

INSPECTION REPORT

Brunswick House Primary School

Maidstone

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118297

Head teacher: Sheila Dennis

Reporting inspector: Grace Marriott
3674

Dates of inspection: 20th –23rd January 2003

Inspection number: 247867

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 – 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Leafy Lane
Maidstone
Kent

Postcode: ME16 OQQ

Telephone number: 01622 752102

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Heather Narramore

Date of previous inspection: February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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3674	Grace Marriott	Registered inspector	History Information and Communication Technology English as an additional language	The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught?
19798	Jane O'Keefe	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27899	Georgie Beasley	Team inspector	Reception Classes Physical Education	
11982	Ray Morris	Team inspector	Science Geography	How well does the school care for its pupils?
23079	Adrian Everix	Team inspector	Mathematics Educational Inclusion	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
30244	Roger Tapley	Team inspector	Art and design Design and Technology Religious Education Special Educational Needs	
20760	Sheila Roberts	Team inspector	English Music	How well is the school led and managed?
27654	Robina Scahill	Team inspector		

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	12
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	17
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	19
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	20
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	24

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Brunswick House is a larger than average primary school in Maidstone, Kent. It has 344 boys and girls aged 4 to 11 on roll. This is an increase of nearly 70 since the last inspection. Mostly pupils are of white UK heritage and come from a wide range of family backgrounds. A few pupils have English as an additional language with very few at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average. The main special needs are moderate learning difficulties, speech, dyslexia and autism. The school moved into a new building in the summer of 2002. The staff are currently taking part in a national pilot scheme called *Pathfinder* which is designed to raise standards. Children join the Reception Classes with average knowledge and skills overall, though with good personal and social skills, and good speaking skills.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school has largely maintained its strengths from the previous inspection and continues to provide a sound education in a stimulating environment. The teaching is also satisfactory overall with some good features. Standards are average in English and mathematics and above average in information and communication technology (ICT) and several other subjects. Head teacher and staff have a very strong team approach, with an increasingly effective focus on raising standards. The school is well led and managed and the governors are supportive. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils have good speaking and listening skills, they are confident and articulate in discussion
- Standards in information and communication technology, religious education, design and technology, science and art are above average
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, have positive attitudes and take full advantage of a wide range of opportunities and excellent extra-curricular activities
- The new premises and facilities provide a very good environment for teaching and learning
- Attendance is well above average

What could be improved

- Standards in mathematics are satisfactory but there is some under-achievement
- Standards in English are satisfactory overall, but spelling is below average and is not being taught consistently across the school
- Teachers could use the information from assessing pupils' work more effectively to match work set to the needs of all pupils and increase their rate of progress

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1998. Since then the improvement has been satisfactory overall and very good in some areas, most notably the completion of the new buildings and the development of the ICT facilities. Standards in English and mathematics are broadly similar, but there has been an improvement in the standards in religious education (RE), design and technology, ICT, art and geography. The school has dealt systematically with the management issues raised and also now had a good programme for inducting new staff and providing staff development.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores¹ in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	C	C	D
Mathematics	A	B	C	E
Science	B	D	C	D

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

In 2002, test results in Year 2 were well above average in writing, above average in mathematics and average in reading. Pupils' achievement was satisfactory when compared with their standards at the end of Reception. The test results in Year 6 were average in all three subjects, and consistent with the same pupils' Year 2 test results in English and science, but not in mathematics. Here they were somewhat below expectations, mainly because pupils did not have enough skills in applying mathematics. When compared with the results of pupils in similar schools, attainment was below average in English and science and well below in mathematics. Results in Years 2 and 6 have fluctuated in recent years, largely because of variations in the attainment of the pupils when they started school, though in mathematics, some higher-attaining pupils have not done as well as they might. The school's targets for 2002 were affected by pupils who joined the school late, but they were also too challenging and were not achieved.

By the end of the Reception year, most children are on track to reach the early learning goals² in reading, writing and mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. They are above average in speaking and listening and in their personal and social development. Most children learn to work independently and to share and take turns well. In Years 1 and 6 current standards are broadly average in English, mathematics, and most other subjects. They are better than average in ICT, art, design and technology, RE and in science in Years 3 to 6. Pupils are achieving broadly in line with what could be expected from their attainment in previous years. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress, as do gifted and talented pupils. Those pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards achieving the targets on their individual education plans.

Literacy skills are satisfactory. Pupils enjoy reading and use their knowledge of letter sounds well to read unknown words. Written work is generally grammatically accurate, but spelling is a weakness throughout the school and detracts from the otherwise good standard. In mathematics all pupils are achieving satisfactorily. Numeracy skills are average overall. At this stage in the year most Year 2 pupils add and subtract to ten, and higher-attainers are adding single digit amounts to numbers under 100. By Year 6, they have a satisfactory understanding of place value with the highest attainers working with four digit numbers. Pupils have good ICT skills. They use computers confidently and competently in many subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes continue to be a strength. They enjoy coming to this school and in lessons, most are very attentive and usually try their best. A small minority, mostly in Year 6, have less impressive attitudes to their education.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Most pupils behave well in class and around the school. A few are less well behaved and can behave in an immature way.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good. Pupils work well together collaborating well in lessons and sensibly discussing their work. Pupils respond well when given to opportunities to

¹ Points are allocated for each level achieved i.e. Level 6 equals 39 points, Level 5 equals 33, Level 4 equals 27, Level 3 equals 21, and Level 2 equals 15 points. The average for the school is calculated for each subject and compared with other schools. Similar schools means those schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals

² The early learning goals are what most children should have achieved by the time they start Year 1

	take responsibility or show initiative.
Attendance	Well above average. Pupils attend regularly and punctually.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

In Reception, the teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with particular strengths in planning activities which will develop good personal and social skills. Good questioning also helps to probe the children's understanding and introduce them to new knowledge and skills. There are differences in the way that learning is organised and managed in the two classes and this sometimes limits the development of independence and responsibility in one class. Assessment procedures provide a good range of useful information about how well the children are learning and their progress, but could be used more effectively to make sure that some children do not repeat work unnecessarily.

