in the reception classes learn well. They are reaching broadly average standards in all areas of learning except for communication, language and literacy, where standards are still below average, particularly in speaking and early writing. Overall, this represents good achievement from their starting points.
2. A significant number of pupils with special educational needs join the school after the reception year. A similar number of pupils tend to leave each year, and very few of these pupils have special educational needs. This trend poses particular problems in English, where results in the Year 6 national tests in 2001 were significantly lower than in science and mathematics. However, the school received an achievement award for the substantial improvement in its results between 1997 and 2000. It has taken action to raise standards in English following the low results in 2001, by increasing the amount of teaching and by grouping pupils according to their learning needs, and the standard of work during the inspection showed satisfactory improvement. Nevertheless, reading, writing and speaking and listening skills are not developed systematically enough in all subjects across the school, and standards in Year 6 in English, and in other subjects where pupils use their literacy skills, could be improved further.
3. Standards in English in Year 2 are below average overall. This reflects the very serious learning difficulties of a small minority of pupils, who are still in the very early stages of learning to read and write, but is also the result of inconsistencies in teaching between classes. In one class, very effective teaching of reading and writing, backed by very good marking and a consistent expectation of the highest possible standards, has led to very good overall progress over the past year. The standard of the best work in this class is well above average. In the other Year 2 class, pupils have made much less consistent progress since the start of the year, and standards are well below average.
4. Standards in science are below average in Years 2 and 6, chiefly because of continuing weaknesses in experimental work and in recording results. Throughout the school, higher-attaining pupils reach above-average standards only in parts of their work. Standards in mathematics are also below average in Years 2 and 6, but pupils across the school make good progress from their starting points. The proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected standard in mathematics during the inspection showed an improvement on the most recent national test results in both years. These good standards are the result of good long-term planning, and effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy. Work in other subjects is not, however, making sufficient contribution to standards in numeracy. Standards in music are above average in Years 2 and 6, as a result of consistently very good teaching from a music specialist. Standards in other subjects, including information and communication technology (ICT) are broadly average, with some good features in physical education.

5. A significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs have serious difficulties with learning, and a smaller proportion have equally serious behavioural difficulties. These pupils make good overall progress, and some of their learning is excellent. A pupil with autism in the reception classes is making excellent progress in his personal development, and pupils make excellent progress in relation to their learning needs when they are taught by the school's specialist teacher. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs learn well and make good progress, but a small number of pupils with serious learning needs, who do not have statements of special educational needs, are unable to learn effectively in lessons where they do not have highly skilled individual help.
6. Most of the pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds have English as an additional language. They are often among the higher-attaining pupils in their classes, and their good attitudes to work ensure that they learn well and achieve good standards. Other pupils who join the school at a late stage in their primary education settle in well and immediately begin to make good progress. Gifted and talented pupils reach above average standards, and do very well in special projects. Their learning has, however, been affected alongside that of other pupils by the school's staffing difficulties, and they are not consistently working to full capacity. There are some variations in the standards reached by boys and girls from year to year, but there is no consistent long-term trend.
7. The school has taken satisfactory action to address the weaknesses revealed by the results of 2001 tests, which fell well short of its targets. Targets for 2002 were set at a significantly higher level than those for 2001, but work seen during the inspection suggested that the school was increasing the number of pupils reaching the nationally expected standard in English and mathematics. There is still some under-achievement in one class in Year 2, but by Year 6 pupils were achieving satisfactory standards in their work during the inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' behaviour and attitudes were good, and they enjoyed school. Pupils continue to enjoy school, have good attitudes to work and form good relationships. However, while most pupils behave well, a small minority only do so in response to strong adult support, and behaviour overall is now satisfactory.
9. Children in the reception class quickly settle into school and work well, both in activities led by the teacher and in those they choose themselves. They play happily in the outside area, using large equipment energetically, and co-operate well when working in groups. Pupils with significant learning difficulties make particularly good progress in adapting to school and forming relationships.
10. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 behave well and work hard. When a topic really catches their interest - for example, when using magnifying glasses to study minibeasts – they become engrossed in their work. On the other hand, a small number are easily unsettled, and need a strong lead from their teacher if they are to learn effectively. Pupils are helped to improve their behaviour and attitudes by good management of classes in Year 3, and by Year 6 behaviour is generally good. However, a small number, mostly boys, still do not listen to teachers as they should, and do not work properly in groups. The management of this difficult behaviour improved as the inspection progressed, particularly in Year 2, but was not effective enough in some classes for older pupils.

11. Behaviour on the playground is satisfactory, and pupils said it had improved following the purchase of new play equipment. Pupils said that there had been some verbal bullying, but that this had recently been reduced. There is good racial harmony throughout the school, and boys and girls work well together. Pupils learn about co-operation and trust, but do not always understand the impact of their actions on others. There has been one fixed-term exclusion this year. The school frequently takes in pupils who have attended elsewhere, some for a fresh start, and is good at including them. The headteacher establishes very good personal relationships with pupils, who are proud to show her their work and win her approval. Generally, relationships between teachers and pupils are good, despite the high turnover of staff, but there is sometimes friction and unkind behaviour among pupils when left unsupervised.
12. Pupils like school and will say so. When asked, they realise they are the most important people in the school, and that they learn more than just their lessons. They enjoy music, sports, and arts and crafts clubs, some of which are run by eleven-year-olds during the winter and spring terms. The older pupils share their enthusiasm – for example, for dance, Spanish or chess – as different age groups work together, with some adult supervision. The oldest pupils enthusiastically volunteer for daily tasks such as tidying infant library books, issuing and checking the return of play equipment, and taking turns with lunchtime clearing duties in the hall and classrooms. Assemblies demonstrate a true sense of pride in belonging to the school, which continues through many shows and concerts. The beliefs of those withdrawn from the act of collective worship are respected, and they take part in other aspects of assemblies.
13. Pupils with English as an additional language have good attitudes to their work and this helps them to learn. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with the most serious learning and behavioural difficulties, respond well to the support they receive from teachers, teaching assistants and other pupils. Most work hard, though the serious behavioural difficulties of a very small minority sometimes interfere with their learning. Gifted and talented pupils show very good attitudes in a small number of special projects that fully extend their talents, and feel well prepared for secondary school. In class, they work steadily and behave well, even when they are not fully challenged. The small number of pupils in public care are well integrated into the school, even when they join at a late stage.
14. Attendance in the last school year was broadly average. After many years at this level, it is slightly lower this year, due to three long-term absences, but is still well above 90 per cent. Unauthorised absence is below average.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, and is similar to that seen during the last inspection. However, the high turnover of staff has led to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching between classes. Four classes, over a quarter of the total, were taught by temporary supply teachers during the inspection. Teaching and learning in these classes were satisfactory overall, and improved steadily during the inspection, with some very good teaching in its later stages. However, two of these teachers were teaching their classes only for the week of the inspection, including one assigned from the local authority's advisory and support service, who was available only for the four days of the inspection.
16. In some classes, therefore, teaching during the inspection was not typical of the teaching pupils received during the rest of the year. Analysis of pupils' work over the year showed significant weaknesses in some classes in the quality and range of written

work, in marking, and in the consistency of challenge to higher-attaining pupils. In some other classes, pupils' work across the year showed very good learning, even when, as in one Year 2 class, gifted and talented pupils and pupils with learning difficulties were taught in the same class. These variations in the quality of teaching between classes are the main reason why teaching and learning overall are satisfactory rather than good.

17. Teachers in the reception classes have created a well-organised and stimulating environment for learning, with well-planned activities that ensure good progress across all of the nationally recommended areas of learning. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of patterns of learning in the children, and the quality of teaching has benefited from stable staffing since the last inspection. All adults use conversation and questions very effectively to draw out children's ideas and develop their confidence. Teaching assistants make detailed assessments of individual children's progress, so it is clear what they have learned and where they need additional support.
18. Teaching in Years 1 to 6 is at least satisfactory in all subjects, and is sometimes better. There are significant strengths in Years 1 and 2, where the co-ordinator has now established a pattern of improvement, and in Year 3, where teaching is well adapted to work with pupils who need to consolidate their basic skills. Across the school, teaching is good in mathematics, where it benefits from effective co-ordination and good use of the National Numeracy Strategy. The teaching of English is satisfactory overall across the school. In the class in which it has been very good over the year, learning has accelerated, and pupils are reaching above average standards in some aspects of their work. Teaching in music is very good, and benefits from the skills of a music specialist. There is good teaching across the school in religious education, which is particularly effective in helping pupils to understand and respect the views of others. The teaching of ICT in Years 1 and 2 is very good overall, with very well planned activities that are carefully matched to what pupils most need to learn.
19. Teachers make effective use of nationally produced schemes of work to ensure consistency in their planning, and this ensures steady progress in all subjects. However, they do not assess pupils' work in all subjects to ensure that they are providing the right level of challenge to all pupils, and do not plan consistently to promote the key skills of literacy, numeracy, ICT and more formal speaking. In some lessons, particularly in science, and in ICT in Years 3 to 6, there is too much use of worksheets that do not require pupils to write their own notes. Most work is marked, but pupils are not taught to use marking effectively to improve their work. Occasionally, marking is inaccurate. Children in the reception class, and in most classes in Years 1 and 2, receive suitable homework, but homework is not used consistently enough to promote learning among older pupils. Some tasks are too vague, and homework is not always set when it should be. Teaching was unsatisfactory overall in only a small number of lessons during the inspection. In two of these, behaviour and the pace of work were not effectively managed, and in the third, the teacher had to use another teacher's planning, which demanded too little of most pupils. In some lessons, time is allowed to overrun, limiting opportunities for learning in the next lesson.
20. Specialist teaching of pupils with special educational needs is excellent. The co-ordinator has very detailed understanding of patterns of learning among these pupils, and work is finely tuned to variations in their needs. She and the teaching assistants assess pupils' learning in exceptional detail, revising targets and planning work each week. This is especially effective for pupils with statements of special educational needs, whose learning is very good. Where pupils' problems are particularly complex, teaching is exceptionally good, enabling pupils to learn as well as they can while including them in all class activities. These pupils' parents greatly appreciate the

