

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **IGHTHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Ightham, Sevenoaks

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118293

Headteacher: Mrs Lesley Ann Iannidinaro

Reporting inspector: Paul Baxter  
25217

Dates of inspection: 14-17 October 2002

Inspection number: 247866

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Oldbury Lane Ightham Sevenoaks Kent
Postcode:	TN15 9DD
Telephone number:	01732 882405
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Christopher Couldrey
Date of previous inspection:	October 2000

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25217	Paul Baxter	Registered inspector	Areas of Learning for Children in the Foundation Stage  English  Music  Religious education	The school's results and achievements  How well is the school led and managed?
9487	Frances Hurd	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?
1224	Graham Todd	Team inspector	Special educational needs  Science  Design and technology  Geography  History	How well are pupils' taught?
30457	David Evans	Team inspector	Educational inclusion  Mathematics  Art and design  Information and communication technology  Physical education	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This seven class primary school for pupils aged between four and eleven years is below average in size and serves the rural community of Ightham in Kent. It is a popular, growing school with 145 full-time pupils of whom 76 are boys and 69 are girls; the vast majority of children having previously attended the adjoining pre-school facility. Most pupils come from the local area, which contains mainly privately-owned housing, and from socio-economic backgrounds that are well above average overall. At present there are 13 pupils with special educational needs in the school, a well below average number. Most have specific learning needs, and a few have either profound, emotional or physical needs. The proportion of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need is above that found nationally. No pupils come from homes where English is an additional language. Three pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds, a below average proportion compared to that found nationally. No pupils are registered as eligible for free school meals, and this is low in relation to the national average. Most pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are above those found nationally. A few year groups contain a greater proportion of boys compared to girls and more pupils with special educational needs than in other year groups.

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

Ightham Primary is a very effective school with significant strengths, particularly the very good teaching and strong leadership. The school has made substantial improvements in the issues identified in the last full Section 10 inspection report and no longer has 'serious weaknesses'. Under the guidance of a very capable headteacher, the school has improved its commitment to raising pupils' attainment, especially in English, mathematics and science where standards are well above average. It is most successful in using its strongly shared ethos of care and effort to promote the pupils' very good attitudes to learning and overall very good achievement. In response to the headteacher's rigorous leadership, very well supported by senior colleagues and governors, provision is very good in most areas and standards continue to rise and pupils are on course to meet their targets. The school provides good value for money.

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

- The outstanding personal leadership by the headteacher is strongly supported by staff and governors. Together they share an excellent commitment for improvement and capacity to succeed that consistently promotes the pupils' enjoyment and success in learning.
- The pupils' very good attitudes and relationships are strongly promoted by the staff and ethos of the school and they enrich their work and progress.
- Standards are very high in English at the end of Year 2, and they are well above average overall by the end of Year 6. The pupils' advanced literacy skills significantly aid their learning across the curriculum.
- All pupils achieve very well, in relation to their prior attainment, by the time they leave the school.
- Excellent moral and social development sustains the pupils' positive attitudes and learning.
- Very good teaching promotes the pupils' very good achievement, especially in the key subjects of English, mathematics and science.

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

- Although improved in word processing, the pupils' attainment in ICT is below average at the end of Year 6, and ICT is not used sufficiently to promote provision and learning across the curriculum.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has continued to make good improvement since the visit of Her Majesty's Inspector in May of this year. Overall improvement since the last full Section 10 inspection in October 2000 has been very good in almost all areas. Under the inspired leadership of the headteacher, fully and capably supported by dedicated staff and governors, the school has done remarkably well in making significant advances in rectifying all of the serious weaknesses completely, and most of the key issues identified by the previous inspection. In particular, teaching has been lifted from unsatisfactory to very good, pupils' attainment has been raised from average to well above average and in Years 3 to 6, underachievement has been lifted to very good achievement. Already this term, the teachers' increasingly effective use of the new ICT suite indicates that the pupils' skills in ICT are also improving. A strong team approach underpins the headteacher's clear educational vision for the future and the school is extremely well placed to continue this improvement.

## 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
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	B	A	B	C
Mathematics	C	B	A	A
Science	C	C	B	C

Key	
Well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

Inspection shows standards continuing to rise in response to strong teaching. This is shown in the performance of Year 6 pupils in this year's National Curriculum tests, seen in the table above. Standards are well above average overall and most pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and higher attainers, achieve very well. Children achieve very well in reception and progress is never less than good in all areas of learning. They do best in enhancing their communication and social skills. Nearly all children attain the early goals in their creative and physical development and exceed expectations in all other areas of learning. Pupils currently in Year 2 are on course to attain standards that are well above average overall. Standards are very high in reading and speaking and listening and are well above average in most subjects, including English overall and in mathematics and science. Standards are above average in geography and music and they are average in ICT and physical education. Achievement is very good overall through Years 1 to 2. The pupils' very good achievement is strengthened in Years 3 to 6 by their substantial literacy skills that support new learning through discussion, reading and writing across the range of subjects. By the end of Year 6 attainment is well above average and achievement is very good in most subjects, particularly in English and mathematics and increasingly in science, due to improved teaching. Attainment is above average and achievement is good in geography and music. The pupils' attainment is average and their achievement is satisfactory in physical education. Attainment is below average and achievement is unsatisfactory in ICT. However, improved teaching and increasing use of the new ICT suite are raising the pupils' skills rapidly.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils enjoy school and are keen to succeed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good overall. Pupils follow the school rules and the teachers' expectations carefully and these support their work and progress.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils assume responsibility well, but there is scope to promote their independent learning skills more fully.
Attendance	Very good, substantially above the national average.

The pupils' attitudes and values are supported by a strong ethos that promotes high expectations of learning.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

Teaching has been re-established as a strength of the school and teaching and learning are very good in all parts of the school. The teaching in most lessons observed was very good, with over three-quarters of all lessons being good or better. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. The overall quality of teaching is aided significantly by the small size of the single year group classes that enables the teachers to challenge all pupils accurately. Teaching in reception is typified by very good planning of the curriculum and by the teacher's and learning support assistants' very good knowledge and understanding of the needs of younger children. Teaching and learning are very good in Years 1 and 2 and are underpinned by detailed lesson planning, and sharp yet warm questioning. Teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 are also very strong, and are enriched by the teachers' rigorous promotion of the pupils' significant literacy and numeracy skills to support learning in other subjects.

Teachers are very skilled in challenging potentially higher attainers and in meeting the individual requirements of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, and this is raising standards. English and literacy and mathematics and numeracy are taught particularly well and learning support assistants are deployed very effectively to assess and support the pupils' progress. Due to the timing of the inspection it was not possible to judge the overall quality of teaching in design and technology. The teaching is satisfactory in physical education and in ICT, where the new ICT suite is bringing improvement. Teaching is either good or very good in all other subjects. The teachers assess and mark the pupils' work very carefully and give very supportive advice that has a very positive influence on the pupils' learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall, strengthened by a very good curriculum for children in their reception year and very good provision in several areas including literacy, numeracy and personal and social education, but restricted by insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn across the curriculum by using computers.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good; sensitive support ensures that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and are fully included in the life of the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall; excellent provision for the pupils' moral and social development and good spiritual and cultural development help to sustain the pupils' very positive attitudes towards their learning. The pupils are well-prepared for life in Britain's multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good overall. Excellent procedures prohibit upsets from bullying. Very good provision for pupils' health and welfare. Good assessment, especially in literacy and numeracy, underpins consistent progress, but scope to use assessment more effectively in a few subjects to improve the pupils' skills.

The school's very supportive partnership with parents provides considerable enrichment to the pupils' achievement.

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

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good overall; excellent leadership by the headteacher, and very effective support from the senior management team and subject co-ordinators. These are strongly promoting consistent teaching and learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Wisely led by an experienced chair and with informed advice from chairs of committees, the governing body ensures statutory provision and acts very effectively as a critical friend to the staff of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has targeted improvement very effectively by sharply evaluating the success of provision in terms of its impact on pupils' attainment. Rigorous yet supportive observation and evaluation of teaching and learning has been instrumental in ensuring that pupils build consistently on previous learning.
The strategic use of resources	Most resources are used well, but insufficient use of computers in classrooms is restricting the benefits of the new ICT suite by limiting the opportunities for pupils to use and develop their skills to the full.

The accommodation and resources for learning are satisfactory overall. The new ICT suite is a significant improvement but the classrooms for Year 5 and 6 pupils are small and the school has plans to replace these in the near future. The school carries forward significant funds to sustain seven classes. The headteacher and governors have used the principles of best value well in using funds to rectify serious weaknesses. Their establishment of a good match of well-qualified staff to the demands of the curriculum has been a key factor in this improvement.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases the vast majority of parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They would feel comfortable about approaching the school with a problem.</li><li>• The children like school.</li><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li><li>• The children are expected to work hard and achieve their best and the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.</li><li>• The teaching is good and the school works closely with parents.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The amount of work given to pupils to do at home.</li><li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li><li>• The quality of the information provided by the school about how their children are getting on.</li></ul>

The inspection team support all of the parents' positive views expressed above. Inspectors consider that homework is set appropriately in accordance with school policy and national guidance and makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. The range and quality of activities outside lessons, especially music clubs, are good for a school of this size. The school provides very good information for parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Ightham is a rapidly growing school and this is resulting in variations in the range of prior attainments and needs of the pupils within the different year groups. Most children enter the school with levels of attainment that are above those found nationally. Standards in communication, language and literacy, especially speaking and listening skills, are at a higher level with standards in physical and creative development tending to be those that are least developed.
2. Young children are given very effective and sensitive support as they begin their life in school and the vast majority makes rapid gains in their learning. Achievement is very good overall and it is never less than good in all areas of learning in their reception year. The biggest gains are made in their personal and communication skills. The children respond very productively to the meticulously planned and very effective teaching and by the time they commence full-time schooling their positive enjoyment and success in learning are enriched by their developing and warm social skills.
3. By the time the pupils enter Year 1, learning has been successful and they have achieved very well overall, especially in their communication, language and literacy skills. Mathematics and numeracy and personal and social skills are other areas where learning is most effective. Attainment is above average in most areas. However, it is well above average in communication, language and literacy and average in their creative and physical development.
4. The pupils' attainment in National Curriculum tests and teachers' assessments for Year 2 pupils has continued to rise in recent years, particularly in writing and science, in response to improved teaching and planning of the curriculum. Standards have continued to improve in English and mathematics following the successful whole school emphasis on implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The pupils' scores in this year's tests show a well above average performance by pupils at the end of Year 2 in relation to the standards found nationally and an equally creditable performance in relation to the standards found in similar schools. The proportions of pupils reaching the higher than average levels have continued to rise in response to the teachers' increasing expectations of what pupils can and should attain.
5. The wider evidence base of inspection now shows that pupils currently in Year 2 are on course to attain well above average standards overall by the end of this school year. Standards in English are very high and they are well above average in most subjects by the end of Year 2. Standards are average in physical education and in ICT, where the quality of work is being lifted by the use of the new ICT suite. Taken together, these standards represent continued good improvement since the HMI inspection in May of this year and very good improvement since the last full inspection in October 2000. This has been accomplished by continuing improvements to the quality of teaching, the quality of teachers' planning and the level of consistent support provided for the pupils. These factors have enabled the pupils to build progressively on their previous learning.
6. In Years 1 and 2 achievement is very good overall. Learning is significantly enriched by the teachers' careful presentation of work that is closely matched to the pupils' prior attainment, enabling all pupils to be challenged at an appropriate level. This was seen to very good effect, for example, in literacy lessons, where standards are much higher than those identified at the time of the last inspection. Science too is an improving subject throughout the school, stemming from the headteacher's strong focus on raising standards and from improved planning.
7. Results in the National Curriculum tests and teachers' assessments for pupils in Year 6 in recent years have been lifted quite considerably. A falling trend seen from 1997 to 2000 has been reversed by the pupils' much improved performance last year and in this year's tests. This has been accomplished by the headteacher's and senior colleagues' efforts to raise expectations of

what pupils should attain in response to the identification of serious weaknesses at the time of the last full inspection in October 2000, and particularly the pupils' underachievement in Years 3 to 6. There has been a successful whole school focus on challenging all pupils to the full, including higher attainers, and this has led to a significant increase of the number of pupils attaining the higher than expected Level 5 standard in English, mathematics and science. In addition both this year's and last year's results in national tests for pupils in Year 6, when taken together, compare favourably with the standards found in similar schools. Comparisons between the pupils' scores in tests when in Year 2 with their performance in Year 6, both in last year's tests and those taken this year show the pupils' positive achievement in relation to their prior attainment as they have moved through the school.