In Years 1 and 2 the teaching and learning were satisfactory overall, with some good teaching and a few unsatisfactory lessons. In Years 3 to 6 the teaching was good overall with some that was satisfactory and some that was very good. The main strengths in the good and very good teaching in all year groups were in the shared planning, the effective use of resources, particularly ICT, and the questioning techniques which developed pupils' understanding and prompted them to think in more depth. Teaching assistants were almost always deployed to work effectively with small groups. Staff provide a good level of support to pupils with learning difficulties, which contributes effectively to their achievement. Pupils with English as an additional language are appropriately supported in mainstream lessons. The strengths in the teaching were most evident in Years 3 to 6 and in the good lessons Years 1 and 2. Where teaching was satisfactory, the pace of work tended to be slower and the worksheets did not meet the needs of all pupils. In some lessons, the work was too difficult for lower-attaining pupils and in others it was not challenging enough for the higher-attainers. On the very few occasions when teaching was unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2 this was because the lesson did not help pupils to build on what they could already do or because the teacher had to spend too much time managing behaviour. The teaching of English and mathematics are satisfactory overall. The emphasis on developing speaking and writing skills has been largely effective, although the weaknesses in the teaching of spelling are limiting pupils' achievement. Phonic skills are taught consistently but the teaching of reading, while satisfactory, has not had as much emphasis recently as writing. In numeracy lessons the initial mental mathematics sessions stimulated pupils' enthusiasm, but the work which followed did not always develop knowledge and skills as much as it could have done.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good curriculum that meets legal requirements. The range of extra-curricular activities is excellent.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils are well supported and make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils are usually well catered for in mainstream lessons and the school has access to appropriate specialist support
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall the school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety are good

The school has worked hard to forge good links with parents and they are happy with the care and education the school provides. The curriculum for the Reception Classes is appropriate, though better use could be made of the outdoor area. In Years 1 to 6, pupils benefit from a curriculum that gives a good balance of creative, practical and academic work. Meaningful links between different subjects, for example art, mathematics and history, help to broaden

pupils' knowledge and understanding. Assessment is satisfactory overall because teachers systematically assess and record pupils' achievements. The information is not yet used as consistently as it could be to track individuals' progress through the school and make sure that the work matches pupils' needs.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led and managed. The head teacher, senior management team and staff work very well together to provide clear educational direction.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body provides good support for the school. Governors visit regularly and are well informed about school developments. They have been less involved in strategic planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The head teacher and senior managers evaluate systematically. This has had a positive effect on the quality of teaching and on those areas identified for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is good and expenditure is clearly linked to priorities in the school improvement plan

The new buildings and facilities provide a very good environment for teaching and learning. Resources are good overall and very good in ICT, reading and music. The school is well staffed and the partnership between class teachers and teaching assistants is particularly effective. The governors' involvement in strategic planning is satisfactory and increasing, but they have yet to take on fully the role of critical friend. The school achieves value for money in purchasing, but has not yet applied the principles of best value to evaluating the impact of spending decision on the standards pupils are achieving.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • The teaching is good • The school has high expectations • Behaviour is good • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework • The information for parents about how well their children are doing • How closely the school works with parents

The inspection team supported the parents' positive views of their children's attitudes, behaviour and personal development. The teaching is satisfactory overall, though many lessons were good and expectations are satisfactory overall. The school tries to work closely with parents, but a significant minority do not feel well informed. The staff and governors are aware of this and are considering how to improve matters. The inspection team felt that the school provides a good range of general information and that reports provide appropriate information for parents, though sometimes with too much jargon. The information provided for parents of the children in Reception is very good. The homework set is generally suitable for the age of pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Most children are on track to reach the early learning goals in reading, writing and mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. They are above average in speaking and listening and in their personal and social development. The regular practice of handwriting and phonic skills helps them to have a go at reading simple texts, to learn the sounds that letters represent, and form most letters correctly. Many children were able to retell the story of *Little Red Riding Hood* in the correct order and, in a later activity when writing letters, many wrote their names correctly before attempting their own writing. Higher-attaining children are beginning to write some familiar words correctly, but most are still making simple marks on paper to represent the words. In mathematical development the children are developing a sound understanding of numbers. The café role-play areas allow the children to exchange money and when this uses coins that adding up to ten pence or less, the children play confidently, needing little adult help. The children use computers and tape players confidently and independently. They have good skills at moving pictures around the screen and some load favourite programs and tapes themselves.
2. Children have good relationships with each other and with adults, so that they are confident to ask for help when they need it. They will confidently hold a conversation with an adult and explain what they are doing. Most children learn to work independently and to share and take turns well. Adults have high expectations of the children taking care of their own personal needs. Consequently, all children have good levels of independence, for example when changing for physical education (PE) or when finding their own coats and boots to go outside.
3. The 2002 test results in Year 2 were well above average in writing, above average in mathematics and average in reading. Pupils' achievement was satisfactory when compared with their standards at the end of Reception. The school has been focusing very strongly on writing, which explains why the results here were much better than in most schools. The test results in Year 6 were average in English and science and consistent with the results these pupils had achieved in Year 2. In mathematics, the results were average but somewhat below expectations, mainly because pupils did not have enough skills in applying mathematics. When compared with the results of pupils in similar schools, attainment was below average in English and science and well below in mathematics. Results in Years 2 and 6 have fluctuated in recent years, largely because of variations in the attainment of the pupils when they started school, though in mathematics some higher-attaining pupils have not done as well as they might. The school's targets for 2002 were affected by a number of pupils who joined the school late, but were also too challenging and were not achieved.
4. Current standards are broadly average across the school in English, mathematics, history, geography, PE, music, and in science in Years 1 and 2. Standards are better than average in ICT, art, design and technology, RE, and science in Years 3 to 6. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall and are achieving broadly in line with what could be expected from their attainment at the end of the Reception year.
5. Literacy skills are satisfactory overall. Pupils enjoy reading and throughout the school, pupils use their knowledge of letter sounds well to read unknown words. They read aloud with good expression and enjoy reading challenging texts. Pupils of all abilities can discuss the plot and characters of their books confidently. Written work is generally grammatically accurate at an appropriate level for the different age groups. The best written work shows good skills. Year 3 pupils wrote some very good