school's contribution to their children's personal development as well as their learning. Teachers and teaching assistants provide very good personal support to pupils with special educational needs. Work is modified to meet their needs, assistants keep pupils focused on their work, and good behaviour management minimises the effect of behavioural difficulties on the learning of other pupils. Special efforts are made to include the pupils in all activities, and other pupils support their learning. Some teaching assistants, however, do not have the advanced teaching skills needed to help pupils with the most serious learning difficulties to work effectively.

21. Teaching meets the needs of pupils with English as an additional language well, with good additional teaching from a visiting specialist. A very small minority of pupils with English as an additional language, who have serious learning difficulties but no statement of special educational need, do not learn effectively when this additional support is not provided. The substantial number of pupils who join the school at a late stage in their primary education, including some in public care, are given very good personal support, and learn effectively. Teaching provides a good range of opportunities for both boys and girls, and boys and girls learn to work together, for example when sharing computers. Higher-attaining pupils are identified through testing and assessments, and gifted and talented pupils are very well taught in some classes and special projects, such as preparing and presenting PowerPoint presentations to the rest of the school in assembly. More often, these pupils complete the same work as others in their classes, and teachers do not plan consistently to ensure that they are working to the highest standard of which they are capable.
22. The school is aware of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching from its monitoring procedures. However, steps to improve teaching have been held up by the high turnover of staff and by illness, which has obliged the headteacher to give priority to the task of ensuring satisfactory teaching in each class. Nevertheless, improving the quality of teaching remains the most important single task facing the school.

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

Opportunities for Learning

23. The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities for all pupils, and meets all statutory requirements. Planning has improved since the last inspection through the use of nationally recommended schemes of work, which the school has adapted to meet the needs of the pupils. This has helped to ensure continuity in pupils' learning despite the staffing problems the school has encountered. The school has addressed the weaknesses noted at the time of the last inspection in mathematics, science and design and technology. These subjects are now given appropriate time and are taught in sufficient depth. The curriculum makes good provision for music. On the other hand, the high turnover of staff, together with weaknesses in assessment and marking, have made it more difficult for the school to provide consistently for the needs of higher-attaining pupils, and those who are gifted and talented. These pupils benefit from special projects, but are not always fully challenged in lessons.
24. The national strategies for numeracy and literacy are well established, and the school has taken action to raise standards by introducing additional teaching groups for higher-attaining and lower-attaining pupils. These groups had ceased to operate for older pupils by the time of the inspection as the national tests had been completed, but work in Year 6 showed improvement from the most recent test results. The Early Literacy Support materials were used very well during the inspection with pupils in Year 1.

However, pupils' numeracy and literacy skills are not developed and consolidated enough in their work in subjects other than English and mathematics. Teachers in most classes, and particularly in science lessons, do not plan writing so that each task contributes to writing as well as to the subject. Library skills are very well taught, but pupils have too few opportunities to use them in their work. The school has identified the need to plan for numeracy more consistently in subjects other than mathematics. ICT is used effectively to promote learning in some subjects, notably writing in Year 1, but some of the work produced using ICT is limited to retrieving information, and it is not contributing enough to learning. The school's work to improve these aspects of the curriculum has been held up by the illness of a key member of staff.

25. The use of time over the school term allows sufficient breadth and balance for the curriculum, but there are some weaknesses in the organisation of time during the day. Some lessons are too long, particularly when the same type of learning activity is continued from one lesson to the next. Occasionally, lessons are allowed to overrun, cutting short the time for the next lesson. This interferes with learning, particularly at the end of the morning, where the final lesson is already short.
26. There is a good curriculum for the children in the reception classes, with a wide range of interesting activities based on the latest national guidance. The school has recently developed very good facilities for them to play and work outdoors, but these are not used consistently throughout the school day. The curriculum in the reception class is exceptionally well adapted to help pupils with statements of special educational needs.
27. The curriculum provides good opportunities for learning to pupils with additional educational needs, whether these stem from learning or behavioural difficulties. Teachers modify work to enable them to take part and to learn effectively, and teaching assistants provide good support for learning and personal development. Additional specialist teaching is excellent, but can only be provided to each pupil in small amounts. A small number of pupils with English as an additional language in addition to significant special educational needs are unable to make sense of their work when they do not have individual support from a specialist teacher. The school is, however, effectively committed to race equality and inclusion, and makes good overall provision for pupils with English as an additional language. The work of specialists outside the school is effectively integrated with the school's own additional support.
28. The school makes good provision for teaching personal, social and health education, including sex education, citizenship and drugs education. There are specific lessons for sex education in Year 6. The local community police officer visits the school to talk to the older pupils about the dangers of the misuse of drugs, and visits from other members of the community support the pupils' learning in citizenship.
29. There is very good provision for learning outside the classroom. Pupils can choose from a wide range of clubs, including art and craft, choir, recorders and steel band, and after-school sports. Pupils and midday supervisors run additional clubs at lunchtime, and pupils have the opportunity to learn musical instruments with visiting teachers. Competitive matches in football, tag rugby, rounders, cricket and athletics take place throughout the year, many of them hosted by the school. Pupils take part in an extensive range of visits to concerts, museums, galleries and places of historical, geographical and environmental interest. Visitors to the school include drama groups, musicians, workshops and speakers to support all areas of the curriculum. Year 6 pupils' annual residential visit to The Isle of Wight offers opportunities for learning in many subjects, including physical education, and adds significantly to their personal and social development.

30. The school has close links with local businesses, government and community groups. They are involved with community events such as the Dartford Carnival and annual Art and Design and Technology exhibition. Learning opportunities benefit from the school's close association with Christ Church College in Canterbury and the University of Greenwich. The school has very good links with the nursery school on the same site. Very good liaison with the secondary schools ensures that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Personal development

31. The school gives high priority to pupils' personal development. A large display of 'Stars of The Brent' outside the headteacher's room has a photograph of every pupil inside a star, with encouraging notes and poems, one of which begins 'I've got The Brent and The Brent's got me'. Parents strongly appreciate the school's work in this area, particularly when their child has experienced serious learning difficulties or illness.
32. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory, and has good features. Pupils have good opportunities for reflection in assemblies, particularly where these are led by the headteacher. Themes include caring for the world and enjoying its beauty, and assemblies include a sensitive and relevant school prayer. Each classroom has its own 'WOW' book recording the children's selection of particular achievements and events of note. Pupils have good opportunities to reflect on their own and others' values in many religious education lessons, and the specialist teacher for English as an additional language provides very effective additional work for pupils in Year 6 on the theme of friendship. However, in many lessons, the pace and organisation of work, and the balance of questions, do not provide enough opportunities for spiritual development.
33. There is good provision for moral development. The school has suitable codes and rules to promote good behaviour in the building and in the playground, and each class has devised its own rules, which are clearly displayed. Teachers, teaching assistants and other adults in the school set pupils a good example of courtesy, respect and fairness. They promote moral and social development as a natural part of their work, and their caring and positive approach has a favourable effect on pupils. The school's work to promote a clear sense of right and wrong is very effective, and great care is taken to help pupils with behavioural difficulties to develop an understanding of the effects of their actions on others.
34. Provision for social development is good, and has some outstanding features, particularly in the great care taken to support pupils with special educational needs. In the reception class, for example, teachers worked exceptionally closely with the parents of an autistic child about to start school, taking photographs of aspects of the environment that he was frightened of, so that parents could show him there was nothing to fear. Teachers in most classes manage the social side of the classroom well, and give pupils good opportunities to work collaboratively. On the other hand, some do not do enough to ensure that pupils understand the consequences of misbehaviour, and some class management is not firm enough. Pupils share and celebrate each other's work, and collections of work are attractively displayed on classroom walls and in corridors. Children from the reception classes first rehearsed an assembly to parents and relatives, and then performed it to the whole school, gaining in confidence as they did so. Pupils with English as an additional language are very effectively integrated into all aspects of the school's life and work, and pupils of different races frequently form friendships. Opportunities for pupils to accept responsibility are well-structured, though systems for consulting pupils are not yet well enough developed.