8. Inspection shows equally positive and improving performance from all pupils across the range of prior attainments. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to attain well above average standards overall. This is a lower attaining year group than those normally found in the school for it contains a greater than usual number of pupils with specific learning needs. Nevertheless, in relation to the pupils' prior attainment this standard shows that most pupils are building effectively on their previous learning and are achieving very well overall by the time they leave the school. The pupils' attainment is well above average in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, history and religious education. It is above average in geography and music and it is average in physical education. Even though it has improved since the last inspection attainment is below average in ICT. The pupils' skills in ICT are improving rapidly now that the new ICT suite is in use. Their skills across the full strands of the subject, particularly in controlling and moving mechanisms using computers remain below average, however, due to the limited time pupils have so far had to develop their skills.
9. Pupils with special educational needs, especially those with significant needs, benefit from additional well-targeted attention from talented learning support assistants and by having their needs targeted and met well through strategies outlined in their individual educational plans. Their achievements are very carefully monitored by the special educational needs co-ordinator. Pupils with special educational needs and potentially higher attaining pupils also achieve very well by the time they leave the school. This analysis shows that standards of attainment continue to rise in response to consistently good and better teaching, detailed lesson planning, high expectations of achievement and by the teachers' rigorous and effective promotion and use of the pupils' significant literacy skills to enrich their learning across the curriculum.
10. The pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 was identified as a serious weakness at the time of the last full inspection. This is no longer the case for pupils achieve very well overall and in the majority of subjects, including English, mathematics and science, through Years 3 to 6. Their impressive achievement in language and literacy and their use of these skills in their oral and written work across the curriculum are key factors in sustaining their very good progress overall. Achievement is good in geography and music and it is satisfactory in physical education. Most pupils are now making satisfactory progress in ICT lessons, especially when working in the new ICT suite, but in the previous absence of sufficient resources, their achievement over time has been unsatisfactory. Their achievement in ICT continues to be restricted, however, for they have too few opportunities to work with the computers in the classrooms, to use and consolidate the skills already introduced in the ICT suite.
11. The agreed targets set for pupils to attain in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 are particularly challenging and reflect the teachers' increased expectations of pupils. The headteacher and teachers assess the pupils' work well and analyse their performance in the National Curriculum tests equally rigorously in the pursuit of higher standards. The teachers mark the pupils' work very thoroughly and identify clear and appropriate learning targets, in the guidance given in their books and at the beginning and end of all lessons. By carefully matching the level of challenge with the pupils' different levels of attainment teachers in all classes extend the pupils' skills successfully.
12. National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are implemented very effectively and consistently across the whole school. This has helped to raise the pupils' skills and enables pupils to use

these skills productively to support further learning in other subjects. The school's increasing focus on writing, the teachers' very strong promotion of discussion to aid learning in lessons and the use of large texts and specific technical vocabulary to share lesson intentions is promoting very good achievement in these literacy skills. At the same time these strategies are enriching the pupils' learning in other subjects: for example, in religious education when studying other faiths and in music when analysing symbols of notation. As a consequence overall attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing and spelling is at least well above average by the end of Year 6.

13. The pupils are also developing their numeracy skills very well. The teachers emphasise these skills rigorously and enjoyably at the beginning of all mathematics lessons and share specific expectations of learning with the pupils at the beginning and end of these lessons. The teachers all follow a consistent approach and this enables the pupils to build systematically on previous learning. As a result standards in mathematics, especially numeracy, are rising steadily. Standards in mathematics are well above average by the end of Years 2 and 6, reflecting very good achievement in response to very good teaching. Numeracy skills are developed further and support learning in other subjects: for example, when establishing accurate proportions during portrait painting in art and design and when counting the beat in music lessons. These skills are not supported sufficiently through the use of ICT, however, and pupils do not have enough opportunities to enrich their skills further by initiating their own lines of enquiry through independent research.
14. In recent years test results have indicated that girls have been outperforming boys. This was not apparent in the learning in lessons or in the samples of the pupils' work, indicating that any differences may be the result of differing levels of prior attainment rather than differences in the quality of learning. For example, in a few classes more boys than girls have special educational needs. The teachers and learning support assistants are skilled, however, in meeting the pupils' needs and ensure that all pupils learn successfully.

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

15. Pupils have very good attitudes towards learning in general and their school in particular, as noted when Her Majesty's Inspectorate visited the school earlier this year. Pupils greatly enjoy most of their lessons and are enthusiastic about all that their school has to offer them. Their interest and positive attitudes are a positive aid to learning. Pupils were respectful and attentive in assemblies: for instance, they were fascinated to see a Torah scroll displayed in a Year 3 class assembly. They listen attentively and concentrate well for long periods on the tasks they are given, needing very little supervision from adults. Pupils work well together whether in groups or pairs, and show no hesitation about working with pupils of the opposite gender. Young children in the reception class also demonstrate very good attitudes to school and their learning. They respond very productively to the caring adults who support them. Pupils with special educational needs, including a few with behavioural needs, receive sensitive support and also show very good attitudes to school. Throughout the school, pupils appreciate the consistency of the school's very effective spiritual provision that underpins their very good development.
16. Behaviour is very good, as observed by Her Majesty's Inspectorate earlier this year. There was a complete absence of any oppressive behaviour during this inspection, showing that pupils are developing well, responding positively to the school's strong moral and social provision. There have been no exclusions in the past year. Behaviour in class was never less than satisfactory, and mostly very good. In those very few lessons where it was only satisfactory it was because pupils had to sit and listen for too long, or their task was rather dry and uninspiring. Nevertheless, pupils still did whatever they were asked to do. Behaviour in the playground is very good. Pupils stop and listen very promptly when signalled to do so. Pupils enter and leave assemblies and lunchtimes in an orderly manner. They move quietly and sensibly around the school; they hold doors open and are always keen to see if they can help visitors in any way. Reception children also behave very well in class, in their outdoor play area and around the school.
17. Pupils' personal development is very good, as noted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate earlier this year. This is largely the result of the excellent provision the school provides for their social and moral development. Pupils are notably articulate. They know they can rely on the adults in the

school community to listen to them courteously and treat their comments with respect. Most pupils are capable of sharing in higher degrees of personal responsibility if these were more widely available by using the computers and library facilities more independently. Relationships within the school are very good, both between adults and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves. They are keen to help each other, both informally and formally. Pupils nominate each other to be rewarded for acts of kindness. Year 2 pupils said if they had a problem they would go to the headteacher or consult a Year 6 pupil. They respond very well to the responsibilities they are given, and show a good level of initiative as far as the school's structures permit them to do so. The 'School Council', where selected pupils meet to represent their peers, is seen by pupils as a real way of getting things done, and they make good use of the suggestions book. They show a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others, and respect their feelings, values and beliefs. These reflect their discussions in religious education and in assemblies and illustrate the positive outcomes from the school's secure provision for their cultural development.

18. Attendance is very good, a marked improvement from the last full inspection, when it was good. In 2000-2001 it was well above national averages (96.2 per cent as against 93.9 per cent). Unauthorised absence below (0.0 per cent as against 0.5 per cent) and authorised absence was also below (3.8 per cent as against 5.6 per cent). Pupils arrive promptly in the morning. These standards of punctuality and attendance are a great aid to their learning.

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

19. Teaching is very good throughout the school; this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. In over three-quarters of lessons observed, teaching was either good or very good. It was very good in well over one half of these lessons and a small proportion of the teaching was excellent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching observed. Much of the very high quality teaching occurs in the Foundation Stage for children in their reception year and in Years 2 and 6. In these classes, the large proportion of very good and excellent teaching is having a very positive impact upon standards, pupils' achievement and learning. The teaching for pupils in other years is also strong. The improvement and the impact of the very good teaching can be seen in the 2001 and 2002 national test results for pupils in Years 2 and 6.
20. The school has developed the quality of teaching very effectively through a rigorous programme of monitoring. Teachers have been supported by additional training in key curriculum areas to improve their subject expertise, and by improving the quality of their assessment. A significant improvement has been the focus on developing teaching strategies for higher attaining pupils to ensure that they receive challenging work.
21. Teaching for children in the reception class has many very good features; for example, children are given good opportunities to make independent choices, planning is very good and tasks are well matched to their prior attainment and age. Higher attaining children are challenged through very focused questioning and tasks that extend them. The learning support assistants have clearly identified roles. Their day-to-day assessments of learning and personal and social development are carefully recorded. English and literacy and mathematics and numeracy are taught very effectively. Staff share expertise willingly and work very effectively as a team to ensure very good teaching, especially in numeracy and literacy as the main priorities. Consequently, the children's basic skills develop very well and they learn to communicate with each other and adults with increasing accuracy. The outside environment is used very well and activities are closely linked to the learning goals.
22. In Years 1 and 2 a feature of the very best teaching is the detailed planning that builds successfully on prior learning. The planning in literacy, numeracy and science is very carefully structured and aimed at getting pupils to achieve above and well above average standards. For example, in a very good history lesson, the teacher reinforced pupils' writing skills by getting them to use time phrases when writing an 'eyewitness' account of the 'Great Fire of London'. Pupils are taught to write using a cursive script from an early age. Reading skills are very well taught; for instance, there is a very good focus upon the teaching of phonics in reading. Many examples were observed of good probing questioning and challenging tasks for higher attaining pupils. In science,

for example, pupils were asked to give an oral account of their investigation about circuits and say how the brightness of the two bulbs in the circuit could be increased.

23. In Years 3 to 6 the teaching is consistently very good. The pupils are very conscious of their targets and teachers make regular reference to them. The impact of the numeracy and literacy strategies can be seen in other lessons; the same structure is providing a very good outline framework for planning in all subjects of the curriculum. Pupils are made very aware of the learning objectives, which are written clearly on the board for every lesson. The plenary sessions are very effectively used to reinforce these objectives and to assess the progress that pupils have made. There has been a significant improvement in teachers' marking since the last inspection. Marking is very detailed and helps pupils to move on to the next stage of learning; for example, 'What do you mean by a force?' and 'Why were you surprised by this result?'. Teachers have high expectations and the pupils usually rise to the challenge. Work is closely linked to other subjects. In a science lesson work about muscles was closely linked to physical education and a good discussion took place about the muscles pupils used when exercising. Links with other subjects are well planned; for example, pupils apply their mathematical skills well in other subjects such as design and technology when measuring materials, and science when interpreting graphs and measuring quantities. Their very good literacy skills are a strong foundation for learning and are used effectively in nearly all subjects of the curriculum.
24. Teachers ensure that all pupils are fully included in the lessons. The quality of teaching, for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The learning support assistants have clearly identified roles and areas of responsibility. They provide very good support for individuals and groups of pupils and liaise very closely with the teachers over the planning of their work. Pupils' individual education plans are of a high quality. The targets are very precise and therefore extremely useful to measure progress. The special educational needs co-ordinator liaises extremely closely with teachers and parents and ensures that resources for these pupils are effectively used. Teachers and support staff make a strong team who work hard to ensure that pupils learn very well, feel confident to tackle challenges and are proud of their achievements.
25. The teachers know the pupils very well and manage them in a consistent way; as a result their behaviour is mostly very good. There is a calm, yet purposeful atmosphere in most classes and very good relationships exist between teachers and pupils. Teachers expect pupils to behave and have very good attitudes to their work; as a result, the pupils respond and work hard. There is a brisk pace to the teaching and a sense of urgency about the lessons, with tasks being carefully matched to pupils' levels of understanding. There is considerable emphasis on developing the pupils' personal and social skills both in lessons and throughout the school day, in a variety of creative ways. This results in pupils developing a real ownership for many areas of school life. Teachers instil a sense of pride and ambition in the pupils as they move through the school, helping them to recognise strengths and areas for further development both academically and socially.
26. Throughout the school the teaching of physical education is satisfactory, but with better teaching pupils could achieve higher standards. The teaching of ICT is satisfactory overall. Across the school teachers are teaching word processing effectively, especially since the opening of the new ICT suite. In reception and in Years 1 and 2 teachers have sufficient knowledge, but in Years 3 to 6, some teachers have inadequate knowledge of new technology, for example, teachers are not yet making effective use of digital photography, e-mail and the Internet. This is restricting their ability to challenge pupils fully. Pupils are not being encouraged to use computers enough for research and this is limiting their development of independent skills. The school has identified the need to raise standards in ICT and the new ICT suite is having a significant impact in the short time that it has been available for use.