reports imagining that they were Howard Carter reporting from *The Valley of the Kings*, and some Year 6 pupils showed great perception in their character analyses, describing the person's feelings and attitudes with real empathy. Spelling is, however, a weakness throughout the school, and affects written work in most subjects. Speaking and listening skills are good across the school. Pupils respond well to opportunities to use their skills, as for example when Year 6 pupils led a whole school assembly very well. They used microphones confidently and read aloud clearly and with very good expression.

6. In mathematics, all pupils are achieving satisfactorily. Numeracy skills are average overall. Most Year 2 pupils add and subtract to ten, although at this stage of the year several still require objects to help them with their calculations and higher-attainers are adding single digit amounts to numbers under 100. By Year 6, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of place value. Average-attainers accurately multiplied and divided numbers by 100 and had an understanding of the value of digits, for example when calculating that 0.6×100 is 60. They identified various shapes using correct terms such as *diagonals* and *vertices* and constructed line graphs to convert Fahrenheit temperatures to centigrade. Higher-attaining pupils demonstrated more advanced skills, especially when working with number. They were calculating that 2 divided by 1000 is 0.002 and find the lowest common denominator to solve $\frac{2}{3} + \frac{4}{7}$.
7. In science pupils' good practical work contributes strongly to the standards. For example In a mixed Year 1 and 2 class the first hand experience of seeing chocolate melt and then solidify again helped pupils to understand the idea of liquid and solid states and that, for some materials, the change in their state is reversible. In all year groups they write clear accounts of practical investigations following a standard structure, but have not yet had the opportunity to decide for themselves how to record their findings.
8. Pupils use a range of ICT applications confidently and competently. Year 1 pupils were loading a program and saving and printing their work. Year 2 pupils used word processing to develop their spelling skills and in Year 3, they were using a spreadsheet to help them practise addition. Pupils at all stages use the Internet sensibly for research. In Year 6, pupils were using a website to find out information about Victorian leisure activities and toys.
9. In PE, standards are average overall, but in swimming they are better than average with almost all pupils learning to swim 25 metres. However, standards in dance in Years 1 and 2 are below average, mainly because of the limitations of the teaching. In music the particular strengths are in singing, pupils sing tunefully and can sustain a two or three-part song. The extra-curricular work in both PE and music supports and develops well the work done in lessons.
10. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their abilities. In science for example, pupils were able to explain how a circuit worked and could accurately draw and identify electric symbols in their diagrams. In an English lesson, pupils could follow two levels of instructions and were confidently completing the tasks set

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes continue to be a strength. From Reception onwards, they clearly enjoy coming to this school and this is reflected in their good attitudes to their work. In lessons, most pupils are very attentive and usually try their best. They are enthusiastic about their work and are keen to answer questions and take part in their lessons. A small minority of pupils, however, mostly in Year 6, have less impressive attitudes to their education, often responding in an immature fashion to lessons. Staff are very aware of these concerns and are working hard with these pupils and are helping them to

become more confident and responsive. Behaviour in lessons is generally good. Pupils listen well to teachers and each other. Occasionally, some younger pupils behave less well when they are ineffectively managed by teachers and at times the less well-motivated older pupils do not behave well. Pupils move around the school in a very orderly fashion and take a pride in their attractive new school building. Lunchtimes are relaxed and friendly with pupils chatting happily with their friends. Behaviour in the playground is satisfactory. There have been no exclusions in the past year.

12. Pupils are confident and articulate. They are both courteous and friendly to visitors, often opening doors or asking if they can be of assistance. They treat each other with kindness and respect. Relationships are good in the school with pupils collaborating well in lessons and sensibly discussing their work. Pupils do not regard bullying as an issue and they are confident that, should an incident occur, staff would deal it with promptly and fairly. Pupils are given a number of responsibilities around the school and in their classrooms. For instance, they help prepare for assemblies and have various monitor jobs within their classes. In the Reception Classes, children manage personal skills well and work independently, for instance on the computers. When given the opportunity to show initiative, the pupils respond appropriately.
13. The pupils' enthusiasm for their school is reflected in the very good attendance figures which are well above those of other schools nationally. No unauthorised absences were noted in the past year. Pupils arrive promptly each morning. Registers are taken efficiently at the beginning of each session and lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. More than nine out of every ten lessons were satisfactory or better and just over half were good or very good. This is a higher proportion of good teaching than at the last inspection. There was good teaching in all year groups but there were however some significant variations. In general the teaching of older pupils is more consistently good than the teaching of younger pupils. In Reception the teaching was satisfactory with some that was good, in Years 1 and 2 it was satisfactory overall, with some good teaching and a few unsatisfactory lessons. In Years 3 to 6 the teaching was good overall with some that was satisfactory and some that was very good.
15. In the Reception Classes, the teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with particular strengths in planning activities which will develop good personal and social skills. The differences between the way that learning is organised and managed in the two classes sometimes limits the development of independence and responsibility, in one class. Good questioning also helps to probe the children's understanding and introduce them to new knowledge and skills. The literacy session on the story of *Little Red Riding Hood* was a particularly good example of skilful questioning and the children enjoyed the challenge of thinking up a new ending to the story, thus adding more interest to the activity, and motivating them further to take part. The activities planned support both personal development and language development. During the inspection, the children made pizzas, thinking about their favourite toppings. This provided a very good opportunity to learn new vocabulary to describe what they were doing, and to talk about changing materials and think about personal likes and dislikes. The lesson built successfully on learning in previous lessons, when the children had tasted breads and other foods from different countries.
16. Assessment procedures provide a good range of useful information about how well the children are learning and their progress but it could be used more effectively to make sure that some children do not repeat work unnecessarily. For example in one class some tasks were too difficult for the lower-attaining children, or the higher-attaining children take part in unnecessary activities, which are too easy. When children played a game involving adding money, two higher-attaining children who could