35. A good range and variety of stories and poems from other cultures, as well from Britain, is used effectively in English lessons to promote an appreciation of literature and develop pupils' writing skills – for example, in re-creating West African stories of Anansi the spider in Year 2. There is a comprehensive programme of educational visits to places such as the National Gallery, the theatre and a power station, as well as to Christian and other religious sites. Pupils are introduced to a wide variety of music and the school has a popular steel band. Many pupils belong to the choir and to recorder groups and there are opportunities for them to receive instrumental tuition. Classroom displays illustrate design and technology work designing instruments. Recorded music is played as pupils enter and leave assemblies. Religious education provides good opportunities for pupils to learn about the cultures as well as the spiritual aspects associated with major world faiths.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The school takes good care of pupils' welfare and has suitable arrangements for health and safety and child protection. The headteacher and the long-serving school secretary know the pupils well, and have maintained continuity despite the very high recent turnover of staff. The headteacher gives pupils a strong lead and very good personal support and guidance. An increasing number of staff live within the local community and understand the pressures on pupils and their parents. Many classroom assistants are parents or former parents, and also work as midday supervisors, providing continuity and consistency of care during the day. Parents, specialists outside the school, teachers, teaching assistants and pupils work in close and sensitive co-operation to support the pupils who need it most – for example, because of autism or long-term illness. There is very effective personal support and guidance for children joining the reception classes, and pupils new to the school at other times are quickly integrated into classes. The headteacher supports pupils and their families very well as they prepare to transfer to secondary school. The school has maintained its good work in this area since the last inspection.
37. Arrangements to promote good behaviour are satisfactory. There are clear rules and a code of conduct, and teaching assistants' good support in class helps pupils with behavioural difficulties to concentrate and not distract others. However, detentions do not always have a positive impact on behaviour. Teachers work constantly to promote good behaviour, developing social skills and an awareness of how actions affect others. However, some parts of the programme of personal, social and health education are not matched closely enough to pupils' immediate needs.
38. The school is aware of broad patterns in attendance, but does not contact parents on the first day of a pupil's unexplained absence, and it is not making the best use of its computerised registration system to track individual pupils' attendance.
39. The school has established satisfactory systems for assessing and tracking progress, including the full range of voluntary national tests. The information from this assessment is used well to promote learning in mathematics, but only in individual classes in other subjects. As a result, work in most subjects does not take enough account of what pupils already know and of what they need to learn next. Most teachers successfully adapt work for lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, but less often do so for higher-attaining and gifted and talented pupils, who spend too much time on undemanding tasks. Weaknesses in assessment are made worse by inadequate marking in some classes; the use of information from assessment was further hindered during the inspection by the fact that temporary supply teachers

were often meeting their classes for the first time. By the end of the inspection, these teachers had begun to make good use of informal assessment to match work to their pupils' needs – for example, work in a personal, social and health education lesson in Year 5 was planned to tackle issues that had arisen in pupils' attitudes and behaviour during the week.

40. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is carried out to a very good standard, with excellent assessment of pupils with statements of special educational needs. These pupils are closely observed by teaching assistants, who report progress and setbacks in relation to learning targets to the co-ordinator for special educational needs each week. Targets in individual education plans reflect pupils' learning needs in great detail, and are closely reflected in specialist teaching. The school makes very effective use of all additional sources of information and advice, and takes full account of parents' and pupils' views. The learning needs of pupils with English as an additional language are also carefully assessed with help from the local advisory service, and additional teaching is allocated to the point of greatest need. In a small number of cases, however, where pupils have English as an additional language and significant special educational needs, pupils need more support than the school can provide.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. When the school was last inspected, its partnership with parents was very good in all respects. It has worked hard to sustain the quality of its work with parents, and many of the strengths remain, particularly in the high quality of its support for those with children who have particular learning or social difficulties. On the other hand, the high turnover of staff and the need to rely on temporary supply teachers have made some aspects of its work less consistent, notably in homework and in writing reports. The school is well placed to deal with these issues once stable staffing is restored.
42. Parents value both the school's teaching and its contribution to developing their children's maturity. One mother reported that she knows her daughter has found lessons informative and interesting because she comes home eager to talk about her day, loves her teacher, and wants to be a teacher when she grows up! They feel the school works closely with them, and are particularly grateful for the headteacher's availability and support as their children approach secondary school.
43. Some parents have concerns about staffing matters, which they would like to see resolved. They appreciate the efforts made to provide supply teachers who know the children. A few parents have concerns that bullying is not dealt with firmly enough, and that they are not adequately informed. Inspectors found that the school reacts well to parental concerns, but that information on staffing is given only to the parents or carers of the class concerned. This means that many parents receive second hand information from each other. Pupils told inspectors that there had been some bullying but that the school had taken effective steps to deal with it. Inspectors found that the school does all it can to secure the best possible staff, and did not share the view expressed by one parent that the staffing situation during the inspection could have been foreseen and provided for. A minority of parents felt that their children were not receiving the right amount of homework. Inspectors found that younger pupils read regularly at home, but that some older pupils were not receiving homework that was regular and well thought out to advance their learning.
44. Good numbers of parents attend school events where pupils participate; the headteacher uses these occasions well to offer praise and encouragement. A few parents, grandparents and friends of the school work regularly in classes or accompany

trips, but no parents help in the youngest pupils' classes. A former member of the support staff regularly helps with swimming instruction. Over 50 parents and family members came to an assembly rehearsal during the inspection, and a high proportion attend parents' consultation evenings. Many of the school's teaching assistants are parents or former parents. The Parents' School and Friends' Association makes a significant contribution to the school and to raising its profile in the local community. They organise events for social reasons as well as fund raising, and many family occasions, such as the New Year's Eve celebrations, sell out quickly.

45. Almost a fifth of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire did not feel well informed about their child's progress. Inspectors found that over half of the reports were well written and gave parents a clear idea of what their children had achieved. Almost half, however, contained some jargon, and did not give a clear enough idea of what had been achieved. Some reports on work in subjects comment only on the pupil's attitude, and too few contain clear targets for improvement. Teachers send home informative letters about the term's work, and parents said that teachers were always available to discuss their children's progress. The school works very closely with the parents of pupils with special educational needs, and those who have additional obstacles to learning, such as long-term illness. Parents of these pupils told inspectors that they greatly appreciated the support they and their children received from the school community.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The last inspection team found that the headteacher was providing dynamic and effective leadership and that the governors were making a very effective contribution to the direction of the school. Both have maintained this level of skill and commitment, but the management of the school has been affected by the very high turnover of teachers over the past two years, and the serious illness of the deputy headteacher. Many co-ordinators are new to their responsibilities and have had to focus on establishing satisfactory provision. They have been successful in this, but have not had the opportunity to ensure that all groups of pupils within the school, particularly the gifted and talented pupils, are working to the full extent of their ability in each subject.
47. The headteacher knows the strengths and weaknesses of teachers and managers well, and deploys staff carefully to meet pupils' needs. For example, she gives priority to strong teaching in Year 3 to help lower-attaining pupils who are still not secure in their basic skills. Staff appointed to the senior management team, including the co-ordinators for special educational needs and for Years 1 and 2, make a very effective contribution to management within their areas of responsibility. However, the pattern of illness among the staff this year has obliged the headteacher to spend much time in ensuring that classes are taught to a satisfactory standard. The development of the range of learning opportunities, especially for literacy, and the use of assessment to meet the needs of higher-attaining pupils, have been held back by the illness of the deputy headteacher. Overall, management and leadership at the time of the inspection were satisfactory, but capable of being restored to their previous levels once the difficulties caused by illness have been resolved.
48. The school analyses all available data closely to track standards and set targets in mathematics and English. The headteacher and governors noted the fall in standards in the National Curriculum tests in 2001. They have taken action to raise them by providing additional teaching in English and mathematics, and by setting targets for improvement for younger pupils. By the time of the inspection, standards in Year 6 were showing satisfactory improvement, with an increase in the proportion of pupils

who were on course to reach nationally expected standards. Improvements in teaching at the time of the inspection were also leading to better standards in Year 2, though the improvement in one class was very recent. The school has, since the last inspection, greatly extended its arrangements to include all pupils in its work, allocating additional funds for teaching assistants and ensuring that they have the behaviour management skills they need. This aspect of management ensures that pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in all school activities, and enables pupils with serious behavioural difficulties to learn to the best of their ability without disturbing others. The school has a satisfactory policy for race equality, including arrangements to monitor its effectiveness.