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

27. The school's curriculum is good overall and meets the statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and religious education, including the provision of a daily act of collective worship. The



Foundation Stage curriculum has been improved well since the last inspection. Overall the curriculum has been improved effectively. The school provides a very good range of learning activities for children in the Foundation Stage (reception) where planning is firmly based on the six early learning goals set out nationally. This curriculum is enriched further by the teacher's careful identification of teacher-directed learning and teaching which is developed from the children's own ideas and choices. The school has rigorously implemented the strategies for the literacy hour and the numeracy strategy. These are very successful in developing the pupils' basic skills and they have had a very positive impact on the rising standards that have been achieved in English and mathematics. There are policies and appropriate schemes of work in place for all subjects, providing appropriate guidance to teachers. The very good curricular planning, based on these, ensures that skills, knowledge and understanding are built cumulatively and in a logical sequence at all levels. However, the use and application of ICT across the curriculum is, as yet, underdeveloped and opportunities are missed to use ICT skills in other subjects.

28. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school has excellent systems in place to ensure that all these pupils are very well supported in all aspects of learning and that they have full access to a broad and balanced curriculum. All staff ensure, through very good planning, that these pupils are fully included in lessons. Learning support assistants relate very well to the pupils, not only supporting them very well in learning, but also giving them the opportunity, either individually or in a small group, to discuss any aspects of school in which they might need support. Their close liaison with class teachers and the special educational co-ordinator means that the pupils' needs, whether learning, behavioural or emotional, are met fully. The school is implementing the new Code of Practice very well and the policy has been rewritten to take account of this.
29. There is good equality of access and opportunity for both boys and girls This is provided by the very good use of appropriate teaching methods and materials and the very good monitoring and support of pupils' academic and personal progress. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and appropriate role models are provided within the school. The school has clearly identified gifted and talented pupils.
30. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good. There are appropriate policies in place. Lessons make very good contributions to this area and pupils are given very good opportunities to discuss topical issues and to speak articulately in lessons. Teachers take very good advantage of visits and visitors to enhance the curriculum, particularly in art, history and religious education. The governors have adopted an appropriate policy for sex education, which is linked to the curriculum. Pupils are taught about health education in general, and particularly the dangers of drugs' abuse. A very effective behaviour policy is successfully implemented and reinforces learning throughout the school.
31. The curriculum is enriched by the provision of a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Staff are generous in the time that they spend on these, and all members of staff lead an after-school club. They include many valuable activities such as art and recorder clubs, and sports clubs, including games, football and netball. In the spring term country and maypole dancing are also provided. There is a very good and varied programme of visitors and educational visits both in the locality and local community and further afield to enhance learning and broaden pupils' experiences. These include strong links with the local church and the local community council. Members of the local community have assisted with the school's annual dramatic production and they have made generous contributions towards the new ICT suite. There are frequent visits to the local village, the theatre, local temples and synagogues, and to museums. Local doctors, nutritionists, firemen and road safety experts visit the school on a regular basis.
32. The school has very good links with playgroups and with the secondary schools to which pupils move at the end of Year 6. Staff meet to discuss pupils before they move to their new school so that the transition might be as smooth as possible. Previous Year 6 pupils have been involved in an ICT project with the nearby secondary school. There are also good links with other village schools.

33. Overall, the school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good and has improved significantly since the last inspection. The daily act of collective worship now gives very good opportunities for pupils to think about values important in their school community and to celebrate the successes of individuals and groups within the school. Assembly themes are carefully planned and cover such principles as valuing oneself, tolerance and appreciation of others. Pupils are eager to contribute in assemblies and enthusiastically discuss issues at appropriate intervals. Many lessons make pupils laugh with enjoyment or gasp with excitement. In Year 4, pupils' response to some mathematics lessons is very good. They are clearly fascinated by the work and those that are chosen to explain their success at the end of the lesson glow with pride.
34. Provision for pupils' moral development is excellent and has a significant impact upon the life of the school. It is very well planned through a well-understood moral code comprising the school's mission statement, RESPECT, and 'Golden Rules'. Teachers and their learning assistants are good at reminding pupils of these rules and praising them when they use them well. Classes write and regularly review their prominently-displayed class rules. Teachers, assistants and non-teaching members of staff at lunch and break times set very good examples of courtesy and consideration for others. There are consistent approaches by all adults to rewarding effort and applying consistent, fair but firm approaches to discipline. Much of the school's provision is embedded in its every day life and teaching.
35. Arrangements for promoting pupils' social development are excellent. This area is an exceptionally strong feature of school life. Supportive and constructive relationships between teachers and pupils successfully promote pupils' self-esteem and social interaction. An established 'School Council', to which all pupils relate, is actively involved in school life. There are many opportunities in lessons for pupils to co-operate and collaborate very effectively in pairs and in small groups, and most pupils do so responsibly and maturely. Many pupils have opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility, such as acting as leaders and prefects. The school promotes teamwork and a sense of fair play through team games and joint ventures with local schools. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 further develop their skills of social interaction by taking part in residential visits to the Isle of Wight. They develop an understanding of citizenship through activities including the raising of money for various charities.
36. Promotion of the cultural dimension is very good. Pupils learn about their cultural heritage through involvement with local groups, and through local study work in history and geography. They benefit from visitors to the school and a programme of visits. Stories, music, literature and art from this country and diverse cultures are used very well throughout the school to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultural imagery and language. By studying French, pupils in Years 3 to 6 gain experience of another language and culture. The school has worked very hard to promote pupils' understanding of multi-faith issues in assemblies and in religious education. These make a significant contribution in developing the pupils' awareness of the diversity of British culture. The school makes very good provision for the development of pupils' understanding and appreciation of European culture. For example, pupils study a range of European artists within the art curriculum. Displays around the school exhibit pupils' work on African and Aboriginal art.

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

37. The school is a very caring community and the secure quality of care provided supports the pupils' very good achievement. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good, a considerable improvement from the previous full inspection, when they were satisfactory. In that report two items relating to health and safety were named as issues for action: vehicles in the school grounds and in particular, crossing the playground to the car park; and the very smelly pupil toilets. The school has made every effort to deal with these issues and has done so effectively. Parents co-operate well over the detailed arrangements for the start and end of the school day. A new car park has been built which accommodates most staff vehicles. The old car park is used only by lunchtime staff, who enter and leave it only when all pupils are inside. The toilets have been completely refurbished and the drainage replaced. They are cleaned thrice daily and regularly checked by pupil toilet monitors. The headteacher is the designated child protection

liaison officer and her training is up to date. She regularly reminds staff of the correct procedures and ensures that their knowledge is updated appropriately. The child protection policy provides very full guidance and follows local authority guidelines. The school has not had to make contact with any external agencies in connection with a child protection issue. The health and safety policy was drawn up by the governors, headteacher and staff, in consultation with the local authority. It lists the responsibilities of all members of the school community very clearly, and provides clear guidance.

38. The school has very good first aid arrangements: there is an annual first aid training day for all staff, with a special focus on swimming pool safety. All classrooms and the school office have a first aid box, and any essential medications are kept in a locked cupboard. Each building has its own security keypad; the side gates are locked during school hours and the driveway barrier kept down. Hazardous chemicals are appropriately assessed and stored. An annual risk assessment is carried out, and electrical, fire, and physical education equipment is checked annually by external contractors. The caretaker does a daily hazard check of the site. A few minor issues were brought to the school's attention. The school holds two bomb drills annually and at least six fire drills to ensure safe provision.
39. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good, and those for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are excellent. This is a remarkable improvement from the last full inspection when they were unsatisfactory. The school's behaviour policy provides extremely detailed guidance. It is supplemented by the anti-bullying policy, which outlines the school's procedures for dealing with bullying or racism. Behaviour is now managed consistently well and often very well in all classrooms. Playtimes and lunchtimes are extremely carefully managed with a high quota of adults to children. Books and playground toys are provided. Year 6 pupils have lunch and playtime with Years R, 1 and 2. Two wear distinguishing hats, and help pupils find someone to play with. Year 5 pupils act as playground monitors for Years 3 and 4. The staff on duty do not hesitate to halt play completely when any issue of safety or behaviour is concerned. Good playground behaviour is rewarded by merits and certificates. Pupils whose behaviour gives cause for concern are given individual behaviour plans, which set targets in discussion with the pupils concerned and their parents. However, the very close support in controlling behaviour does mean that at times pupils are given limited opportunities to use their initiative and develop independence.
40. Procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' personal development are good, an improvement from the previous full inspection, when they were satisfactory. Staff monitor and record significant personal development in their pupils, for example improved concentration. The school has achieved the 'Healthy Schools Award'. Pupil achievements, whether academic or personal, are lavishly rewarded, and staff ensure all receive some recognition over a year. The school provides a suggestions book for pupils. The headteacher writes in responses weekly. Year 6 pupils are encouraged to see themselves as role models, with a wide range of responsibilities. The 'School Council' has two representatives from each class, as well as from teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and governors. Each class develops its own class rules. Pupils are encouraged to get involved with charitable fundraising, for example the head boy and girl sell poppies for Remembrance Day each November. In lessons, especially in discussions and group work the pupils show great responsibility for their learning. As yet, however, ICT is not used effectively to support the pupils' learning across the school, consequently opportunities to support the pupils' learning through independent research are not fully developed, limiting these skills.
41. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory, as at the time of the last full inspection. Registration is quickly and efficiently managed, and pupils arriving late report to the school office. Parents know that they should telephone the school to inform them of any absences and the school follows these up within two or three days to check. The educational welfare service visits at least once a term. To ensure that all pupils are present during statutory assessment tests, the headteacher will not grant holiday absence during May.
42. Overall there has been continued good improvement in assessment since the visit by Her Majesty's Inspector in May of this year and very good improvement since the last full inspection.