already add two numbers together in their heads to make totals to ten, were expected to take part in a much simpler activity.

17. The main strengths in the good and very good teaching in all year groups were in the shared planning, the effective use of resources, particularly ICT, and the questioning techniques. In Years 3 to 6 in particular, the shared planning makes good use of teachers' expertise and interests and ensures that pupils in the same year group have a comparable experience whichever class they are in. In all year groups, good questioning techniques develop pupils' understanding and prompted them to think in more depth. Similarly, in the good lessons, resources are used effectively. In an English lesson in Year 2, the use of laptops and the ICT suite successfully developed pupils' vocabulary and their understanding of word groups. In geography in Year 5, the use of a scouring pad as a visual aid and the subsequent questioning helped pupils to understand clearly the scouring effect of glaciers. In design and technology, the teacher guided pupils to think about objects and buildings in real life as groups used websites on 'shelters' in preparation for their future designs. In a very successful dance lesson in Year 6 the teacher used lively music to motivate the pupils and stimulate their imagination and give them ideas on how they could vary and improve their movements and sequences.
18. In all year groups, teaching assistants were deployed well and worked effectively with small groups. They are well trained, fully involved in the planning and have a clear understanding of their role in lessons. In addition to working well alongside teachers in classrooms, several teaching assistants were observed working successfully in the ICT suite helping pupils to develop a good range of skills. (Occasionally, though, pupils saw the use of the computers as more important than the subject being studied). The art lessons seen in Years 3 and 4 drew heavily and successfully on the expertise of teaching assistants.
19. Where teaching was satisfactory rather than good in all year groups, the pace of work tended to be slower and the work did not meet the needs of all pupils. A weakness in the school as a whole is in the use of information from assessment to plan the next steps. For example, in some mathematics lessons all pupils started at the same point on worksheets, which meant that for some pupils the first questions were too easy. In English, at times, the work was not well enough matched to the needs of the pupils.
20. In the few unsatisfactory lessons in Years 1 and 2, which were mainly in PE, the work did not build on what pupils could already do and meant that they made little or no progress. In one lesson, the teacher had to spend too much time managing poor behaviour, which had a detrimental effect on the learning of the class as a whole. There are also weaknesses in the teaching of dance in the younger classes. Teachers lack expertise in this aspect and do not always give pupils enough opportunities to evaluate their own performance and to describe what is good about each other's performance. Therefore, pupils are not learning quickly enough in how to identify what they need to do next to improve the quality of their sequences.
21. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory overall. The emphasis on developing speaking and writing skills has been largely effective, although the weaknesses across the school in the teaching of spelling are limiting pupils' achievement. Phonic skills are taught consistently, but the teaching of reading, though satisfactory, has not had as much emphasis recently as writing. In an excellent lesson in Year 5, the teacher used a variety of strategies successfully to develop pupils' descriptive writing skills. They had to listen, describe what they heard and then analyse their vocabulary to develop their ideas further. Where the teaching was satisfactory, the overall level of challenge was not as great, and in some lessons the teacher had to spend a significant amount of time managing pupils' behaviour.

22. All teachers introduced numeracy lessons enthusiastically and this enlivened pupils' interest. Several pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they enjoyed their mathematics lessons. The purposes of lessons were nearly always shared with pupils and this helped them to understand what they were learning. Teachers expected pupils to use the correct mathematical terms such as *partitioning* or *numerator* when talking about their work. The difference between the satisfactory and the good numeracy teaching lay in the accuracy with which the subsequent work in lessons was matched to the pupils' needs.
23. All teachers and support staff provide a good level of support to pupils with learning difficulties, which effectively contribute to their achievement. Most pupils work successfully towards their targets alongside other pupils in the classroom. These targets are clearly linked with work on the national curriculum subjects. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Occasionally, when targets set for learning are not specific enough or the pace of work is too slow, progress is poor and pupils lose interest.

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

24. Overall, the school provides a good curriculum that meets legal requirements. All aspects of learning are suitably planned in the Reception Classes, though the outdoor area is not yet fully exploited. In Years 1 to 6, pupils benefit from a curriculum that gives a good balance of creative, practical and academic work. Co-ordinators carefully check planning for each age group to ensure all aspects of their subjects are taught. Meaningful links between different subjects, for example art, mathematics and history, help to broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding. The strengths of the curriculum identified in the last inspection have been maintained and the provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) has improved.
25. The school is imaginative when considering ways in which the curriculum can be improved. In Years 3 and 4, a system is being evaluated whereby classes go to different teachers for some subjects. This means, for example, that classes in these year groups are taught by the same teacher for music or PE and pupils benefit from the individual skills and interests of staff. A critical eye is kept on this arrangement and the organisation of the afternoons has changed to ensure that lessons are of adequate length.
26. The school has fully implemented the new Code of Practice for pupils identified with special educational needs. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school uses a range of school-based and national tests to determine pupils' needs. These are identified at an early stage and pupils placed on the register of special educational needs. Once identified, pupils have support throughout the school and this contributes to the good results they achieve for their ability. Most individual education plans contain clear targets identifying areas for improvements. Targets are reviewed regularly and programmes of work adjusted according to need. Pupils have access to all areas of the curriculum and the full range of learning opportunities.
27. Trips to places of educational interest, including studies of the locality and a residential visit for Year 6, enrich the curriculum. The expertise of visitors, such as musicians, poets and members of the local community, broadens pupils' learning. Good, constructive relationships have been established with other schools. Positive links with staff from local schools, including one catering for pupils with special educational needs, enable the exchange of ideas for improved learning and other aspects of school life, such as playground management. The school benefits from the use of facilities at a local secondary school for musical productions and from special days when groups of pupils from local primary schools meet, for example, to work on technology projects. Students from local colleges and