49. The headteacher and governors manage the school's finances well. They allocate money, including additional grants and the funds arising from the large class sizes in Years 3 to 6, effectively to support the school's aims of raising standards, promoting personal development and including all pupils. Examples of effective use of funds include specialist music teaching, supplementary teaching in English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6, and good levels of spending on books and the library. The school tracks the impact of these spending decisions on standards and on the quality of provision.
50. The school has sufficient, qualified teachers on its staff to teach the National Curriculum and provide for pupils' additional learning needs. Its recent and current staffing difficulties have been caused by illness. Almost all temporary supply teachers have been suitably qualified, but at times the school has had to employ teachers who have not had sufficient experience in the primary phase. The headteacher and governors appoint new staff carefully, with a clear eye to the balance of skills within the school, and the school benefits from its connection with an initial teacher training institution. Teachers new to the school, including newly qualified teachers, are given very effective support, and there are good arrangements for the professional development of all teachers. Teaching assistants are well qualified and experienced for their work, though some need further training for work with pupils with the most significant special educational needs.
51. The library for Years 1 and 2 has a very good collection of books, particularly fiction, which are attractively displayed at child height. Pupils use it regularly, and are encouraged to replace books on the shelves, using guide cards to identify the correct place, and take their turn to tidy the library each day. The library for Years 3 to 6 also has a good stock of fiction, and has sufficient books to support learning in most subjects. A high proportion of pupils borrow books regularly, and pupils in Year 4 have very good lessons in library skills, taught by the school's qualified librarian. Outside these lessons, however, the non-fiction sections of the library are not used systematically to promote learning.
52. The school has good resources for learning in English, particularly to support reading, and for music. There are good facilities for physical education. There are good resources for the reception classes, including good new facilities and equipment for outdoor play, although the school is not yet making full use of these. Other resources for learning, including computers, are adequate. Teachers during the inspection were using resources well in Years 1 and 2 – for example, by taking computerised floor robots into the playground, and enlivening their use with a good game of skittles. The use of resources in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. There are good features, such as the use of a digital camera to record work, but also some weaknesses, for example in the range of tools used in some classes for design and technology. The school has large and well-maintained grounds. The building provides adequate accommodation, though its design creates some practical problems for teachers, and classrooms for older

pupils are cramped. The school uses the building well, particularly small pockets of additional space, and teachers have created an attractive learning environment through good displays of pupils' work.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. The issues the school needs to address in order to improve further are all included, either wholly or in part, in the current school improvement plan. In preparing their action plan following this report, the headteacher and governors should pay particular attention to the following points:

(1) Raise the standards reached by average and higher-attaining pupils, by:

- ensuring that they work consistently to the highest standards of which they are capable;
- using information from assessment to set challenging work in all subjects;
- promoting the achievements of gifted and talented pupils systematically.

(Paragraphs 2, 3, 6, 13, 19, 39, 47, 69, 78-82, 94, 107)

- (2) Raise standards in literacy, numeracy, ICT and speaking, by:
- ensuring that work in all subjects contributes systematically to these skills;
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to learn to speak in formal contexts;
 - improving the use of the library and computers to support learning in all subjects.
- (Paragraphs 2, 3, 19, 47, 51, 64-7, 76, 79-82, 102, 123)
- (3) Improve teaching, by:
- designing more effective tasks for pupils working independently and in groups;
 - making more consistent use of marking, homework, and target-setting;
 - improving arrangements to ensure that pupils in all classes concentrate on their work.
- (Paragraphs 7, 10, 15, 16, 19, 39, 47, 68-9, 76, 78, 81, 91, 94, 102, 107-8)
- (4) Use time during the school day more effectively, by:
- making sure that each lesson is long enough to promote effective learning;
 - arranging the timetable so that pupils do not have to concentrate for too long on the same subject or type of activity;
 - starting and ending lessons on time.
- (Paragraphs 19, 25, 81)

Further issues to be considered in the Action Plan:

- (1) Improve the use of the good outdoor facilities in the reception classes.
(Paragraph 61)
- (2) Ensure that all annual reports on pupils provide a clear account of what they can and cannot do, and of their targets for improvement.
(Paragraphs 45, 97, 103)
- (3) Improve the use of the computerised registration system to track patterns in attendance.
(Paragraph 38)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	83
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	17	32	29	3	0	0
Percentage	2	20	39	35	4	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)	436
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	60

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	129

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	17

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	5.8	School data	0

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 Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	34	33	67

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	27	30
	Girls	26	26	29
	Total	52	53	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (82)	79 (86)	88 (89)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	29	27
	Girls	28	27	27
	Total	56	56	54
Percentage of pupils	School	84 (88)	84 (86)	81 (86)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	31	34	65

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	20	27
	Girls	15	16	24
	Total	35	36	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	54 (77)	55 (78)	78 (86)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	23	27
	Girls	21	20	22
	Total	43	43	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (81)	66 (80)	75 (83)
	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	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	2
Indian	9
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	1
White	353
Any other minority ethnic group	7

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.5
Average class size	31.1

Education support staff: YR-Y6

Total number of education support staff	24
Total aggregate hours worked per week	451

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2
	£
Total income	973,572
Total expenditure	981,134
Expenditure per pupil	2,261
Balance brought forward from previous year	53,863

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	436
Number of questionnaires returned	97

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	33	3	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	34	4	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	45	6	5	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	52	13	1	0
The teaching is good.	54	36	6	3	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	42	18	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	29	6	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	36	4	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	38	54	7	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	55	35	4	3	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	40	3	3	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	65	24	5	0	5

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

54. The school's two reception classes give children a good start to their school life. Most children join the school with below-average standards for their age, and a significant number have reached well below average standards. Some children with special educational needs have serious learning and behavioural difficulties. Teaching and learning are good. As a result, by the end of the reception year, most children reach the expected standard in all of the nationally recommended areas of learning, except for communication, language and literacy, where standards are below average. Children with special needs educational needs and those at the early stages of learning English make very good progress. They benefit from very effective additional support from the specialist teacher and teaching assistants, from the local advisory service, and from their parents. Overall, there have been good improvements in provision and standards in the reception classes since the last inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

55. Children make good progress in personal, social and emotional development. The strength lies in the good relationships between adults and children and the way in which the teachers know each child personally and are able to cater for their individual specific needs – for example, by asking about their family or sharing a child's interest in reading. This makes the children feel important and valued. Children work together in a friendly and supportive manner, and show respect for each other, adults and visitors. They take part in a variety of activities, some led by adults and some that they choose themselves, and handle resources sensibly. Children are well behaved, and sustain concentration well when working. They play well with others, share and take turns. Children respond well to adults. They follow instructions, listen carefully to what they are told, and begin activities eagerly.
56. Children are sensitive to the needs of others, and show obvious pleasure in friends' successes. They line up and move around the school sensibly. They take lunch in the dining room with the rest of the school, showing good social skills. In an assembly during the inspection, they entertained both the school and 50 parents and grandparents with a confident performance of the story of Noah. This included dressing up, singing, playing musical instruments and good opportunities for recitation. Outdoor facilities are good, but planning for outdoor play does not include enough opportunities for children to develop group play where, for example, they can work together to solve problems. The personal development of children with statements of special educational needs is exceptionally good, in response to very high levels of care and support from teachers and other pupils.

Communication, language and literacy

57. Although standards at the end of the reception year are below average, children make good progress. They learn to listen attentively, and all join enthusiastically in reading a big book. Children take part in discussions and answer questions confidently, though with limited vocabulary. Through carefully chosen stories, most recognise an increasing number of words in familiar contexts, and know basic links between sounds and letters. Children who learn quickly read texts from the school's reading scheme confidently; others use picture clues and retell the story in their own words. Children develop good skills in handling and understanding books. Those who learn more quickly

understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction, and the terms 'author', 'illustrator' and 'blurb', correctly explaining each one. These children can form simple sentences using word banks. However, most children reach very limited standards for their age in early writing, including a significant number of children with special educational needs. Parents are closely involved in helping to develop their children's literacy skills through reading books and working on spellings and sound patterns at home.

Mathematical development

58. Children make good progress, particularly in early number work. They count the dots on a dice accurately, and enjoy number rhymes on addition and subtraction. At this stage of the year, many count confidently to ten and beyond, recognise numerals to ten and can combine groups of numbers. Some are learning how to write sums, in the form of 'number sentences'. Children recognise basic shapes and have begun to identify three-dimensional shapes. Teachers use races with toy cars, ordering the positions of the winners to help the children sort, number and sequence in ordinal numbers.
59. Teachers' lucid explanations of mathematical ideas ensure that children understand their work and clear up misconceptions. Group activities are well planned, with a range of number games, and are effectively supported by adults through systematic teaching based on a thorough knowledge of what children know and can do. Teachers use displays well to promote learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

60. Progress and learning are satisfactory, with good features. Good opportunities are provided for children to extend their understanding of their local community and beyond through various visits: for example, to the bridge, the viewing platform and to the local farm and shops. Through such visits and explorations of themes, the children can comment on what they see and do, and ask questions. Children considered appropriate materials and developed satisfactory skills in cutting and joining when making a range of materials for their 'Bear Hunt'. They journeyed through grass, mud, a forest and took refuge in a cave. Cultural development is promoted well in paintings and writings about Noah and the story of Joseph. The children celebrate the Chinese New Year and make dragon masks. Their spiritual development is promoted through their fascination and wonder at the natural world, for example when observing their teacher's tortoise and describing its shell. However, computers are under-used and the range of programmable and communication toys is limited.

Physical development

61. Children make satisfactory and at times good progress. They handle pencils, brushes, scissors and glue tentatively at first, but soon become confident users with careful guidance by staff. The new outside environment is a stimulating resource. When it is fully used, it makes a good contribution to learning, but this is only for half an hour each day. Pupils run, skip, jump, balance and climb with growing inventiveness and control. They use bikes, chariots and trolleys with considerable agility, turning corners and dodging others with skilful speed. Some children with good gymnastic skills can climb up and down the pole. Children do not have enough experience of changing for physical activities.