43. The school's procedures for measuring attainment and assessing the pupils' academic achievements are very good overall. In English, mathematics and science there is a close analysis of data such as baseline assessment, teachers' skills books, national tests and pupils' work. When collated, this information is used very effectively to predict future levels of attainment and set targets for learning. The assessments are particularly useful in identifying and focusing upon pupils whose achievements mean that they require close monitoring and tracking in order to raise their levels of attainment. The identification and assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are very good. Pupils having learning needs are identified early and parents are contacted whenever the school has any concerns. Pupil records are very detailed and they are well kept. The school receives effective help from outside agencies such as the psychological services.
44. The use of assessment data to improve teachers' planning is good overall. It is very good in English, mathematics and science. An example of this is the way the school has analysed data in English this year and targeted writing as an area for further improvement. Although pupils are assessed and tracked well throughout the school in English and mathematics, the school is aware that this close tracking needs to be extended to science. Marking is very good throughout the school enriching other forms of assessment and record-keeping. The work seen in the work scrutiny and in classes indicated that teachers were setting higher attaining pupils challenging targets through the marking of their work. The quality and use of assessment in other subjects ranges from unsatisfactory to very good and is significantly enriched by the high quality of the teachers' day-to-day questioning in lessons and their informative marking. Pupils are given clear targets for improvement and clear ways of achieving them. These strategies are having a beneficial influence in raising standards. Assessment is unsatisfactory in ICT and physical education, however, and this is limiting the teachers' ability to raise standards.

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

45. Parents expressed very good views about the school. A high proportion (65 per cent) returned the questionnaires sent out by the registered inspector. Parents feel that their children like school, the school is approachable, and the leadership and management are very good. They think the school has high expectations of its pupils and has a good partnership with parents. In written comments, parents praised the leadership of the headteacher, the school's family feeling and the high standards of behaviour. Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting praised the school's high academic standards. They felt teachers knew their pupils very well and helped them to become more mature. Pupils with special needs were valued and the school was truly inclusive. Some parents feel that there is too much homework, and did not find their children's annual reports helpful. There was some concern that the curriculum did not allow enough time for history, geography and music, and that the accommodation for Years 5 and 6 was too cramped. These issues are being addressed by the staff of the school and inspection shows that none of these issues has a significantly detrimental effect on pupils' learning. New classrooms are planned to ensure that pupils in Year 5 and 6 have more space for practical work.
46. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is very good. Homework set is nearly always done. Parents support learning well by taking their children on appropriate educational visits, by loaning items to support topic work, and by helping their children with research tasks at home and in local libraries. Many parents are able to give their children the opportunity to use a computer at home. Parents hear their children read regularly. Comments made by parents at consultation evenings, in response to children's annual reports and in the Home School Contact books show very clearly how anxious parents are to support their children's learning. The attendance rate is very good and very few families take holidays in term time.
47. Parents have an excellent impact on the work of the school, a further improvement from the last full inspection when it was very good. The parents' association, run by a committee of sixteen, is very active and raised £28,000 for the school over the last two years. Recent parents' association activities have included a family masked disco, and 'Dads v. Lads and Lassies Football'. Many parents lend their personal expertise to support learning: for example, an airline pilot came to talk

about visiting St Lucia in a geography lesson. There are parent representatives for each class, who act as a point of contact for all other parents in that class, and work with the class teacher to come up with ideas for fundraising by the pupils. Parents help clean out the swimming pool each year, and also help with gardening and grounds maintenance. Several help in class. Parents help run the football and netball clubs after school and at weekends, and have helped to set up and maintain the school's website.

48. The school has very good and effective links with parents, as at the time of the last full inspection. The headteacher and all class teachers are all available for informal consultation after school on the playground, and parents can easily make appointments for other times. Additionally, there are weekly drop-in sessions when parents can chat informally to class teachers. The school keeps careful records of all contacts with and comments from parents, and follows up any concerns immediately. There is a 'Suggestions Postbox' installed at parents' request. The school has a well-designed 'home-school contact book' for each pupil. This contains much information as well as the home-school agreement, the curriculum plan for the year for the whole school, the pupil's current targets, their reading record and a place for parents and teachers to pass messages to each other. The school works hard to ensure that the parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully informed and involved in the review of their individual education plans. There is an annual open evening when parents can see their children's work, and parents are invited to attend school productions. Parents were sent a copy of the behaviour policy and asked for any comments before the governors review it. The 'School Council' is chaired by a parent governor. Each November the staff stage a 'fun Saturday' when they stage activities for pupils whilst parents go Christmas shopping, having paid a fee for the privilege. Proceeds go to the parents' association.
49. The quality of the information provided for parents, particularly about pupils' progress, is very good, as at the last full inspection. Overall the standard of annual reports is good, and those for reception pupils are of a very high standard. Reports indicate whether pupil attainment in mathematics, English and science is at the expected level for the age group. They give a good picture of strengths and weaknesses for these subjects. Comments on other subjects are much briefer, and in some instances include too much description of the curriculum, for example 'He has studied Christianity and Judaism this term and has looked at how faith has led people to undertake particular jobs'. Targets for improvement are usually clear, however and often include personal development, for instance, 'To learn to contribute more frequently in class discussions'. The weekly newsletters give a very full picture of the school's life. They are supplemented by the humorous and friendly newsletters produced by the parents' association. Additionally, the school provides reading lists for holidays and extremely detailed half-termly overviews of curriculum, with requests for specific parental help. There are two parent information boards, and termly consultation evenings. Clear information is given about homework and the school's plans for the future. The prospectus and governors' report give very full information and ensure that statutory requirements are fully met.

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

50. Overall, the leadership and management of the school are very good. A visit from Her Majesty's Inspector in May of this year reported that the school had made good progress since its last full inspection. Evidence now shows that the school has continued to improve. It no longer has serious weaknesses and is now a very successful school. The headteacher's personal and inspirational leadership, ably supported by staff and governors, has been the driving force behind this substantial improvement.
51. The headteacher and chair of governors promote a team approach to leading and managing the school. As a result senior colleagues and subject co-ordinators work to establish accurate evaluations of the school's effectiveness and take the school forward most successfully. Strong teamwork enables the school to keep abreast of the increasing bureaucratic demands placed on schools, indeed it enables them to utilise them for maximum benefit. For example, the school sets particularly challenging targets for pupils to attain by the end of Year 6 and the teachers use them effectively to raise expectations and to promote improvement. The talented senior teacher supports

the headteacher closely and all staff share their commitment to improvement. They collaborate well and with great success to reach their targets, and they ensure that the aims and values of the school are evident in the day-to-day life of the school.

52. All pupils are fully and equally included. The school has placed a determined and successful effort on challenging potentially higher-attaining pupils to the full. At the same time and with equal success and determination, the school increased its ability to cater for the significant needs of pupils with special educational needs. As a consequence, all pupils feel valued and respond positively. There is a consistent ethos of care and expectation across the whole school. Learning is a spiritually uplifting experience and these qualities underpin the pupils' achievement highly successfully.
53. Staff, governors and parents share an excellent commitment to improvement and an equally strong capacity to improve further. The school has shown very good improvement since the last full inspection, and all key issues from that inspection have been addressed fully. Good improvement has continued since the HMI visit in May of this year. There are gaps in the provision for ICT that limit pupils' achievement but the school is rectifying this as a matter of urgency and the new ICT suite is a clear example of this targeted action.
54. The governing body is very effective in fulfilling its responsibilities. It operates through an established committee system which ensures that the school is taken forward positively. Governors visit the school regularly to update their knowledge and they support the headteacher very effectively in monitoring and raising standards. Governors with specific responsibilities such as literacy, early years and finance give particularly informed support. Daily acts of collective worship meet the statutory requirements and provide full inclusion for all. Governors and staff ensure good provision for the pupils' health and welfare and through their new and effective policy for Race Equality they are strong in their promotion of racial harmony. In all areas the governors meet their statutory obligations.
55. The school has an agreed set of aims and values, which promote a close partnership with parents. They are fully shared by the whole school community and are fully seen in the work of the school. The school is determined in providing equal opportunity. It is equally committed to providing first class support and in fulfilling its statutory obligations in respect of pupils with special educational needs. The headteacher as co-ordinator gives excellent leadership and with support from colleagues and from the designated governor with responsibility for special needs, they ensure that provision is very effective overall. Managers are diligent in ensuring that the needs of all pupils, including gifted and talented pupils, are met fully. As a result, all benefit from very good achievement in relation to their prior attainment by the time they leave the school. Management of the special educational needs provision is excellent. The school has revised its documentation and procedures to meet the requirements of the new Code of Practice. Statutory requirements for the three pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need are fully met.
56. The headteacher, with strong support from an experienced and very astute experienced chair of governors, motivates colleagues in providing a very clear educational direction. The staff and governors are fully involved by the head in planning for development. School improvement and development planning represents a very effective tool through which the school is successfully improved. As a result the school identifies appropriate targets for improvement accurately, ensuring that funds are used effectively. Individuals have responsibilities for leading on specific targets, as appropriate to their roles. For example, subject co-ordination has improved substantially since the last inspection and standards in English, mathematics and particularly science have been raised.
57. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance is now very good overall. The headteacher, senior managers, governors and subject co-ordinators and representatives from the local education authority visit classrooms and monitor the quality of teaching effectively. The school's strategies for appraisal and performance management are very good. Results of developments are thoroughly evaluated by the staff together and positive informative feedback and support from the headteacher has promoted significant improvements to the quality of planning, teaching and learning. Within an

ethos of constant improvement and the sharing of good practice colleagues have established an impressive consistency in the quality of the teaching and learning. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching is very good.

58. Financial planning is very good. The school has targeted its funds in a very focused way to ensure that the serious weaknesses identified at the time of the last full inspection in October 2000 have been rectified. The school has used additional funds made available by the local education authority prudently to introduce smaller class sizes, improve resources and undertake staff training. These have proved beneficial in raising standards. In order to continue the successful development and growth of the school, significant funds have been raised and ear-marked to provide additional facilities, such as the new ICT suite and Year 1 classroom and to create and sustain seven, single age classes. At the same time the school's expenditure per pupil has continued to be significantly above that found nationally, ensuring that pupils currently in school are well provided for. However, with continuing very good support from parents and following successful bids for grant-aid, the school has accumulated a substantial carry-forward in funds, representing 16 per cent of the school's total expenditure. Even though over half of this is clearly earmarked for planned development, such as the resourcing of a planned new classroom block, now that serious weaknesses have been overcome, this inspection shows that there is scope for expenditure to address shortages of resources in ICT in the shorter term without jeopardising the new seven class structure.
59. The school puts the principles of best value into practice very diligently. It is constantly evaluating the effectiveness of its decisions in terms of their impact on the pupils' performance. It ensures purchases are made economically and it is proficient in comparing its performance against its own and national targets. Specific grants, such as the standards fund, are used well, for example, to improve teaching and raise standards in literacy and numeracy, to increase provision for ICT and to support pupils with special educational needs.
60. Financial control is also very good and the headteacher and the two administrative staff work closely with the chair of governors and chair of the governors' financial committee work to ensure that the funds made available to the school are managed very efficiently. Together they strengthen the school's strategic decision-making by basing it on up-to-date, accurate information.
61. The school is very well staffed. The move to a seven class structure has resulted in small class sizes and given the additional learning support assistance all pupils now benefit from a low pupil : adult ratio with all staff working very effectively together to meet the pupils' needs. Administrative staff use management information systems effectively to monitor the budget and increasingly to record the pupils' assessments but as yet, they are not used to monitor attendance. All teachers are well qualified and have significant skills in most areas of the curriculum, however, not all teachers in Years 3 to 6 possess sufficient knowledge to teach all strands of the ICT curriculum and to utilise the new ICT suite to the maximum.
62. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. It has been enlarged and improved in recent years by the opening of a new Year 1 classroom and ICT suite and by an additional temporary Year 3 classroom. Year 5 and 6 classrooms are small, but the school has plans to replace these as soon as it is able. Key issues of the last full inspection, relating to car parking and faulty toilet facilities, have been rectified sufficiently. The school has sufficient playground space but other outdoor facilities are spacious and include woodland and pasture areas. These are more readily available again, after building works, as first-hand resources for environmental and science work.
63. The provision for learning resources is satisfactory overall. Resources are accessible and are well cared for. The new ICT suite is a significant development that is extending the pupils' learning opportunities. Not all classrooms have sufficient class-based computers, however, and this is restricting the school's attempts to enrich learning across the curriculum by using ICT. In general, resources are used very well to support the pupils' learning.