secondary schools regularly work in the school. As well as supporting the students, this provides pupils and teachers with additional help and expertise. For example, work experience students assist in football training and trainee nursery nurses work in the Reception Classes.

28. An excellent range of clubs and activities significantly enriches pupils' learning at lunch times and out of school hours. Several clubs are available for pupils in Years 1 and 2, and the opportunities widen as pupils get older. Staff give generously of their time to organise clubs for ICT, writing, mathematics, newspaper, chess, drama and a wide range of sports and music. In addition, pupils have many opportunities to perform and compete. For example, the orchestra and choir perform to different audiences and sports teams participate in a range of competitions.
29. PHSE is planned effectively. Teachers follow the helpful guidance provided by the school and, consequently, the lessons seen during the inspection were usually taught well. The development of pupils as citizens has a strong emphasis, as in a lesson for Years 1 and 2 where the importance of being a good member of the community was successfully discussed. Sex education and drug awareness are carefully planned into the programme of work. An awareness of issues is enhanced by outside visitors, including a nurse, and theatre companies, whose work with pupils covers such topics as anger management.
30. Staff value all pupils equally as individuals, whatever their needs, and work hard to make sure they get their best from their time in school. Pupils with learning difficulties are usually well supported so that they are fully included in lessons. Those with behavioural difficulties are given extra support, and focused discussions with small groups of these pupils help to build their self-esteem and develop an improved approach to learning. Work for pupils with English as an additional language is carefully planned to ensure they benefit well from lessons. The school is aware of the needs of the highest-attaining pupils and has introduced strategies to help them fulfil their full potential, especially in mathematics. Girls and boys are given the same opportunities for learning, including participation in activities out of school hours.
31. Overall, the school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Spiritual development is promoted effectively through subjects such as religious education, art and music. For instance, in one R.E. lesson pupils were able to reflect sensitively on a bible story about a precious coin. Assemblies are used very well to promote a feeling of community and consideration of others amongst the pupils. In an excellent whole school assembly pupils were asked to think about the story of Joseph and express their feelings about it, which they did with great very sensitivity.
32. Moral development is fostered well. Pupils are consistently made aware of the difference between right and wrong. When Year 5 were studying the life of Elizabeth Fry they expressed shock and dismay when learning of the living conditions in Victorian women's prisons. The programme for PSHE usefully helps them to consider moral issues. During a circle time in Year 6 some pupils were able to openly discuss their concerns and opinions about recent world events.
33. The success of the school's provision for social development is clearly reflected in the good behaviour found around the school. The behaviour code works well and most pupils clearly value and respect the system of rewards and sanctions. Pupils are given opportunities to be able to work together in pairs and small groups during lessons, and Year 6 pupils benefit from the experience of a residential trip to the Isle of Wight. The recently introduced group times for Year 6 pupils gives them good opportunities to work together on a range of activities.
34. The provision for cultural development is effective. Pupils are given good opportunities to experience their own culture through visits to theatres, museums and art galleries and through visits from poets,

writers and theatre groups. Pupils support the local elderly at Christmas by singing carols for them and sending them gift parcels at Harvest Festival. Multi-cultural development is promoted through the celebration of festivals, the use of *Barnaby, the travelling bear* and the very good use of display. An example of this is the attractive welcome poster near the entrance of the school, produced by some of the younger pupils, which shows greetings in a range of languages from around the world. Festivals from a range of cultures are studied across the school with, most recently, children in Reception making paper dragons to celebrate Chinese New Year.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school has good procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety and makes good provision for their personal support and development. The views expressed by parents strongly support the school's achievement in this aspect of its work. The school demonstrates a philosophy in which all pupils are equally valued. This is explicitly expressed in the school's mission statement, is adopted by staff and governors alike, and permeates all aspects of school life. Pupils feel valued, safe and know they are well taught. The school actively promote learning about and tolerance of different beliefs and cultures. The race equality policy is good.
36. The head teacher and governors take their responsibility for health and safety seriously. There are regular checks carried out by the head teacher and site manager in line with the school's policy. Three members of staff are designated First Aiders and all teachers have had basic training. Good procedures exist to deal with injury or sickness; parents are immediately informed of any injuries, especially to the head, and appropriate records are kept. The school has a very good Internet safety policy, which is very well displayed next to computers. Child protection procedures are properly established, and appropriate systems exist to deal with any concerns should they arise.
37. Pupils' personal and social development is closely monitored and, when necessary, sensitive measures are agreed with individuals to help promote these more effectively. The school has good systems for monitoring and promoting attendance. Absences and late arrival are quickly followed up. The school secretary regularly reviews each pupil's attendance and punctuality, and the Education Welfare Service is involved if necessary.
38. Staff are generally effective in promoting good behaviour. Policies for dealing with bullying and oppressive behaviour are established in daily routines. Pupils agree their own class rules and appropriate rewards and sanctions are employed to maintain the good behaviour and positive attitudes observed around the school during the inspection. Pupils were clear about how bullying would be dealt with if it did occur. Regular achievement assemblies and the use of the Golden Book celebrate good behaviour. The system of Class Councils, when pupils can discuss aspects of school life, provides opportunities for them to become directly involved in establishing a calm and ordered atmosphere.
39. The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. It now needs to make better use of the information gained to ensure there is a sufficient level of challenge in the work planned for all pupils. Good use is made of assessment information when children start in the Reception Classes. Data are analysed, targets for development are set and progress is monitored. In the other year groups, Assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science are good overall and plans are in place to extend these by making more effective use of information technology. Teachers systematically record pupils' academic achievements. However, the information from assessment is not being used consistently enough to track individual progress and plan appropriate work. This is particularly important in mathematics and science where the match of work to pupils' needs is not always good enough, particularly, though not exclusively, for the higher-attainers. Other subjects do not, as yet, have assessment systems, because these have not been priorities for development. The involvement of pupils in assessing their own progress is being encouraged.