Creative development

62. Learning and progress are good. Children use a good range of media to draw, paint, print and make models. They enjoy singing songs from memory and song is well used as a teaching aid. There are good opportunities to use the sand, water, art materials, dressing-up clothes and musical instruments independently, through choosing the tools, materials and containers that best suit what they want to do. These opportunities are particularly valuable to children with special educational needs.

ENGLISH

63. The results of the 2001 national tests were well below average in Years 2 and 6, and showed a sharp fall from those in 2000, particularly in Year 2 reading. The standard of work seen during the inspection was better, but was still below average. Standards throughout the school are affected by high proportions of pupils with special educational needs. Some of these pupils, particularly in Year 2, have very serious learning difficulties, and are still in the initial stages of learning to read and write. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make good progress, and their learning is exceptionally good in lessons with the school's specialist teacher. Pupils with English as an additional language are often among the most able in their classes, and achieve good standards by Year 6. Standards have fallen somewhat since the last inspection. This is caused partly by an increase in the number of pupils with significant learning difficulties in English, and partly by weaknesses in teaching in some classes, which were being addressed by the time of the inspection. There is no significant difference between the standards reached by boys and girls, and overall standards in Year 6 show a reasonable level of achievement.
64. Throughout the school, standards in speaking and listening are below average, and particularly low for some pupils with special educational needs. Most pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other when working in groups, and they make good progress in listening in some classes where teachers are highly skilled in explaining things to them – for example, in a lesson on Sikh culture and religion in Year 3. However, a significant minority of pupils in most classes do not listen closely enough to what teachers say. By Year 6, higher-attaining pupils speak clearly and confidently, but many pupils use limited vocabulary for their age, and contribute only very briefly to discussions.
65. Standards in reading are higher than in other aspects of English. By Year 2, many pupils use a sound range of skills to help decode unfamiliar words. They can read and compare different versions of the same story, such as traditional and modern versions of 'Little Red Riding Hood', and identify the audience that the different authors have in mind. For example, one pupil said of Roald Dahl's version, 'That must be for younger children, cos' its not as scary as the story we know'. Higher-attaining readers read with fluency and expression, conveying the full meaning of the text. Some of the pupils with the most serious special educational needs in Year 2, however, were still working hard to learn basic connections between sounds and letters at the time of the inspection, and could not read independently.

66. Most pupils in Year 6 are enthusiastic and independent readers. They have preferences for particular authors, and can place fiction books into different categories. Higher-attaining readers are beginning to discuss the interaction of plot and characters, and can predict how the narrative will develop as a result of their observations of the ways in which characters behave. Learning benefits from efficient organisation and promotion of reading through the home-school reading scheme and the library. A high proportion of pupils borrow books. On the other hand, the use of reading for learning in other subjects, particularly in science, is underdeveloped.
67. Standards in writing are below average in Year 2, mainly because of well below average standards in one class, where there is much incomplete work. In most classes in Years 1 and 2, pupils are making good progress in writing through regular practice, such as recording news and contributing to the diary of the class mascot. There is outstanding progress, among both lower-attaining and gifted and talented pupils, in one Year 2 class. A lower-attaining pupil in this class had improved his work from a below average standard at the beginning of the year to reach the nationally expected standard, and a pupil with a talent for writing had reached a standard close to that expected for an eleven-year-old. Teachers in Year 1 make good use of a modified word processor to support early writing skills, and there is good writing in subjects other than English in Year 2 in one class. By Year 6, most pupils compose texts to a below average standard, with limited vocabulary, and too many very short sentences. Higher-attaining pupils meet the nationally expected standard comfortably, with good vocabulary, paragraphing and punctuation. Some of these pupils' best writing was in guides to holiday resorts, which also made very good use of ICT. Too often, however, the writing tasks given to all pupils make too few demands on them, and they are often allowed simply to state an opinion without giving reasons for it.
68. Teaching during the inspection was satisfactory, with good features, in Years 1 and 2, and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Where the teaching is good, work is well matched to the range of learning needs in the class, teachers sustain a good pace of work, and pupils receive careful guidance through marking. Teachers in these classes choose texts well to interest pupils, and provide a good balance of activities to develop their speaking skills. One very good lesson in Year 2, which built on excellent teaching of writing across the year, enabled pupils to reach above average standards in reading, and to make relevant and confident contributions to discussion. Teachers in most classes throughout the school give pupils clear and skilful explanations of their work, though in a minority of classes this aspect of the work is only just satisfactory. Where the teaching is satisfactory, teachers keep closely to the structures of the National Literacy Strategy, and sometimes do not adapt it sufficiently to the needs of the class, for example, when pupils need extra time to complete writing to a good standard. Some of the work meets the needs of most pupils, but not those of the gifted and talented. Analysis of pupils' work showed unsatisfactory teaching of writing in a minority of classes in Years 1 and 2, and there were occasional weaknesses in managing time during the inspection in Years 3 to 6. Teaching assistants provide good support to pupils, but are sometimes not directly enough involved when the teacher is working with the whole class.
69. The recently appointed co-ordinator is well qualified, and has begun to observe teaching. Test results are carefully analysed and pupils' progress is tracked and recorded. Management of the subject is satisfactory, but is not yet enabling the school to provide consistently good teaching and learning for all of its pupils. Day-to-day assessment is often weak, and some marking, which at worst places ticks beside errors, does not provide sufficient encouragement and incentive for pupils to do their

best. Across the school, work in subjects other than English is not planned effectively to contribute to literacy skills, particularly in writing. There are examples of good use of computers to assist literacy throughout the school, but these do not form part of a clearly thought-out pattern of development. The school has built up a good collection of resources for English, including a broad collection of reading schemes and well-chosen books from other cultures, including West Africa and the Caribbean.

MATHEMATICS

70. Results in the Year 6 national tests in 2001 were below average, but close to the average achieved by similar schools. Standards of work seen during the inspection were also below average, but reflected good progress from these pupils' national test scores at the end of Year 2. Results in the 2001 national tests for Year 2 were well below average. The standard of pupils' work during the inspection showed some improvement on this, particularly among higher-attaining pupils, but was still below average overall.
71. There are no long-term differences between the standards reached by girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, and are helped by very effective support from teaching assistants. Pupils show good understanding of the work covered in the current year. However, across the school, more able pupils are not achieving as highly as they could because they are not being given the opportunity to cover more challenging work to extend and develop their mathematical thinking. Frequent changes of staff have affected the progress of pupils across the school. In all other respects, the school has made satisfactory improvement to its provision, with good improvements in the teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs.
72. There is a very broad range of standards in Year 2. Some higher-attaining pupils are working at above the level expected for their age, while a small number have serious learning difficulties and are still in the early stages of learning to count. Most pupils understand place value, number sequences and simple fractions. Most pupils entering Year 1 have reached broadly average standards in their number skills. They make steady progress, and their achievement over time is satisfactory. They count in twos and tens, and higher-attaining pupils record numbers up to 100. They read the time to the hour and half hour on an analogue clock and 12-hour digital clock. By Year 2, most pupils have secure knowledge of addition and subtraction and of odd and even numbers, and understand multiplication and division by grouping. Higher-attaining pupils are confident with numbers over 100, and use what they have learned to solve word problems. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in class, and those with the most serious problems receive excellent specialist teaching, closely and sensitively matched to their individual needs. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress, because they are given appropriate help through the good focus on vocabulary.
73. In Year 3, pupils work confidently, adding three-digit numbers by partitioning. They recognise multiples of 2, 5, and 10 and their common multiples. Year 4 and 5 pupils make sound progress. They know the relationship between units of capacity and how to express their answers in simple fractions. The work in their books shows that they understand place value, including two places of decimals and negative numbers, which they use to solve problems involving measuring temperature. By Year 6, pupils work confidently with numbers. For example, higher-attaining pupils carry out long division working to three places of decimals. They have made good progress in developing strategies for calculating, such as rounding, approximating and doubling and halving and

know the relationship between fractions, percentages and decimals.

74. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Mental and oral starters to mathematics lessons are well established. In the most successful lessons, pupils are well motivated and the activities are fast and fun. Teachers' planning takes into account pupils' different abilities and suitable work is set for different groups. However, in some lessons the match of tasks to pupils' different abilities is insufficiently refined, particularly when temporary supply teachers have not had time to get to know the class. In most lessons, teachers give clear explanations and emphasise mathematical language. This encourages pupils to use the correct terms when talking about their work.
75. In most lessons, pace and challenge are good, and teachers use different activities and time targets to ensure that pupils stay focused and work quickly. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils and, as a result, pupils concentrate well and are confident when asking or answering questions. Teaching assistants share the teachers' planning and are fully involved in supporting pupils who need their help at all stages of the lessons, making very detailed assessment of pupils' learning. Teachers vary activities in order to repeat facts and still maintain interest. They build up from what the pupils know and understand to introduce more challenging work. For example, pupils in Year 2 described and compared numbers using mathematical vocabulary correctly and confidently to make up well-defined word problems for each other.
76. Marking is not consistent, and, although worksheets are marked, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use marking to improve their work. Where numeracy is used in other subjects, such as geography, science and design and technology, it makes a satisfactory contribution to learning, but the application of numeracy across the school is not planned in sufficient detail. There is some use of ICT, but it is not yet having an effect on standards in mathematics.
77. Leadership and management are good, and the appointment of a co-ordinator since the last inspection has been a key factor in the development of the subject. The school makes effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy to provide a consistent framework for teaching, and teaching assistants have been more effective in classroom support. The co-ordinator has suitable priorities to develop the subject further.