64. Taking into account the pupils' very good achievement and quality of the education now provided in relation to the funds available, the school provides good value for money; another significant improvement since the previous inspection.



## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

(\*) Issues already identified for development by the school.

65. In the context of the school's renewed and very effective educational direction and in order to bring all aspects of the pupils' attainment to the highest possible standard, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

\*Continue to raise the pupils' attainment and achievement by the end of Year 6 in ICT and improve the use of new technology to enrich teaching and learning across the school by: (paras. 10, 26-27,122-126)

- creating more opportunities for pupils to use computers as a tool to aid their learning across the range of subjects;
- continuing to improve the 'in class' ICT resources available to the pupils, so that they can practise, improve and use the skills learned in the new ICT suite to enrich their work and progress;
- providing staff with sufficient training so that they develop the necessary skills to support the teaching of ICT through Years 3 to 6 and to support the use of new technology in enriching the school's provision.

66. In addition the following minor points for improvement should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- providing additional and increasing opportunities for pupils to learn through independent research as they move through the school; (paras 13,21,26)
- raising the status of physical education and the standards attained in this subject throughout the school by ensuring that the quality of the provision and the expectations of what the pupils can and should attain match the high standards expected in other subjects. (paras. 26, 134-138)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	48
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	25	9	11	0	0	0
Percentage	6	52	19	23	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	145
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	13

#### English as an additional language

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

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.8

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

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)**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	10	11	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	21	21	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	21	21	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. Figures have been removed because there are fewer than 11 boys.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	4	9	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	11	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (94)	92 (100)	92 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	12	13	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (94)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. Figures have been removed because there are fewer than 11 boys and 11 girls.

**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	129	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	13	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.9
Average class size	20.7

**Education support staff: YR– Y6**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	129

**Financial information**

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	360967
Total expenditure	334582
Expenditure per pupil	2573
Balance brought forward from previous year	65975
Balance carried forward to next year	78801

FTE means full-time equivalent.

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	145
Number of questionnaires returned	94

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	36	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	38	48	4	1	9
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	34	2	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	46	13	4	5
The teaching is good.	54	40	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	53	8	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	22	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	30	2	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	44	51	4	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	71	27	0	2	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	37	1	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	54	10	1	2

### Other issues raised by parents

The parents are very supportive of the headteacher and staff and recognise Ightham as a successful and improving school.

**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**

67. Provision for children in the reception class is very good and has shown ongoing improvement, especially in planning the curriculum since the last inspection. It is a strength of the school. All the recommended areas of learning included in the Foundation Stage Curriculum are taught and the teaching and learning pay due regard to specific learning goals expected of young children in this stage of their development. The accommodation for the reception class is spacious and it is generally well-equipped, except for ICT equipment. A relatively new secure outdoor area, recently back in use after building works, represents another improvement since the last inspection. Overall, the facilities are very well organised, enabling a good balance between teacher-led activity and child-initiated learning from play. The teacher ensures strong supportive links with pre-school providers, particularly the adjacent playgroup from where most of the children transfer. New parents and their children are welcomed into school life through a well-planned induction process. The children enter the reception class on a full-time basis following several opportunities to visit to experience the classroom situation. This ensures that all children have a happy and fruitful start to their schooling and the teacher and learning support assistants have a beneficial opportunity to assess the children's needs and to establish warm relationships.
68. The children's prior attainment occasionally varies quite considerably from year to year, especially as the school promotes its fully inclusive ethos. The vast majority of the children enter the reception class with above average attainment in most areas of learning, particularly in communication, language and literature and in their aspects of their personal and social development. Nurtured well by their parents they also bring positive attitudes to school and this enriches their learning. The children's attainment is average in their creative and physical development.
69. By the time the children are ready to start Year 1, learning has been successful and they have achieved very well overall, especially in their communication, language and literacy skills. Mathematics and numeracy and personal and social skills are other areas where learning is most effective. Attainment is above average in most areas. However, it is well above average in communication, language and literacy and average in their creative and physical development. Achievement is never less than satisfactory for the majority and they attain above the expected levels of the goals in their English and mathematics and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. In personal and social development, their achievement is good as their attainment is above average by the end of the reception year. Because of this, they are well prepared to enter Year 1 to extend learning within the National Curriculum and they continue to have very good attitudes towards their learning.
70. Children in the reception class benefit from consistently very good teaching in all areas of the curriculum. The teacher plans the curriculum meticulously ensuring that the children have appropriate opportunities to learn from play and to learn from carefully focused direct teaching from the teacher and learning support assistants. This approach is successful because it ensures that the children develop their skills and understanding progressively and it also stimulates their imagination, motivates them to learn successfully and enriches and develops their independence. Children now receive a very well-planned practical curriculum that is purposeful and well linked to national guidance for children of these ages. This means that all children, including those with special educational needs, learn most productively. Strengths of the teaching include the warm relationships, the focused questioning that extends and utilises the children's advanced communication and language skills and the excellent use of the learning support assistants, in assessing the children's needs and learning and in promoting new learning through direct questioning of children at play. For example, adults support and question the children, unobtrusively but purposefully, as they play with sand, water or outdoor equipment. The teacher is also particularly skilled in planning specific activities to enrich particular skills: for example, encouraging children to communicate with each other in pairs when playing with 'glue'. During the



inspection, the lap top computer normally used in reception was being used elsewhere in the school, and children had insufficient opportunities, therefore, to utilise new technology in support of their learning. This is a weakness.

### **Personal, Social and emotional development**

71. Children achieve very well in this area of learning because teaching is of a high standard and emphasises on the one hand the development of the children's independence and on the other their co-operative skills. This helps the vast majority of children to exceed the expected levels by the end of the reception year. For example, children follow class routines well, they relate warmly toward each other and they show respect and trust towards the adults who care for them. Increasingly they communicate more effectively with each other and begin to share their ideas. Initially these skills are promoted by the teacher and learning support assistants through large group discussions and by encouraging children to work together when using the sand tray, for example. They are promoted on a daily basis through opportunities to collaborate with other children in the 'Doctor's Surgery' where though role-play the children develop and use their personal and social skills to aid their learning.

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

72. Staff work hard and successfully to develop and utilise the children's understanding and response to language in all areas of learning. As a consequence pupils achieve very well in this area of learning and their attainment exceeds expectations significantly by the time they enter Year 1. Children are taught to offer and share their ideas regularly through whole class or group discussions as a result the children experience how they can communicate with others and how they can extend their knowledge and understanding. Caring adults value the children's responses, encouraging them even more to offer imaginative ideas, for example, when discussing letter sounds related to 'Munching Mike' or when using the 'Talking Teddy' as an aid in telling about what they have done. The children's speaking and listening skills are developed to a standard that is well above those found nationally for pupils of this age. Most talk in well-constructed sentences and converse productively in role-play and when working with sand, water or constructional equipment. The teacher works with groups of children in developing their writing skills; for example, when using story maps – cartoon drawings to support their written versions of 'The Gingerbread Man'. Most children concentrate well and can write their names and some form letters correctly without support. The children enjoy looking at books and listen very attentively when the teacher reads from a book. The teacher promotes a love of books and literature very strongly and uses questioning very effectively to motivate the children into remembering favourite story characters and sharing ideas about the plot with each other, as in a literacy session when reading the story of 'The Gingerbread Man'. The teacher encourages children to read simple large text out loud. A modified literacy hour is already established where children share 'Big Books' and then work on group tasks. The teacher and other adults give very effective support to the development of reading, writing and speaking and listening skills. All adults working with these young children know and meet the need of all children equally. Higher attainers and children with special educational needs, at times including children with profound needs, are challenged and included effectively and all build very well on their previous learning.

### **Mathematical development**

73. The teaching and learning is very good in this area of learning. The teacher plans interesting and enjoyable numeracy lessons, using many of the methods employed in the numeracy strategy. Skilful questioning enables her to assess children's level of understanding and to extend their thinking. Day-to-day use of numbers in counting familiar objects in the classroom is well established. The teacher and learning support assistants use every opportunity to encourage children to count and think about number problems, for example by counting animal figures used to create imaginative zoos. Children know how many of them are allowed at each activity and they plan and sequence the events of the day that the teacher shares with them at the beginning of the day. Children build on their understanding of numbers and achieve above the expected levels by the time they leave reception.

74. Children count up to 20 reliably and enjoy tapping their knees in time to the counting. They understand the addition sign '+' and the equals sign '=' and relish the opportunity to show their skills in completing single digit addition 'sums'. They recognise higher and lower numbers and most are adept at explaining their thinking when adding numbers. A strength of the teaching is the good range of practical activities to reinforce learning, for example by counting real objects. The children show great interest and sustain their concentration well. By the time the children are ready to enter Year 1, they are working well within the National Curriculum.

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

75. By the time children enter Year 1, they have above average knowledge and understanding of the world. The teaching and children's achievement in this area is very good. Children are gaining a good understanding of the world in which they live through a wide range of imaginative and practical activities. They learn the importance of rules and are introduced to the school's 'Golden Rules' as they listen to Bible stories. The children discuss zoos and talk about their favourite animals, recalling their own experiences of such visits. They work individually or in pairs when playing with sand and water exploring displacement and the capacity of different containers and shapes. The children's use of ICT is under-developed at present. Although the majority of children have good access to new technology at home provision to use the school's new ICT suite is not fully established and other computers are not always available. This limits their skills.

### **Physical development**

76. The teaching and children's achievement in this area of learning are good. Children meet the expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. Children have appropriate opportunities to develop their fine motor skills as they handle small tools such as pencils, crayons, paint brushes, glue and scissors. They frequently put together and take apart construction equipment. The majority of children show a good level of skill in fixing construction equipment together or when cutting card and paper. Regular times in the outdoor play area provide a structured time to use the large wheeled toys, to play with water and brushes and to co-operate in a role-play cabin. There are good opportunities for more robust physical development in the hall and outside in the secure outdoor play area. Observation of children, early in their school year, indicates average ability to control their movements in physical activities.

### **Creative development**

77. The teaching is very good in this area of learning and the children achieve well and attain the expected level by the time they enter Year 1. They paint and make collage pictures of animals and have good opportunities to experiment and paint their ideas in colour. Their musical skills are developed well. The children use simple percussion instruments to make different kinds of sounds associated with 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. The development of these skills is enriched significantly by the teacher's very good questioning that helps the children to distinguish between high and low sounds. Children's ability to use materials creatively is average for their age. In their role-play, they play co-operatively alongside other children who are in the 'Surgery' acting out 'real-life' situations for short periods of time, independently.

## **ENGLISH**

78. Overall standards are very high by the end of Year 2. This is especially the case in speaking and listening and in reading. Standards in writing are well above average overall with a significant proportion of pupils producing writing of a very high standard. By the end of Year 6 standards are well above average overall, representing a very good performance from a previously lower attaining group. Many pupils demonstrate very high standards in reading and in speaking and listening. An increasing proportion attain very high standards in writing, where standards are well above average. In relation to their prior attainment, standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 represent very good achievement for all pupils, including potentially higher attainers and pupils with special educational needs.