Teachers are rightly devoting time to developing systems of marking which give pupils a clearer idea of how to improve their work and to help them learn how to learn.

40. The school keeps detailed records and documentation on all pupils with special educational needs, all class teachers have their own special educational needs file. This ensures they are knowledgeable about individual difficulties pupils might encounter and ensures they receive appropriate support and guidance. Teaching assistants give good support, as for example in a science lesson when the teaching assistant guided a pupil through the task by asking careful questions. The school is beginning to develop a system to record the pupils' views of their progress. There are regular meetings with outside agencies, which support the school in developing appropriate plans for their pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. Parents are happy with the care and education the school provides. In the questionnaires and at the meeting many parents confirmed that their children enjoy coming to this school, and that they were particularly happy with the teaching and the expectations of what their children should achieve.
42. Parents receive useful information in the form of newsletters, the school's brochure and annual report. Children in the Reception Classes bring home their own attractively presented newsletter each week, with other classes receiving useful curriculum information. The governors' annual report to parents also provides information on the curriculum and the meeting is often well attended. Two consultation meetings are held each year, with an open afternoon and written reports provided in the summer term. These reports provide appropriate information on pupils' progress and work covered, and give parents and their children an opportunity to respond to them. The style of some reports is not always helpful, with far too much educational jargon used. In the Reception Classes staff run regular workshops for parents to explain different areas of the curriculum and how their children learn. These work well and are much valued by parents. Parents also appreciate the accessibility of all teachers, who are always willing to talk to them at the beginning and end of the school day should they have a concern. However, a minority of parents do not feel well informed and do not feel that the school works closely enough with them. The school is anxious to overcome this perception, and the governors are looking at ways to improve communication with parents.
43. The school has worked hard to forge good links with parents for whom English is an additional language. Events and meetings have been arranged for these parents and they, in turn, have visited the school helping to provide, for example, artefacts and food for the celebration of festivals.
44. The parent-teacher association is well run and active. Regular fund raising and social events are held which provide funds for extra resources such as stage lighting for school productions. The school's parent governors are knowledgeable and committed, providing good support to both parents and staff. Parents support their children's education appropriately by supporting them with their homework. Some parents help in school with, for instance, hearing readers and many provide help on outings. The home-school agreement is signed by all pupils and their parents.
45. Parents of pupils with learning difficulties have additional opportunities to work in partnership with the school and to understand the steps their children need to take to help them progress. This is effectively achieved for parents of the younger children because attendance at review meetings is good. Attendance at review meetings for older children is not as good and this has not always been followed up. Some parents of children with special educational needs are unsure of how well their children are progressing. The school does not always record the advice they give to parents for supporting their children at home, therefore opportunities are lost for assessing the impact parents have on their children's progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The school is well led and managed. The purposeful leadership of the head teacher, deputy and senior management team, ensures a clear educational direction for the school. The strong team ethos, involves all staff in school improvement. Many initiatives have been introduced aimed at raising standards. These include more rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning, the tracking of pupils' progress, and target setting. The school's aims and values are well reflected in the daily life of the school. Staff morale and motivation are high. Professional development and training for teachers and assistants are priorities with the result that staff feel valued and supported. There has been good improvement since the last inspection when key issues were to strengthen leadership of the school by developing the expertise and increasing the effectiveness of the senior management team, and by regular and systematic monitoring by the head teacher and coordinators. These are now firmly established.
47. The school's commitment to and capacity for further improvement are good. Members of the senior management team and the subject co-ordinators are developing a good understanding of key strengths and weaknesses. They monitor planning and pupils' recorded work, have good opportunities to observe lessons and provide teachers with feedback on their teaching. Performance management is firmly in place and teachers are set targets closely linked to improving pupils' performance. The school has recently achieved the 'Investors in People' award. Staff training fully includes the teaching assistants and makes a significant contribution to the high quality of support they provide. The school is currently piloting a government sponsored *Pathfinder* initiative. Joint planning in year groups, which has made teachers more aware about their actual teaching and enabled them to share expertise, has been a successful aspect of this. Equally successful is the contribution of teaching assistants. Teachers are making effective use of non-contact time for preparation and marking. Although it is too early to measure the impact of this initiative on standards, it has led to the introduction of more rigorous assessment initiatives. Induction for new staff, including the support given to newly qualified teachers, is very good. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. The school improvement plan is well written, and has targets which are clearly focused on raising standards and improving the quality of learning.
48. The special educational needs co-ordinator has only recently taken over the role. She has written a detailed action plan, closely linked to the school improvement plan, which puts a number of systems into place, though the school has not yet developed one for evaluating the impact of special needs provision on pupils' progress. All staff are involved in training, and teaching assistants have had recent training in working with children who have on the sensory and or physical impairment.
49. The governing body provides very good support for the school. They are well informed about school developments by the head teacher. Many of them are regular visitors to the school and have developed a good working partnership with the head teacher and staff. Each governor has responsibility for an area of the curriculum. They work effectively in committees dealing with issues relating to premises, finance, curriculum, and staffing. They receive presentations from subject coordinators, and have participated in a development day with the staff to discuss different aspects of the school. These helped inform the school improvement plan drawn up by the head teacher and senior management team. The new chairman and other members of the governing body are very aware of the need for the governing body to be more objective and to further develop its role as 'critical friend' to the school. All statutory duties are met conscientiously.
50. Financial planning is good and expenditure is clearly linked to priorities in the school improvement plan. The governing body monitors expenditure on a monthly basis. Funds granted to the school as a result of the *Pathfinder* initiative have been used well to improve staffing and ICT resources. Money