SCIENCE

78. Standards in the Year 2 and Year 6 national tests in 2001 were well below average. Standards in work seen during the inspection showed some improvement, but were still below average in both years. There are no long-term differences in the standards reached by boys and girls, and pupils with special needs and with English as an additional language make good progress by Year 6. Overall, pupils' achievements in Year 6 are satisfactory, but a significant proportion in Year 2 are achieving less than they should. Standards are very similar to those at the time of the last inspection, and need to be improved further, particularly in experimental work, and in provision for higher-attaining pupils.
79. Pupils in Year 6 make straightforward observations of the outcomes of practical work, and record them on charts and simple graphs. They understand scientific concepts such as *friction*, *gradient* and *gravity*. However, there is too little progression between their work and that carried out in younger classes, and this has restricted their progress over time. Pupils in Year 5 during the inspection, for example, were beginning to carry out investigations with care and accuracy, and understood the need to ensure that tests are fair. There was no clear extension from this in the work undertaken in Year 6.

Pupils in Year 3 were reaching good standards in their work on growth, taking delight in watching their beans and cress grow, and regularly measuring the rate of growth of their bean shoots. These pupils were taking pride in their work, which was helping to raise their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils in Years 4 to 6, however, have too few opportunities to design their own experiments or to record their work in a scientific way, using appropriate vocabulary and diagrams. As a result, work in science is not making an adequate contribution to literacy and numeracy skills.

80. By Year 2, most pupils can make simple observations and are beginning to learn scientific facts, such as that pushes and pulls are types of forces, and that shadows change when light moves. Some work has good features, for example in close observation of the diet of snails, and pupils are sometimes excited by their work, developing a sense of wonder at the range of minibeasts. However, most pupils' limited speaking and listening skills make it very difficult for them to attempt any explanation, however tentative, of what they have observed. Higher-attaining pupils only occasionally work to an above average standard, and standards in Year 2 have been affected by the turnover of staff. There are weaknesses in the presentation of much of pupils' work, and some is left unfinished.
81. Teaching during the inspection was satisfactory overall, with some good teaching in Years 1 and 2. Analysis of pupils' work, however, showed that there had been some unsatisfactory teaching over the course of the year, particularly in the scope of work for higher-attaining pupils, and in assessment and marking. Lessons during the inspection were well planned, and led to satisfactory learning across all aspects of the National Curriculum, though pupils' skills in designing experiments were limited as they had not had enough practice at this during the year. Where the teaching is good, teachers have good subject knowledge, use questions effectively, pace their lessons well and have high expectations of the pupils in terms of behaviour and learning. In a minority of lessons, time is not managed well, and teachers are too tolerant of poor behaviour when pupils are working in groups. Teachers do not use assessment and marking effectively to help pupils improve their work.
82. The co-ordinator is new to the role, and has made a satisfactory start in monitoring teaching and learning. However, long-term planning does not yet provide for the systematic development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, particularly in investigations and in designing experiments. The library was used very well in one lesson during the inspection, but is not contributing effectively to learning across the school. Information and communication technology, the school grounds and the local environment are under-used.

ART AND DESIGN

83. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are broadly average, and have good features. Most pupils make satisfactory progress, particularly when experimenting with a wide range of art forms, and higher-attaining pupils achieve good standards of composition. The learning of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory, and boys and girls achieve equally well. Overall, standards and achievement in art and design are satisfactory. There have been some improvements in the quality of teaching and in pupils' attitudes to work since the last inspection, but standards are broadly the same.
84. There is considerable variation in the quality of work in Years 1 and 2. Most pupils paint well, using a range of forms. Year 1 pupils paint portraits of themselves, and have produced painted collages of fruits in response to 'Green Bananas' by Nina Squires. Year 2 pupils have painted effective bird mobiles and thoughtful illustrations of characters from their reading. There is some good three-dimensional work where pupils have made and painted Aztec totem poles. Most of the other work is of broadly average quality, and includes some computer-generated painting of houses, and design work, linked with learning about William Morris in history. This work is finished well, in appliqué work on silk. However, pupils' basic skills in drawing, design and the use of clay are less well-developed, and sometimes weak.
85. There is a good range of drawing and painting by pupils from Years 3 to 6. Painting is of a good standard, but the quality of drawing is more variable, and is often below average. Year 3 pupils have used sponges well in paintings creating the mood of autumn through colour. There is a good sense of movement and colour balance in Year 5 pupils' pictures of Kenyan figures. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 interpret and respond very well through their paintings to music, photographs and the work of artists. Good examples are paintings creating atmosphere by pupils in Year 5, such as 'My idea of heaven' and the landscapes inspired by Altaplano II by Year 6 pupils. The quality of work in pupils' sketch books, however, indicates that too little time is given to developing basic drawing techniques using pencil, charcoal and pastels. There are, however, good drawings on display. Pupils reach average standards in design and in collage, and make satisfactory progress in the development of design. In Year 3, pupils have created patterns based on primary colours and in Year 6 pupils have developed their own strong designs based on Indian art. Pupils in Year 5 showed a good sense of design when composing still life groups to be photographed with a digital camera.
86. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, and sometimes good. Most lessons are carefully planned to allow pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding. In a lesson introducing still life as an art form, pupils worked well together to create still life compositions. The lesson was challenging because pupils had to appraise their own progress and improve their compositions as they increased the number of factors to be taken into account. Lessons are well managed by teachers, creating a secure environment in which to experiment, and teaching assistants give effective support to pupils with special educational needs. A particular feature is the quality of pupils' interpretation of their work, and the respect with which they listen to and learn from others. For example, in a lesson on modelling in plasticine, pupils described their models to the rest of the class, and higher-attaining pupils gave reasons for their successes and failures with the medium. Teachers use a good range of stimulating resources, and teach painting well. Teaching is less effective in developing drawing skills, and there are too few opportunities for printing, design and three-dimensional work. Very good displays throughout the school give pupils opportunities to evaluate

their own progress. Pupils enjoy art lessons. Their behaviour is good and their interest and concentration contribute significantly to their learning.

87. Although the number of books devoted to art in the library is limited, the overall quality and quantity of illustrated fiction and non-fiction books are above average. An excellent reference resource is the picture trail. There is a large number of prints of famous paintings on display in the school corridors. These form a trail which pupils follow, looking for specific features and answering questions which help them to understand and interpret the pictures. Discussions make a good contribution to literacy skills by helping pupils to make their meaning clear in words, but there is little use of numeracy. Information and communication technology is used well in some lessons, and could be developed further.
88. Leadership and management are satisfactory, ensuring that pupils have a broadly based curriculum in art and design. However, there are no consistent procedures for assessing and guiding progress, and this limits achievement, particularly among higher-attaining pupils. The range of artists, techniques and materials, however, makes a very good contribution to cultural development. Pupils have good opportunities to reflect on their work and on art in a range of societies.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

89. Standards are broadly average in Years 2 and 6. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were below average and progress was unsatisfactory. There is now greater emphasis on designing and evaluation.
90. It was not possible to observe teaching in Years 1 and 2, but analysis of pupils' work showed broadly average standards, with evidence of good teaching. Pupils in Year 2 have made puppets and moving vehicles. Their design plans are detailed, including the materials they intend to use. They evaluate their work and it is well displayed, showing examples of the whole process. Work has been carefully planned to link with other subjects. By Year 6, pupils have carried out a range of projects, including sandwich making and designing and making monsters that move with pneumatic systems. Year 4 pupils have visited the local technology college, where they made toys using cam mechanisms. They have studied a wide variety of money containers and ways of joining materials prior to designing and making their own. Links with music are made through the design and construction of musical instruments. Work in Year 6 has been affected by staffing difficulties. However, pupils have completed a range of projects involving design and selection of materials, for example to make slippers, to broadly average standards, and have completed a portfolio of work that many will take to an interview at the technology college.
91. Teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory overall. Analysis of work in Years 3 to 6 over the year shows that the quality of teaching and learning in the longer term is satisfactory, and sometimes good. Lessons are well planned and materials carefully prepared. Teachers give clear explanations and demonstrate work well so that pupils know what is expected of them. In some lessons, however, this phase lasts too long, so that pupils get restless and are keen to try out their ideas. Pupils of different abilities have a positive attitude to design and technology and take pride in their work. The pupils talk with enthusiasm about the processes involved in design and technology and what they have found out. On the other hand, the high turnover of staff and the need to rely on temporary supply teachers have caused some interruptions to teaching and learning, particularly in one Year 6 class, where some designs have been poorly made up and left incomplete.