79. In response to improved and consistent teaching, the pupils' performance in recent years in the National Curriculum tests has steadily improved. In particular, the number of pupils attaining the higher than expected levels has increased significantly, especially at the end of Year 6. This improved performance from an above average standard in 2000, to a very high standard at the end of Years 2 and a well above average standard at the end of Year 6 in recent years, has been accomplished by a consistent combination of excellent subject leadership by the co-ordinator and literacy governor; very high quality subject action planning that sets high expectations and details clear success criteria and by very sharply focused and supportive staff development – informed by effective monitoring, feedback and performance management targets. In addition, sharp implementation of the National Literacy Strategy; increased expectations of what pupils can and should attain; improved challenge for potentially higher attainers; and strong and consistent use and promotion of literacy skills to enrich learning across the curriculum have all had a beneficial impact on the pupils' achievement.
80. National test results have indicated that girls have out-performed boys. Inspection observations indicate, though, that boys and girls are equally challenged in lessons due to the teachers' steps to address this issue. Differences are, therefore, due to differing rates of progress and maturation and are also linked to different starting points. Additional support from teachers and learning support assistants is targeting individual pupils and this is narrowing the gap between the girls and the boys.
81. Standards in speaking and listening are never less than well above average across the school. Pupils currently in Year 2, a capable group, are on course to attain very high standards for their age. These standards represent continued good improvement since the visit by Her Majesty's Inspector in May and reflect very good achievement.
82. Teachers use discussion and questioning productively to stimulate the pupils and to introduce new concepts. This is especially important in continuing close links with previous work, as in a lesson in Year 6 when discussing Roald Dahl's use of setting in describing characters. These methods promote the pupils' communication skills and most pupils respond in well-considered sentences. Plenary sessions within the literacy hour are well used to enable pupils to talk about what they have learned and what they need to do next to continue their work. Year 2 pupils acquire new vocabulary as they discuss joining words and they learn well from each other as they share their already substantial vocabulary. By the end of Year 6, pupils learn to evaluate text and understand and use metaphors and similes, one pupil using 'a moonbeam as a silver blade' as an example in a text. Older pupils use more formal language very accurately. All pupils interviewed by inspectors were articulate, well able to express an opinion and confident in speaking to adults. Pupils' listening skills are also highly developed. They listen very attentively and the very good attitudes pupils bring to their lessons contribute very significantly to their learning.
83. Standards in reading are never less than well above average and represent very good achievement for all pupils across the school. The teachers use large texts regularly to encourage the pupils' oral reading skills and 'Home-school' reading record books are used very effectively to promote reading skills, a love of books and to utilise parental support. As a consequence the vast majority of pupils read capably and use their skills beneficially to promote their learning across the range of subjects. Readers heard from Year 2 are already achieving levels well above their age. They are fluent, show good comprehension awareness, make good use of punctuation and read expressively. Parents give very good support at home and teachers use the literacy hour well for group reading. By the end of Year 6, pupils read expressively, fluently and with accuracy. Most know how to access books from the library but their responses show that there is scope to increase such research to promote the pupils' independence in learning. The pupils choose their reading books carefully; most have favourite authors and give perceptive reasons for their choices. They predict endings thoughtfully, retell stories in lively fashion and most pupils understand terms such as 'contents, index, dictionary and glossary. Standards of reading, from the sample taken during the inspection, are well above average in Year 2 and in Year 6, at this early stage in the school year.

84. By the end of Years 2 and 6, the vast majority of pupils are on course to attain well above average standards in writing. This shows continued good improvement since the visit of Her Majesty's Inspector in May and indicate that the school's focus on improving the quality of the pupils' writing is having a beneficial effect. A higher proportion of pupils in Year 2 are on course to attain higher than average standards than pupils currently in Year 6, for the older year group has a greater number of pupils with specific learning needs. Nevertheless, in relation to their prior attainment, the pupils in both groups are achieving very well.
85. Pupils in Year 2, across the full range of prior attainments, benefit from regular weekly handwriting sessions and specifically use pencils as they are introduced to a cursive style. They soon begin to use a joined script for writing and show skills and very positive attitudes as they write very neatly and legibly. The pupils demonstrate a good understanding of punctuation and a clear awareness of sentence structure and the need for accurate spelling. The pupils write expressively about their holidays, for example and sequence their ideas logically and clearly for the reader. By Year 6, pupils have developed significant skills and have responded very well to the school's strong focus on writing. At times, in a few lessons, however, pupils have insufficient time to record their ideas fully and this is limiting their progress. Most pupils write with expression and use an impressive range of vocabulary to describe characters, for example, one pupil recording, "I think she is a diminutive girl," when completing a character study. Other pupils show a clear awareness of description and mood, describing an author's, "Conflicting reports about a character's appearance." All pupils respond to their teacher's high levels of challenge and expectation of good work and make very good progress.
86. The quality of teaching and learning has continued to improve since the visit of Her Majesty's Inspector in May and it is now very good throughout the school. Occasionally teaching is excellent. The strengths of the school's approach lie in the rigorous, yet warm, questioning by the teachers and the consistent emphasis on the development of listening and speaking. Most pupils show highly-developed communication skills in relation to their age and the teachers are diligent in using and enhancing these skills to address new learning. The pupils have interesting, perceptive ideas and the teachers value their responses. The pupils know that their suggestions will be received well and, as a consequence, this stimulates their enthusiasm even more. All the teachers show very good knowledge of the subject and identify key vocabulary, share lesson objectives and success criteria with the pupils and match their questions closely to the pupils' interest and prior attainment. As a result pupils maintain very good concentration and learning is very effective. These successful teaching strategies were seen in lessons in Year 5 and in Year 6 where the teachers enthused the pupils by using interesting materials such as the diary of the Titanic and the writings of Roald Dahl respectively.
87. The success of an excellent lesson in Year 2 was illustrated by the pupils' articulate explanations of when connectives such as 'and' and 'but' are most appropriate. Teachers' expectations of pupils' effort and behaviour are high. The management of pupils is consistently very good, enabling lessons to run smoothly without interruption. Pupils show very positive attitudes to their learning and pupils learn very well. The teachers make very good use of learning support assistants by keeping them well informed, thereby empowering them to support pupils effectively through questioning. Assessments, including the marking of pupils' work, are carried out regularly and to a high standard. They include clear ways of improvement and the setting of group and personal targets to build on previous learning. Well thought out professional development has strengthened the teachers' implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and this is typified by the careful reviews, known as plenaries, at the end of lessons, where the teachers systematically revisit learning objectives to reinforce what the pupils have learned. As a consequence, the pupils acquire a very good knowledge of the success of their own learning and this raises their desire and enjoyment in learning. Such very good teaching in single age small classes is the key factor behind the significant improvement in pupils' attainment.
88. The headteacher provides excellent leadership of the subject. She has been extremely well supported by the literacy governor and by staff. She has targeted key issues of the previous full inspection through detailed and rigorously implemented, monitored and evaluated subject action plans. The interim inspection undertaken by Her Majesty's Inspector in May of the year identified

the significant success of this strong management. The curriculum fully meets the national requirements. The headteacher and literacy governor have monitored lessons and planning, supported colleagues and raised expectations. The teachers have been given clear guidance in teaching the National Literacy successfully, in matching tasks to pupils' prior attainment and in assessing and marking pupils' work supportively. This has improved the quality of the teaching and learning and has raised standards. The teachers' marking, in particular, is of a high standard and informs pupils' future learning most effectively. Resources for learning are good and the library has also been improved in recent years.

89. ICT is increasingly used effectively in the ICT suite to promote pupils' literacy skills. Occasionally individual pupils also use classroom computers to extend their learning. There is scope, however, to support the very good cross-curricular use of literacy more productively through ICT, particularly in support of independent research back in the classrooms.

## **MATHEMATICS**

90. Lesson observations, scrutiny of both current and past work, the results of interim testing and discussions with pupils indicate that standards by the end of Year 2 and 6 are well above average. All pupils are achieving very well in relation to their prior attainment. This is because they are taught very well throughout the school, the National Numeracy Strategy is being implemented very effectively and the pupils' academic performance is very well monitored. This represents a continued good improvement since the visit of Her Majesty's Inspector in May and very significant improvement since the time of the last full inspection when pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 was average and pupils were not achieving well.
91. National test results since the last inspection, and especially over the last two years, show a very good improvement in the numbers of pupils meeting and exceeding the expected standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. There are some fluctuations in results from year to year due to differences in the number of pupils with special educational needs in the relatively small year groups. There are some differences in the performance of boys and girls, but inspection evidence does not confirm these in the present year groups. The last inspection identified under-achievement, particularly for high attainers, as an area for improvement. In response to this, the teachers have raised their expectations and set appropriately challenging work for these pupils, who also achieve very well now.
92. By the end of Year 2 pupils have a very good understanding of place value relating to tens and units and work with numbers to 100. They work out simple multiplication problems accurately and complete tasks in set times in order to speed up the mental recall of number facts. They sort and sequence numbers, gaining an understanding of how to use Venn diagrams in the process. They measure length and mass and identify common two- and three-dimensional shapes confidently. Most pupils know their 3, 5 and 10 times tables very well and can recall numbers quickly. The average and higher-attaining pupils can work independently and are confident in their learning. By Year 3, pupils are recognising patterns when adding odd and even numbers, and by Year 4 they are adding two-digit numbers. In Years 3 and 4 average and higher attaining pupils make very good use of mathematical vocabulary and know such terms as 'sequence'. In a very good lesson in Year 4, pupils were able to correctly use and interpret coordinates. These pupils also correctly identified isosceles triangles. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a very good grasp of place value to four figures and can apply all four rules of number. Higher and average attaining pupils display a very good understanding of solving problems involving the use of decimal fractions, percentages and fractions. They explore the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes, work with prime, square, cube and triangular numbers.
93. The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the school. As a consequence, pupils are learning very well in lessons. The teachers' confidence with using the numeracy strategy has been further enhanced by the way in which planning has been very thoroughly upgraded. Teachers know their pupils very well because of the assessment information they collect. This information is used very well to target pupils so that they can improve their attainment. Pupils are interested and keen to talk about their work and they respond very well because teachers challenge them very

well in their learning. Teachers plan their lessons well and this ensures that pupils build upon their knowledge in a consistent way. The teachers' management of pupils is very good and so, from an early age, pupils have simple, established routines. This means that pupils have a clear idea of what is expected of them. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are very good and this creates a very pleasant, yet purposeful, atmosphere in which pupils feel comfortable about their learning. Learning support assistants provide very good support to lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. This support enables these pupils to make very good progress in lessons.

94. Teachers are very clear about their objectives for each lesson. In most cases these are shared with pupils and used as a yardstick by which to measure progress at the end of lessons. The teachers set high expectations for behaviour and participation and treat the pupils with great respect. Teachers are very good at introducing new mathematical vocabulary orally and, in this way, they very effectively promote aspects of literacy within these lessons. Very good lessons are characterised by high levels of concentration, rapid pace and the very effective use of questioning to extend pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. All teachers have very good subject knowledge, which they use very well to ensure the very good teaching of basic skills. Pupils use their numeracy skills to help learning in other subjects; for example, when studying the shapes of faces in art and when preparing a school map in geography.
95. The school has made very good improvements since the last inspection. Assessment and record-keeping procedures are now very good. The subject leader, who manages the subject very well, carries out very useful, detailed and lucid analyses of tests taken. All staff are fully briefed with regard to the areas of strength and areas to focus on to ensure that pupils gain a good understanding across all aspects of the programmes of study. The headteacher, subject leader and staff are determined to raise standards still further and have established very good procedures to monitor teaching in order to ensure that the quality of lessons presented to pupils continues to improve. The use of ICT to support pupils' learning is underdeveloped and opportunities are lost to use this to support pupils in their mathematical work. Homework is used very well to engage pupils in their learning and to give them opportunities to consolidate their learning.