granted to support pupils with special educational needs is well used to ensure that they are fully included in learning. It ensures a good staff ratio and appropriate resources to meet the needs of those pupils in the classroom. Funds allocated for the new buildings have been very well used and remaining money is clearly designated for further developments in equipment and accommodation. Principles of best value are applied before the authorisation of major works or purchases. However, there is no system in place to use the principles of best value to measure the impact of expenditure on pupils' progress and raising standards, or to compare its results and costs with similar schools. Office administration is efficient and effective use is made of information and communication technology, throughout the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51. The head teacher staff and governors have a clear view of the need to raise standards and the school improvement plan has made raising standards in mathematics and in reading a priority. Building on the work already underway and on the existing good practice in teaching and learning they should work to:

- (1) Raise standards and achievement in mathematics through
 - providing work in mathematics which enables all pupils to build on what they have already achieved and moves higher-attainers on to more difficult work more quickly;
Paragraphs 19,22,58,75
- (2) Raise standards and achievement in English by
 - implementing as quickly as possible a whole-school approach to the teaching of spelling;
Paragraphs 5, 21, 67, 100
- (3) Use information from assessment to plan a range of work which provides
 - activities, including worksheets to
 - provide more challenge for the higher-attaining pupils;
 - give more support to average attainers;
 - set more rigorous targets;
 - ensure that children do not repeat work unnecessarily.
Paragraphs 16, 19, 39, 54, 58, 81, 82

In addition the governors should consider including the following issues in their action plan:

- (1) Applying the principles of best value to evaluating the impact of spending decisions on pupils standards and achievement;
Paragraph 50
- (2) Working with parents to ensure that communication is as effective as possible.
Paragraphs 42, 45

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	63
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	15	17	26	2	1	0
Percentage	2	24	27	41	4	2	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	334
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	19

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	76

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	13

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	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

National comparative data	5.4
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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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
2002	23	24	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	19	21
	Girls	20	22	22
	Total	20	41	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (86)	87 (84)	91 (90)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	21	23
	Girls	22	22	23
	Total	42	43	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (88)	91 (90)	98 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

Percentages in brackets refer to 2001*Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
2002	24	27	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	19	21
	Girls	25	20	26
	Total	40	39	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (77)	76 (81)	92 (91)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	19	19
	Girls	24	24	23
	Total	42	43	42
Percentage of pupils	School	82 (83)	84 (92)	82 (91)

at NC level 4 or above	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)
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*Percentages in brackets refer to 2001

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	180	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	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	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	100	0	0

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y R– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.7:1
Average class size	26.2

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	423

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	707654
Total expenditure	627622
Expenditure per pupil	1890
Balance brought forward from previous year	75748
Balance carried forward to next year	155780

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
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	250
Number of questionnaires returned	67

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	24	1	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	33	7	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	54	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	48	12	1	1
The teaching is good.	58	37	3	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	22	60	18	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	39	9	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	36	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	27	58	15	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	48	42	6	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	49	1	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	42	6	3	12

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE RECEPTION CLASSES

52. The children start school in the September before their fifth birthday. Due to the good links with the pre-school providers and good induction procedures, they start school with confidence and settle quickly into the routines. They have their own area for play, and this helps them to form relationships with each other before joining the older pupils when they start Year 1. There are currently 49 children in the two Reception classes and all the children attend full-time. Teachers and teaching assistants plan regularly together to make sure that the children enjoy the same activities. Provision is satisfactory overall.
53. The previous report indicated that the children were above average overall when they started school, but this is not true for every year group. This year's Reception children started school with average literacy and numeracy skills overall, although their speaking and listening skills are much better. Personal, social and emotional development is above average. Overall the children make satisfactory progress and the majority attain the early learning goals in reading, writing, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. They are above average speaking and listening skills and in their personal, social and emotional development.
54. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Particular emphasis is given to the children developing good personal and social skills and this is successfully managed. There are differences in the way that learning is organised and managed between the two classes and, in one class, this sometimes limits the levels of independence and responsibility of which these children are capable. Assessment procedures provide a good range of useful information about how well the children are learning and what they can and cannot do. However, this information is not always used as well as it could be to match tasks to the needs of individuals, especially higher-attaining children. This means that some children repeat work unnecessarily or take part in group activities that are not relevant. Many adults use questions carefully to probe the children's understanding and introduce them to new knowledge and skills. This was particularly evident in a literacy lesson where, as a result of the skilful questioning, the children learned how to retell the story of *Little Red Riding Hood* in the correct order. They enjoyed the challenge of thinking up a new ending to the story, thus adding more interest to the activity, and this motivated them further to take part.

Personal, social and emotional development

55. Suitable emphasis is given to the development of the children's personal and social skills and they make satisfactory progress overall. Children have good relationships with each other and with adults, so that they are confident to ask for help when they need it. Adults have high expectations that the children will take care of their own personal needs. Consequently, all children find and put on their own coats and boots for outdoor activities, and change for PE in the hall with little or no help. The adults create a quiet but purposeful atmosphere in the classrooms and emphasise the good things that the children do. This means that the children have good levels of self-esteem and confidence and are happy to take part in the full range of activities on offer. Behaviour is very good in lessons and this is reflected in the careful and thoughtful way they treat each other and the resources with respect. On occasion, the children are not given enough opportunity to think for themselves or control their own behaviour, despite having the ability to do so, because teaching contains too many direct instructions.