92. The subject is well led and managed, and there is good support and guidance for teachers. The co-ordinator has developed a scheme of work based on national guidance, which provides a sound basis for teachers' planning and is having a positive impact on standards. This marks an improvement since the last inspection. The good presentation of their best work and evaluations of designs ensure that the subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' literacy, and measurement allows satisfactory application of numeracy skills. There are good resources to support pupils' work, including control technology. Pupils have won several prizes in local competitions, and the subject provides a good focus for co-operation with the technology college, to which many pupils transfer at the end of Year 6.

GEOGRAPHY

93. Standards are broadly average in Years 2 and 6, but the learning of all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, has been affected by the school's staffing difficulties. Nevertheless, the school has improved its planning for the subject, and overall standards are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. There are no significant differences in the achievement of girls and boys.
94. Standards in Year 2 are significantly higher in one class than the other. Analysis of pupils' work shows that this reflects both a high proportion of special educational needs in one class and differences in the quality of teaching over the year. By the end of Year 2, pupils have reached broadly average overall standards in their study of their own and other communities, in an imaginary Scottish island and in the hill farming community of Touraro in Mexico. Pupils can explain some of the differences between these societies and their own urban environment, and higher-attaining pupils give reasons for the differences. Pupils in Year 6 have a satisfactory understanding of how environmental factors affect the economy and everyday life in Kenya, and have produced individually researched projects on skiing locations across the world. These are well structured, with a good level of geographical detail. Pupils reach average standards in most other aspects of geography that they have studied in Years 3 to 6, with some good analysis of patterns of litter in the school grounds in Year 4. However, some work, including the study of water in Year 5, is not sufficiently challenging to enable pupils to build on what they already know.
95. Teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory, and ranged in individual lessons from satisfactory to very good. Most lessons are well planned with clearly expressed lesson objectives. This enable pupils to build on their previous learning and to understand the purpose of each lesson. Teachers choose imaginative approaches to teaching, including role-play, which enable pupils to take an active part in their learning. As the inspection progressed, temporary supply teachers managed the more difficult classes effectively, and began to pitch work at the right level for pupils, including those with special educational needs. There is good use of ICT to promote research skills in Year 3, though some of the research work for older pupils is focused too much on retrieving facts rather than evaluating them, and is only just satisfactory. There was evidence of unsatisfactory teaching in pupils' work over the year in some classes. Some work is incomplete, and marking is unsatisfactory. In one folder, a tick was placed beside the basic error that Mount Etna was in the Alps. There are too few comments on pupils' work, and they do not provide enough guidance on ways of improving it. There is insufficient extension work for higher-attaining pupils.

96. Learning in the classroom is well supported by a good range of visits, both locally and to the Isle of Wight in Year 6. The school has very good library resources and sufficient reference texts to support the curriculum. Whilst pupils have adequate numeracy skills for geography work, standards and progress are adversely affected by below-average writing skills. In some classes, teachers respond by using worksheets that require pupils to write only a few words rather than to write simple texts or make notes. This holds progress back further, as pupils do not have enough practice to improve.
97. Leadership and management are satisfactory. A revised scheme of work has enabled teachers to provide satisfactory learning opportunities, with more local geography and fieldwork than at the time of the last inspection. The approach to other societies makes a good contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development. Sound assessment procedures have been set up, although they are not yet used effectively to match work to the needs of all of the pupils, particularly those capable of reaching high standards. Comments on standards in annual reports to parents are often weaker in geography than in other subjects.

HISTORY

98. Normal history lessons were not taking place as teachers were concentrating on geography. Evidence from discussion with pupils and teachers, and analysis of pupils' work, indicate that standards are close to average in Years 2 and 6. Most pupils make satisfactory progress, and higher-attaining pupils make good progress, partly through making good use of their reading and writing skills. The learning of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is satisfactory. Boys and girls achieve equally well. There has been a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, chiefly because of improvements in long-term planning, but standards are broadly similar.
99. By the end of Year 2, most pupils develop satisfactory research skills, for example in work about Florence Nightingale. Higher-attaining pupils explain her part in the changing role of women in society. Pupils make links between history and other subjects, for example, art. They understand the design work of William Morris and have made designs of their own. Such activities help them develop sound skills in observation, and an eye for similarities and differences between modern life and life in the past. On the other hand, higher-attaining pupils reach only above-average standards in parts of their work, and their skills are not extended systematically.
100. Pupils continue to develop good research skills in Years 3 to 6. In Year 3, pupils find out about life in Ancient Egypt and, in Year 5, pupils research the important events and inventions from 1950 to the present day, using evidence from reference books, videos and the Internet. Pupils in Year 4 develop satisfactory skills of analysis and interpretation by studying old photographs to decide what they tell us about life in the past; this learning links effectively with their satisfactory general knowledge and understanding of local history. By Year 4, pupils make personal timelines to help develop further their sense of chronology. Pupils' knowledge about the everyday lives of ordinary people and the reasons for improvements over time is satisfactory. Year 6 pupils, for example, know about everyday life and the main events in Tudor England. Higher-attaining pupils give reasons for the short life-span of people at that time. Most Year 6 pupils have a satisfactory sense of history over time.
101. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, and some uses lively and practical approaches that lead to good learning. Pupils studying World War II build shelters, and those studying the Romans build models of Roman baths. The school organises a Victorian

day and a Greek day. A drama company introduced Shakespeare to Year 6 and school presentations, such as 'All Along Down Along Watling Street' establish a sense of history over time. There are effective links with other subjects. Year 5 pupils, for example, research the technological inventions of the past 50 years. Classroom topic work is effectively consolidated with visits to places such as Lullingstone Roman villa. The school uses its own history as a starting point for learning local history, and pupils analyse and interpret the features of parts of the school buildings thoughtfully. Teachers are beginning to develop social and environmental dimensions. In the topic 'Invaders and Settlers', most pupils understand the reasons why people move from one place to another. Pupils enjoy history and their behaviour is good. Their positive attitudes contribute to their learning.

102. However, in most classes writing is not used effectively to consolidate historical understanding, or to help pupils develop their literacy skills. Pupils often fill in worksheets rather than write, and most marking is so limited as to be unsatisfactory. The ICT suite is used well in some classes, and higher-attaining pupils particularly benefit from this, but ICT could contribute more to learning in the subject with more consistent planning. The library has a very good collection of books, and supports teaching and learning effectively. During the inspection, pupils received an expert introduction to the archaeology of the Indus Valley from a visiting specialist.
103. Leadership and management are satisfactory, and the revised scheme of work has helped the school maintain a satisfactory pattern of learning in the difficult circumstances it has faced since the last inspection. Teachers provide good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through considering historical issues in the context of the lives of real people. Research opportunities have been improved since the last inspection report. Assessment procedures have been introduced, but are not yet fully effective, and pupils' achievements in history are not fully reported in some annual reports to parents.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

104. Standards are broadly average in Year 2 and Year 6, and there was evidence of rising standards during the inspection. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress overall. Teachers in most lessons adapt work well to these pupils' needs, and they receive good support from teaching assistants. However, in a minority of lessons, pupils with particularly serious learning difficulties need more support than the school can provide. Gifted and talented pupils reach high standards in a small number of special projects, such as preparing a PowerPoint presentation for assembly on Christmas around the world, but they are not always fully stretched in lessons, and could be achieving more. There was no significant difference during the inspection between the standards reached by boys and girls. There have been significant changes in the standards expected nationally in ICT since the last inspection. The school has kept pace with these. Overall, improvement since the last inspection, and the standards achieved by pupils by Year 6, are satisfactory.
105. By the end of Year 2, pupils can operate a computer independently and save and print their work. All pupils use the computer to produce art-work, often of a good standard. Higher-attaining pupils modify basic texts by changing fonts and adding features such as word-art, use the computer to make good graphs, and label them well. Lower-attaining pupils reach close to average standards for their age, and benefit from close support from teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils with special educational needs reach satisfactory standards in relation to their learning difficulties. They do well in most

classes, particularly when they are actively involved in group activities, but a small number have such limited basic learning skills that they do not learn effectively when they are not supported directly by an adult. Standards in Year 2 are above average in one class, but below average in the other.

106. Pupils in Year 6 can use a spreadsheet, plan and make a simple presentation using PowerPoint, and investigate topics using the Internet. They can make simple evaluations of Internet sites and items of software, though they often simply record whether a program is good or not without saying why. Effective support ensures that all pupils can use computers confidently by Year 6, and pupils with special educational needs use the Internet accurately. Higher-attaining pupils had produced very well designed brochures for holiday resorts, and used formulae well in their spreadsheets. They are not, however, working to these high standards consistently enough, and at times work less effectively in school than they do at home. The contribution of other subjects to ICT skills is underdeveloped, particularly in science, though there is some good use of a digital camera in art and design. There is a small collection of books on computers in the library, but it is not making the contribution it should be to work in ICT, particularly for higher-attaining pupils.
107. Teaching during the inspection was satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 and very good in Years 1 and 2. The teaching of one class in Years 1 and 2, however, benefited from very effective work from a temporary supply teacher, and was not typical of the teaching this class had received over the year. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 plan an interesting range of learning activities that are very well matched to the learning needs of the pupils. They make very effective use of specialised programs such as a modified word-processor that provides extra support for lower-attaining pupils. They involve pupils very effectively in evaluating their own learning, and assess progress closely. Pupils with special educational needs are given very good support, and are included in all activities. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is effectively planned to ensure steady development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding of computers, and includes a sound range of activities in each lesson. Planning does not, however, consistently provide fully demanding work for higher-attaining pupils. Support from teaching assistants and the technician is effective with individual pupils, and most of the time when they are working with groups. However, there was some misbehaviour when staff who are not qualified teachers had to assume sole responsibility for pupils.
108. Management is satisfactory. It ensures that teachers and teaching assistants are confident in using computers, and enables pupils to develop sound skills. The school is building a bank of successful teaching methods and useful resources, including materials of high quality to support modern foreign languages. However, older pupils' skills are not yet assessed systematically, and some good features, such as the extension projects for higher-attaining pupils, are not used consistently enough. There is a computer club, but it is open only to older pupils, and attendance has recently fallen. Overall, however, the school has established a pattern of improvement in ICT, and is well placed to develop this further.