## SCIENCE

96. The school has made very good improvement since the last full inspection. Lesson observations and the work scrutiny show, that in all aspects of their work, most pupils in Years 2 and 6 are attaining standards that are well above the national average. There has been a significant improvement in investigative science.
97. Throughout the school, pupils achieve very well and there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. During the inspection, pupils in Year 2 were observed talking about how they enjoyed making electrical circuits. The very good questioning by the teacher encouraged higher attainers to say how they built circuits using batteries wires and bulbs. They were very clear about the reason for the light getting dimmer when another bulb was added to the circuit.
98. In Year 3, the pupils were studying the senses. The teacher had prepared the resources very well for the pupils to experiment with different types of crisps. The objective was to determine whether it was easier to detect the flavour of the crisps by tasting or smelling them. They worked very well together and showed that they were learning the principle of how to carry out a fair test and interpret the results. In a good Year 5 lesson, the teacher questioned the pupils effectively about their previous work on sound. This was effective in reinforcing facts particularly for the lower-attaining pupils. She used very good scientific language when demonstrating high and low pitch using a guitar, glockenspiel and pipes. This consistent emphasis on specific vocabulary aids the pupils' strong literacy skills and aids the pupils' understanding of the subject. The very good subject knowledge of the Year 6 teacher enabled her to give effective help to the pupils with their investigation as they categorised different types of soils according to their textures. The pupils' very good English skills enabled them to speak with authority and clarity of thought, and record their results well. Measurement is a regular activity in many lessons, enriching the pupils' numeracy skills.

99. The quality of teaching and learning are very good overall. In the four lessons observed, the teaching was very good in three and good in the other. There is now a strong emphasis on investigation; this interests and motivates the pupils. Features of the very good teaching are the open-ended questioning by teachers; for example, 'What would happen if . . .?' and 'Why do you think . . .?' were significant factors in the pupils' very positive responses to their learning. Other strengths in teaching are the high expectations of teachers and their secure subject knowledge, which enable them to give clear explanations to pupils and provide work that extends the higher-attaining pupils. Planning is very good and the work is adapted and modified for pupils of all abilities. Pupils' books are very well marked and the best ones set challenging targets for the higher-attaining pupils. Although assessment is effective the school is aware that this needs to be developed further to bring it up to the high standard of the tracking in English and mathematics. Teachers are not using ICT enough; insufficient thought has been given to using computers for research and recording the results of investigations. This is unsatisfactory.
100. The pupils enjoy the subject and most have very good attitudes towards work. They are co-operative and respectful to one another and respond to their teachers with enthusiasm. Very good relationships exist between pupils and teachers and this is reflected in their good behaviour. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. This is because of very good support from all staff in relation to the technical vocabulary of science and the provision of suitable activities and good resources in lessons. Higher attaining pupils display a genuine interest and curiosity in science. They are beginning to realise that first-hand evidence gathered through investigation can cause them to change their minds.
101. The management of the subject is very good. Time has been allocated for the co-ordinator to monitor lessons; this has been used effectively and is helping to raise the quality of teaching and standards of attainment.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

102. Owing to the school's time-tabling arrangements, it was not possible to see many art lessons during the inspection. From two lesson observations, an examination of pupils' work in folios, folders, sketchbooks and on display, standards are well above average at the end of Year 2 and 6 and pupils achieve very well. These standards represent good improvement since the last inspection. There are no significant differences in learning between boys and girls, and well-supported pupils with educational needs make very good progress in lessons.
103. The pupils' work covers all the attainment targets in the National Curriculum and a wide range of media is used. In Year 1, there are displays of pupils' pictures of things they enjoy doing in school and at home in a colourful classroom art gallery. By the end of Year 2 pupils have created a whole-class mural with observational drawings of different parts of the school. A local weaver has visited the school and helped pupils in Years 2 and 3 to use a range of materials and to apply different methods of weaving. Year 3 pupils have also drawn attractive self-portraits in the style of Van Gogh. A portfolio of work completed by Year 6 exhibits some very mature, outstanding drawings of the old school house. Work on display shows that, by the end of Year 6, pupils can produce work for specific purposes, such as illustrating creation stories in the style of Aboriginal art and drawing pictures of African dances.
104. Pupils' drawings and paintings show how they have tried to appreciate the work of great artists. Their drawings and paintings show how they have tried to develop some of their techniques. Very good examples of this are the pictures and portraits made up using strokes of different colour after the style of Van Gogh. In a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils exchanged ideas enthusiastically and concentrated their creative energies on drawing faces in the style of L S Lowry. This lesson made a very good contribution to other subjects in the curriculum such as literacy and numeracy. Art and design clearly makes a very good contribution to cultural development and reflects the rich cultural heritage of the pupils.

105. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and understanding which are used very well to ensure that pupils make very good progress in lessons. Planning is very good and ensures continuity and progression as pupils move through the school. Teachers' expectations are very high and pupils' productivity and pace of working is very good. Teaching methods are very effective and teachers make very good use of time, support staff and resources. As a result, pupils' interest is maintained very well in lessons and levels of concentration ensure very good progress in learning. Teachers' informal assessment of pupils' work in lessons is satisfactory and helps them to make constructive suggestions as to how pupils can improve their work.
106. The co-ordinator provides good leadership for the subject. There are two after-school art clubs for pupils, one for Reception and Years 1 and 2, and another for the older pupils in Years 3 to 6. Areas for improvement are assessment and the extension of work using ICT, which is currently under-used to support teaching and learning. Resources for the subject are good and this has a positive impact on the standards attained by pupils.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

107. Standards are well above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. The timing of the inspection and the class timetables meant that only one lesson was observed during the week of the inspection. It is, therefore, impossible to make a judgement about the overall quality of teaching. However, judgements are based upon the close inspection of pupils' work, photographic evidence and discussions with the co-ordinator. These show that most pupils, including higher attainers and pupils with special educational needs, achieve very well as they move through the school.
108. In the one lesson observed in Year 2, pupils were designing a moving picture. The teacher worked hard at developing the pupils' thinking skills, and challenged them saying, 'This is a difficult task, but I know...'. This immediately helped the higher attainers to develop and share their ideas during group discussion. Such discussion also utilises and enriches the pupils' strong literacy skills.
109. Throughout the school, pupils' work covers all aspects of the National Curriculum: for example, developing, planning and communicating ideas, working with tools and materials, and evaluation. Through their work, pupils are gaining a very good knowledge and understanding of different materials. Last year in Year 2, pupils had first-hand experience of weaving techniques from a local weaver. They had been shown techniques such as carding, and learned facts about weaving with a loom such as the function of the shuttle. A very good display of work including tie and dye showed how pupils extended their knowledge of different textiles and fabrics. This linked well with work in art and science. In Year 6, pupils' designs were very carefully planned and they were able to apply their knowledge learned in other subjects; for example, measuring card and paper aids their numeracy skills. A scientific understanding of forces and circuits was apparent in the different types of fairground rides such as swing boats and merry-go-rounds. Very good mathematical understanding was also evident in the way supporting frames had been measured and accurately cut.
110. The co-ordination of design and technology is very good. Standards of design, making and evaluation are high. The school is starting to use ICT, but this is currently a weakness in the work; for example, using computers as an aid to design and to control models. Resources are good and the school has maintained a strong focus on this subject since the last inspection.



## **GEOGRAPHY**

111. Standards of attainment are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The majority of pupils are achieving well, including those with special educational needs and potentially higher attainers.
112. The work scrutiny in Years 1 and 2 and an analysis of the curriculum planning were used to make judgements in Years 1 and 2. The work fully covers National Curriculum requirements. The pupils are developing a sound knowledge of their own environment and places farther afield. Currently, in Year 1 the pupils are looking at different types of houses and the area around the school. Work in design and technology links well with this; for example, pupils had made models of houses.
113. The overall quality of teaching is good. In the Year 3 lesson observed, pupils were learning mapping skills. A good recap by the teacher and sharp questioning reinforced the pupils' prior knowledge about their walk around the school. The work was linked well with mathematics; for instance, directional and positional skills aided the pupils' numeracy skills. Pupils' geography books show good quality work about their routes to school. Subject vocabulary was taught well in this lesson – a clear example of how the pupils' advanced literacy skills are further developed and used to aid learning in this subject.
114. In Year 5, pupils were studying water and, particularly, how clean water was essential for living. They showed by their responses that they had a good knowledge of environmental issues in relation to the availability and use of water in countries around the world. Sound questioning helped them to think carefully about how we waste water in the home. A good link was established with history and the Victorians and their use of water. A higher-attaining pupil talked enthusiastically about how the Victorians used springs. However, some time was lost in this lesson because of a minority of pupils who persisted in talking at the same time as the teacher. Better resources would have improved the lesson; too many higher-attaining pupils copied facts from photocopied sheets.
115. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a responsibility for several other subjects and geography has not been a priority in the school action plan. Assessment is good, but currently she has insufficient time allocated for monitoring and this is not helping her to raise standards. Resources are satisfactory and are often supplemented by the loan of materials from the local education authority. The local environment is used effectively for learning; for example, the village, and Oldbury Woods. Insufficient attention has been given to the use of ICT. During the inspection the computers were not used for research and there was little evidence to suggest that digital photography is used to best effect, for example, to support the pupils' visits or achievements in the subject.

## **HISTORY**

116. The pupils' attainment is well above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils achieve very well over time as they move through the school and there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
117. In the lessons observed pupils made very good progress. For example, in a very good Year 2 lesson, pupils studying 'The Great Fire of London' made good comparisons between past and present times. Very good questioning by the teacher encouraged pupils to imagine that they were 'eyewitnesses' to 'The Great Fire of London'. They were able to apply their very good literacy skills when it came to writing their diary accounts. One higher-attaining pupil wrote, 'We ripped up our sheets and tied them together to escape from the house'.
118. In Year 4, pupils were studying the Anglo-Saxons and learning about crop rotation. The teacher had planned the lesson very well; this enabled pupils of all abilities to participate fully in the lesson. The pupils enjoyed miming; chopping down trees, sowing seeds, harvesting and reaping. When asked about crop rotation one pupil showed a very clear understanding by saying that if crops weren't rotated 'the soil would be depleted of nutrients'. Lower attainers worked hard on a

sequencing activity and received very good help from the learning support assistant. Such analysis of the passage of time aids the pupils' numeracy skills. This helped to reinforce the facts about crop rotation. Year 6 pupils enjoyed their lesson about the 1950s. Very good questioning by the teacher enabled them to see how people were influenced by the media; for example, smoking, coffee bars, 'Teddy Boys' and the music of the era. The majority of the pupils had remembered facts from previous lessons and were able to make good comparisons with life then and now. They mentioned the influence of the United States on the development of the car and 'pop' music.

119. Most pupils have very positive attitudes towards the subject. Their behaviour is very good and they show enthusiasm and interest in the work and are keen and eager to answer questions. Pupils work very collaboratively together, and their discussions utilise and extend their well-developed literacy skills.
120. Teaching was very good in all the three lessons observed. Through probing questioning and the provision of suitable resources, teachers are helping pupils to develop a very good sense of enquiry. There are good opportunities for pupils to look and discover how events and people in the past have helped to shape our culture today, and through this develop a sense of chronology. Resources are good. The curriculum is enriched by visits to places such as Ightham Mote when studying the Tudors, Lullingstone Roman Villa and Rochester Castle. The visit to the Isle of Wight is also used effectively to extend pupils' historical knowledge.
121. The subject is led very well and there are strong links with other subjects such as literacy, art, music, religious education and design and technology. However, the school does not use ICT sufficiently for research purposes, for example, by using CD-ROMs or the Internet, and this is restricting the pupils' independent research skills. Pupils show fascination for the subject and in response to the teachers' interesting teaching methods, work contributes strongly to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

#### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

122. Standards are average at the end of Year 2 and below average at the end of Year 6. Whilst this is a similar outcome to the last inspection, satisfactory improvements have taken place since that time, especially in the training of staff, and the provision of additional resources. As a result of these, standards are rising throughout the school, but there has not been long enough for the full impact to be seen at the end of Year 6. This means that, although pupils in Year 2 are achieving satisfactorily in relation to their previous level of skills, pupils in Year 6 are not yet achieving satisfactorily. At present, standards and pupils' achievements in word processing are better than in other strands of the subject, especially in control technology.
123. Satisfactory improvements have been made in provision for ICT. The introduction of a new computer suite in September 2002 is enabling pupils to have a better access to computers and they are making rapid progress with their learning. Although most pupils in Year 6 currently attain standards that are below national expectations, they are competent in a number of basic skills for word processing and are on course to meet national expectations. They lay out text, edit and save, for example, in writing stories and in literacy work. In one lesson observed they linked their ICT skills to current artwork on LS Lowry. Most are able to cut and paste pictures from one program to another. Pupils in Year 4 use simple word processing skills for storing and editing information. In Year 2, pupils are able to open a file with help and use the mouse for simple movement of information across the screen. They apply skills learned during the term to write a diary entry based on the Great Fire of London.
124. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection and is partly due to the good use teachers are making of ongoing training. A particular strength of the teaching was the thorough preparation undertaken by all staff, some of whom still lack confidence in this subject. Teachers have clear aims and strategies and provide appropriate activities. They expect good behaviour and achieve good standards of discipline. They manage classes well and provide appropriate stimulus and support. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated and receive additional support in using computers during

group sessions. In these sessions they make satisfactory progress. Teachers display a sound knowledge of the subject and their obvious enthusiasm is reflected in the progress that pupils are making in lessons. The new computer suite is a valuable resource and is having an impact on progress with pupils having regular access to good quality programs and equipment. However, the lack of a projector in the new ICT suite to magnify the screen image in lessons prevents teachers from making effective demonstrations of the key skills and techniques that they want to teach during lessons. Some classes do not have computers for follow-up work, but new laptops did arrive in the school during the inspection.

125. Although the ICT usage mentioned here is relevant and worthwhile, it has not yet had sufficient time to impact upon pupils' learning and to raise standards of achievement. ICT is increasingly used effectively in literacy lessons, where lists of key vocabulary enrich the pupils' skills, but other observations during the inspection indicated that opportunities to use ICT to support learning in other subjects are not sufficiently exploited. As a result, attainment and progress are inhibited because pupils do not have sufficient regular opportunities to extend their skills. In particular, ICT is not used sufficiently to promote the pupils' numeracy skills or to inform investigation in science. Discussions with pupils showed that, whilst they have a range of experiences with ICT work, the breadth and depth of what they do at present is too limited. In particular, they possess very limited knowledge of areas of work such as control, modelling and interrogating information using computers or other ICT equipment.
126. Teachers have worked hard to upgrade their own skills through recent ICT training and are currently building up their expertise further. Further training, for example, in control technology is needed to support teaching in Years 3 to 6. Satisfactory co-ordination of the subject has enabled significant progress to be made in improving the provision of facilities to a good level since the last inspection and the school is now well placed to move forward with developing the use of ICT. At present, a weakness is the absence of a satisfactory whole-school system for assessing pupils' progress through the National Curriculum. The co-ordinator has produced a detailed, updated action and development plan, which addresses important issues for the future development of the subject in the school. With the new ICT suite 'up and running', progress in the subject is rapid.

## **MUSIC**

127. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils attain above average standards, especially in composing music and in singing. Younger pupils also show skill and interest in performing using percussion instruments such as tambours, tambourines and wood blocks. Standards have improved well since the last full inspection in 2000. Most pupils, including higher attainers (who read notation accurately) and pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
128. Singing in assembly provides an ideal and regular venue for the pupils to present and enjoy their developing singing skills. Younger pupils show obvious excitement and interest as they move and sing to their favourite hymns and songs. Older pupils concentrate well to retain harmony and rhythm. All pupils enjoy the subject, handle and use instruments with respect in class and show interest in mastering musical notation. Many pupils benefit from regular instrumental tuition and most experiencing such extra-curricular support attain well above average standards.
129. By the end of Year 1, pupils show an above average knowledge of instrument names, readily acknowledge the difference between a tambour and a tambourine or the difference between long and short notes. Most attempt, with reasonable awareness, pictorial representations of rhythms and enjoy listening to various pieces, enjoyed previously in assemblies.
130. By the end of Year 2, pupils readily understand the term 'pitch' and can utilise pictorial representations such as a 'musical roller-coaster' to illustrate high and low sounds. Increasingly, matching the pupils' developing understanding, teachers introduce notation to record musical sounds. For example, in a lesson in Year 4, the pupils interpreted the pentatonic scale, matching the feelings associated with colour with rhythms. Most pupils make good progress in lessons and by the end of Year 6 interpret musical styles perceptively. For example, they understand the

influence of the popular tunes of the United States of America on the music in this country. They develop a good awareness of how lyrics fit with the tune. Most pupils sing well and show good harmony when singing in assembly.

131. Teaching and learning are good overall because teachers plan their lessons well, establish clear links with previous lessons and thus sustain a consistent progression in the pupils' learning. Teachers set high expectations, respond positively to the pupils' ideas and use specific subject vocabulary effectively to enrich the pupils' understanding. This was seen to good effect in a lesson in Year 1 where, when shown a tambour and a tambourine, pupils soon learned the distinctive differences between these two percussion instruments. All lessons are characterised by the sharing of specific learning objectives at the beginning of lessons and by the review of these objectives at the end of lessons. These strategies ensure that pupils learn what is taught rather than just experience activities. Occasionally, however, a few lessons lack sufficient stimulus and rely too much on the pupils' positive response and this restricts progress. Teachers have good skills though and when they use these, for example, by playing the guitar as in a lesson in Year 5, the pupils respond more positively.
132. The subject is led and managed effectively. The headteacher, as a holding co-ordinator, has monitored planning and has supported colleagues in their planning. The curriculum meets statutory requirement and planning is informed by day-to-day teachers' assessments gleaned from their effective use of questioning. Teaching and learning are supported effectively by a satisfactory range of resources but there is a shortage of library books about instruments and famous composers and musicians. There was little evidence to show that ICT is used to good effect in enriching learning but taped music is used well to promote the 'special ethos' of assemblies. Overall, work in the subject contributes well to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development. The teachers cultivate the pupils' creativity and effective links between art and design and music extend the pupils' imagination.
133. Annual performances at the 'Summer Music Afternoon' and separate school productions for Reception, Years 1 to 2 and 3 to 6 are enriched by the pupils' skilful singing and by the instrumental contributions of pupils who enjoy specific instrumental tuition. Music adds to the special occasion in assemblies and acts of collective worship and contributes positively to the ethos and enjoyment of learning within the school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

134. Standards are average by the end of Years 2 and 6 and have been sustained since the last inspection. There is no difference in attainment between boys and girls and all pupils have equal access to the physical education programme. Extra-curricular activities are provided by both school and volunteer staff and extend pupils' physical education opportunities. Football and netball clubs enable pupils to improve their skills and to represent their school at local tournaments. The school is also very fortunate to have secured the services of an 'All England High Performance' netball coach and parental support for football clubs. In the spring term the headteacher organised maypole dancing for public performance, and there are a variety of summer sports available. Good emphasis has been given to swimming, with pupils regularly engaged in learning to swim. Structural damage to the school's swimming pool may mean that pupils will have to swim in local community pools until it is repaired.
135. By the end of Year 2, pupils use the limited hall space appropriately to practise and refine different movements. For example, they explore different actions, such as jumping, with varying amounts of control and co-ordination. More able pupils join two movements together using their ideas. Year 2 pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons. They explore and demonstrate simple sequences of actions with increasing precision. They balance soundly and travel in movements involving changes of speed and direction. Pupils are aware of health and safety requirements. They use available space well and they are always careful to keep a safe distance from each other. They are able to explain the need for warm-ups and also cooling-down exercises. They are starting to evaluate the work of their peers, although this skill is not fully developed.

136. By the end of Year 6, most pupils can send and receive a ball accurately, although some show little confidence. They understand the importance of tactics, involving attack and defence techniques, and effective teamwork in small-sided games. They are encouraged to improve their performance by learning from previous performances. They start to appreciate the benefits of vigorous activity and of maintaining reasonable levels of fitness.
137. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Some good and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Where teaching is good, teachers place much emphasis on developing important skills, use resources well, ensure that lessons are suitably brisk to maintain momentum, and show enthusiasm themselves to increase levels of motivation and involvement. These features ensure that pupils' attitudes to lessons are overwhelmingly positive. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all lessons and receive sensitive support. However, some teachers miss opportunities to develop learning by encouraging pupils to evaluate their own performance and the performances of others, do not enable pupils sufficiently to learn from the good attempts of others, and do not focus enough on the effects of exercise on their bodies. Some teachers emphasise activities rather than developing skills, showing insecure subject knowledge and a lack of confidence.
138. The subject is soundly led and there are further positive plans for improvement. The subject leader actively supports the school's programme and leads various clubs effectively. Whilst planning uses national guidelines to make sure that statutory requirements are met, there are few formal strategies to evaluate the effectiveness of learning and the curriculum. Work in physical education does not utilise or enrich the pupils' literacy and numeracy or ICT skills sufficiently, for example, through self-evaluation or by measuring the impact of exercise on heart rates. School teams take part regularly in local tournaments, for example in football and netball, and all pupils take part in Annual Sports Days for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6. These enhance the competitive aspect of pupils' learning well.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

139. Aided significantly by their advanced and improving literacy skills, pupils' standards in religious education are well above the expectations laid down in the locally agreed syllabus for Years 2 and 6. This represents a good improvement since the previous full inspection, which found standards that matched expectations at the end of these years. Improved and more consistent teaching, sharpened planning that links prior learning with new learning and detailed teachers' assessments informed by effective questioning have raised expectations of what pupils should and can attain, thereby raising standards. The subject is given clear emphasis across the school and contributes strongly to the school's ethos of mutual respect and endeavour.
140. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and potentially higher attainers, achieve well, building successfully on the learning achieved in previous lessons and classes, as they move through the school. The teachers' rigorous, yet warm, questioning stimulates the pupils' interest and ideas that feed their developing understanding. As a consequence, learning is meaningful as it has natural links, making comparisons with their own experiences. This comparative approach to religious studies enriches the pupils' awareness and understanding and strengthens their respect for the religious customs, belief and practice of others. Such learning also contributes powerfully to the pupils' cultural development. For example, comparisons with Islamic belief in the revelation experienced by Muhammad with Christian belief in the life of Christ, create links that engender empathy and tolerance that are helpful in preparing pupils for life in our multi-cultural society.
141. Inspection shows that pupils develop a good awareness and respect for Christianity and other world faiths. Studies in Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism contribute to the pupils' above average knowledge. For example, pupils in Year 2 remember their visit to the local church, understand the importance of the church as a special place to Christians and describe stained glass windows as depicting 'Jesus as the light of the world'.
142. By Year 5, pupils study the teaching of Muhammad in the Qur'an, extend their understanding of religious terms. They learn how religious belief and practice can influence a person's life. They

study communities, their own, as well as others, for regular visits to the local church and visits from the local vicar underpin, the pupils' studies of Christianity. By the end of Year 6, pupils are articulate when describing how some people derive comfort and guidance through their faith and how religious belief often guides the rules and principles that support the cultural life of communities.

143. The quality of teaching and learning are good. Teachers are well prepared, promote warm relationships and by sharing lesson objectives and outcomes, set high expectations of learning. The pupils respond positively and with enthusiasm and this enriches their progress. The teachers make good use of artefacts to stimulate the pupils' interest. For example, in Year 6, the teacher used an example of Jewish headwear to illustrate how Jews respect and celebrate the Shabbat.
144. The subject is led and managed well. By monitoring the quality of teaching and planning the co-ordinator has ensured that colleagues use the pupils' literacy skills to support learning by emphasising specific religious vocabulary, for example, symbolism, reflection and belief.
145. The curriculum is well planned and is securely based on the locally agreed syllabus. The teachers often make productive cross-curricular links; for example, with history when considering how difficult it would have been for Anne Frank and her family to celebrate Shabbat in the customary fashion. Such links enrich the pupils' understanding. Resources are well organised and are in good supply and are used to support learning successfully. ICT is not used sufficiently to enhance learning and opportunities to extend the pupils' independent research skills, by using CD ROMs, for example, are not yet provided appropriately and this is restricting independent research.