MUSIC

109. Standards are above average in Years 2 and 6. Most pupils make good progress, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Overall, achievement in music is good, and standards and the quality of teaching have shown good improvement since the last inspection.

110. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 sing well together, with a secure sense of rhythm, although their sense of pitch is weaker. Year 1 pupils compose accurate three-beat patterns in groups and perform them. Year 2 pupils are developing a simple understanding of graphic scores, and most match sounds to pictures. Pupils create their own graphic scores, including a playground slide with notes ascending in steps, and descending in glissando style. Pupils perform their scores accurately on xylophones. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 listen carefully to music and are developing appraisal skills as part of learning to perform their own compositions and in singing.
111. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress in singing together. By Year 6, pupils have a good sense of rhythm, clear intonation and can sing loudly, softly and expressively. Pupils in Year 5 recognise repeated phrases in songs and perform them accurately on xylophones. They compose and perform a wide range of repeated rhythms. Year 6 pupils read simple notation. They know some note values and use this knowledge to write eight bar pieces with repeated rhythms. Pupils perform their own compositions on keyboards, glockenspiels and xylophones and most reach above average standards. Listening and appraising skills are also above average. More than 40 pupils learn the recorder. The senior recorder group played 'When a knight won his spurs' sensitively and accurately in two parts in assembly, keeping together well.
112. The quality of teaching is very good, and benefits from the advanced skills of a specialist music teacher throughout the school. Lessons are carefully planned, well structured and well managed. Pupils learn music confidently in a secure learning environment. Good standards are achieved through a balance in lessons between performing skills, such as playing and singing, and activities to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of music. There is regular practice in listening and appraisal skills. Lessons are lively and imaginative. All these features were combined in a Year 3 lesson, where pupils learned about pitch by playing a game of standing up and sitting down as notes rise and fall. They listened to excerpts from 'The Nutcracker Suite' and 'Peer Gynt', decided whether the music was high or low, and what feelings the music generated for them. Pupils drew musical sounds and participated in a taped musical quiz about pitch. The lesson ended with the song, 'Those magnificent men in their flying machines'. Pupils enjoy music, concentrate well and participate whole-heartedly. These positive attitudes enhance learning.
113. There are sufficient reference books in the library to support learning in music, but the most effective support is through the wide range of extra-curricular activities. There are three recorder groups, a choir and a steel band. There is a good number of annual concerts throughout the year and pupils take part in the local musical festival. Year 5 pupils are involved in composing music on an environmental theme through a link with the Canterbury Symphony Orchestra. Pupils have sufficient literacy and numeracy skills to support learning in music. There is, however, little use of ICT in music lessons.
114. Leadership and management are very good, and the scheme of work provides a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils. There are good assessment procedures. Pupils' knowledge and skills are recorded and analysed, and the results are used effectively to assist in the planning of lessons and to report progress to parents. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

115. Because of the timetable, it was not possible to gather enough evidence to report fully on standards in this subject. Evidence gathered on ball skills, games and swimming indicated that standards are broadly average and sometimes better, particularly as

pupils prepare to move on to secondary school. A slight fall from the standards reached during the last inspection has been caused by the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs, particularly in relation to behaviour, some of whom have joined the school at a late stage in their primary education. Standards benefit greatly from the wide range of learning opportunities outside lessons. These involve large numbers of pupils from Year 2 onwards, and provide good opportunities for gifted and talented pupils to develop their skills, both through a high standard of coaching and in competition with other schools.

116. The quality of teaching during the inspection was satisfactory, with good features. In one lesson, it was very good. Teachers manage their classes well and relationships are good. Generally, pupils respond quickly to instructions and the pace of lessons is good. Several older pupils find the freedom of outdoor work difficult to cope with. This poses a serious challenge to teachers and teaching assistants, which they handle very well, ensuring that pupils with behavioural difficulties do not spoil the learning opportunities of others. Teachers and pupils wear appropriate clothing. Lessons are well planned and take into account the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. All pupils are integrated well in physical education classes and co-operate well when organising themselves in team games.
117. Where the teaching was very good, in Year 1, it was carefully planned, and learning aims were shared with the pupils, who knew exactly what was required of them. There was strong emphasis on correct technique, a good pace of work and good use of praise to reinforce learning. Pupils responded very well, and reached above average standards in the skills taught during the lesson. Swimming is well taught, with work matched to the needs of all pupils, including beginners and more advanced swimmers who develop their strokes. While standards in swimming are broadly average overall, however, roughly a tenth of pupils in Year 6 are still unable to swim the nationally recommended distance of 25 metres. The quality of teaching in extra-curricular activities is very good. Coaches often have professional or international experience. They combine high levels of skill with relaxed but purposeful relationships with pupils and very good communication.
118. The curriculum makes good provision for all aspects of physical education including, in Year 6, outdoor adventurous activities in a residential visit to the Isle of Wight. Swimming is introduced from Year 3 in the school's outdoor pool, and some of the pupils who could not swim 25 metres had recently joined the school. There is an extensive and interesting range of learning activities outside lessons for all pupils from Year 2 onwards. The gymnastics club for Year 2 pupils is very popular, and older pupils take part in football, netball, gymnastics, judo and summer sports. The school has good links with a local professional football club. These activities are so popular that the school has had to set up a rota system for pupils. Pupils are involved in a wide range of competitive sports, including tag rugby, racing rounders, cricket and athletics. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are fully involved in extra-curricular activities. Two halls, a swimming pool and a large field provide good accommodation for the many activities in which the school is involved.
119. The recently appointed co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management. She is well qualified, sustains this broad range of provision very effectively, and gives guidance and a clear lead to her colleagues. She has identified strengths in current provision and areas that need to be developed, including assessment and the use of ICT.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

120. Pupils reach broadly average standards throughout the school, and their achievements are satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and benefit from the emphasis on stories in the teaching. Higher-attaining pupils could be more challenged in some lessons, particularly in their written work, but many lessons give them good scope to develop their understanding of the significance of religious experience. Boys and girls work well together and are equally involved. Overall, the picture is similar to that found at the last inspection.
121. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the special nature of religion, particularly in relation to Christianity. Most can recall key elements of the Christmas and Easter stories. They are beginning to develop a satisfactory understanding of stories from other faiths, for example Rama and Sita from the Hindu Ramayana. Literacy skills are helped through writing their ideas about religious stories and events, such as the Nativity, but marking does not correct punctuation and spelling errors, and some glaring factual mistakes are missed. Pupils with special needs are supported well – for example, by adults helping them to structure their work and responses so that they can play a full part in lessons. By the end of Year 2, pupils are gaining an understanding of how special signs and symbols are related to different religions. They understand the significance of sacred scriptures in various faiths, and have made their own Torah scrolls which are displayed in the classroom.
122. By Year 6 pupils have extended their knowledge and understanding of world faiths and considered a broad range of moral and social issues in a religious context. These include the idea of service in Sikhism, the role of feelings and emotions in religious faith, and key features of the Jewish year. Pupils demonstrate balance when expressing views from different perspectives, and some make thoughtful and perceptive comments.
123. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, and it has good features. Teachers have sound, and sometimes good, knowledge of the subject, and most lessons are taught with enthusiasm and a strong sense of purpose. This brings out a good response from pupils – for example, through lively dramatisation of feelings, using facial expressions and body language, but no words, in Year 5. Successful lessons also involve very clear explanations to pupils of features of religious faiths, instilling respect as well as understanding, and there is good use of well-chosen videos. Overall, teaching in religious education makes a very good contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures and faiths, and there is a good series of visits, which includes Anglican and Baptist churches, the Vaisakhi celebrations in Gravesend, and a Sikh temple. On the other hand, pupils' written work often consists of undemanding worksheets, and, particularly in Years 3 to 6, the subject does not contribute enough to literacy. Information and communication technology and the library are not used systematically to promote learning.
124. Management is satisfactory. Planning ensures systematic coverage of the Kent Agreed Syllabus for religious education, and the school has built up a good collection of resources, though some, such as religious objects, were under-used during the inspection. Teaching and learning are not, however, monitored closely enough to ensure that religious education contributes as much as it could to pupils' literacy skills or to the standards reached by the highest-attaining pupils.