Communication, language and literacy

56. The children start school with average reading and writing skills. They have better than average speaking and listening skills and this means many are confident to ask adults for help. Many are confident enough to start a conversation with adults who work in the school and with visitors to whom they are introduced. 'Did you have a nice Christmas?' one boy asked, showing genuine politeness, but also sharp enough to know that this was an opening for him to talk about his favourite Christmas present. One class in particular is a hive of activity, which lends itself to spontaneous conversation, and this is helping the children to make further gains in their ability to hold social conversations. Careful thought is given in planning to how language can be developed in all activities and this is mostly successful, although occasionally when the activity is cut short too abruptly, this detracts from the other planned learning in the lesson.
57. The story of *Little Red Riding Hood* was the main focus during the week of the inspection and provided a familiar context through which the children were able to develop their reading and writing skills. Activities allowed the children to talk about the main events in the story, and to consider the main characters and their actions. By sequencing pictures, many children were able to retell the story in the correct order, thinking of a new ending to this familiar tale. In a later activity, they wrote letters inviting the wolf to visit, being careful about what they were going to say to make sure he remained friendly. Many wrote their names correctly before attempting their own writing. Higher-attaining children are beginning to write some familiar words correctly, but most are still making simple marks on paper to represent the words. Adults support the task well by writing the children's ideas down for them so that they can see the correct way of writing what they want to say. There are good opportunities for the children to attempt their own writing in role-play and other self-initiated play activities. The children are developing good ideas about the purpose and different times that people write and their attempts reflect their growing knowledge of letter sounds. Handwriting and phonic skills are practised regularly. This is helping them to have a go at reading simple texts, to learn the sounds that letters represent, and form most letters correctly in their guided writing activities.

Mathematical development

58. Children start school with average attainment. They make satisfactory progress and by the end of the reception year most are attaining the early learning goals in this aspect. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Particular care is taken to make sure that the children develop a growing understanding of numbers and their place in the number line. This learning is presented in a structured way so that they learn new things within familiar situations. The café role-play areas allows the children to exchange money and when this uses coins that add up to totals of ten pence or less, the children play confidently with little adult help needed. On occasion, in one class, tasks are not matched well enough to the children's prior learning. As a result, some tasks are sometimes too difficult for the lower-attaining children, or the higher-attaining children take part in unnecessary activities, which are too easy. This was evident when children played a money game and two higher-attaining children who could already add two numbers together in their heads to make totals to ten, were expected to take part in a much simpler activity

Knowledge and understanding of the world

59. The good teaching means that the children make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of the world and most attain the early learning goals in this area of learning. In some aspects these are exceeded. Lessons provide good situations through which pupils develop new language and learn about how and why things work. The interesting range of activities and role-play support the

children's knowledge of the local area and the wider world. They think about suitable holidays and the clothes they need to take with them. During the inspection, the children made pizzas, thinking about their favourite toppings. This activity provided a very good opportunity to learn new vocabulary to describe what they were doing, and to talk about changing materials and think about personal likes and dislikes. The practical activities add meaning to their learning. The lesson built successfully on learning in previous lessons when the children tasted breads and other foods from different countries. This activity very effectively developed the children's growing awareness of cultures different from their own. Parents are involved in many of these activities,

60. A particular strength is the children's ability to use computers and tape players independently. The programs they use are relevant to other learning in the classroom. They interest the children so that they concentrate consistently well when working independently. They have good skills at moving pictures around the screen and some load favourite programs and tapes themselves. One group of children were very pleased with themselves when they learned for the first time how to turn the volume up on the tape player.

Physical development

61. There is a suitable range of physical development activities for children to develop running, skipping, jumping and hopping skills. A carefully structured programme of physiotherapy activities, which teaches techniques and skills in a structured way, is particularly beneficial for children with difficulties in their motor skills. One PE lesson observed, developed the children's skills very well. Learning was made fun, which meant all the children took part and the nature of the game meant that the teacher could monitor safety appropriately, while giving the children responsibility to assess for themselves where and how to move. Consequently they all moved sensibly, finding their own space and were fully aware of their own and other's safety. One lesson observed however, focused unnecessarily on behaviour control rather than physical development. The teacher gave the children too little freedom to think about their movements themselves. They did not have enough opportunity to move freely, find spaces for themselves, or have enough time to practise their skills of running, jumping, skipping or hopping or of considering their own and other's safety. This meant that the children's skills were inhibited, and the early learning goals were not achieved.
62. Suitable emphasis is given to developing children's ability to use small tools such as scissors and pencils. Work on display indicates that most children can cut in a straight line, although there are missed opportunities in some creative development activities, as papers are often already cut for the children to use. Children hold pencils with a suitable grip and most have the strength and control to form letters accurately and draw pictures with some detail. Most colour evenly and with good directional control.

Creative development

63. There are suitable opportunities for the children to take part in a range of creative activities. The role-play areas are particularly well planned to enable the children to develop their imaginary play and language. These activities make strong contributions children's confidence, and the new vocabulary learned improves their speaking and listening skills effectively. Suitable resources are included to make the areas as close to real life situations as possible. In the travel agents therefore, the children were entering information into the computer to try to find holidays to match the wishes of their customers. They used brochures to show the customers possible places to visit and were pleased when their suggestions are accepted. Puppets play a large part in many literacy lessons when the children are acting out familiar stories and rhymes. This helps keep their attention focused on learning and motivates them to concentrate throughout the session. Painting activities are usefully linked to

current topics and this adds meaning to the tasks, because particular skills are taught within a relevant context.

ENGLISH

64. Results of the 2002 tests for seven year olds were in line with the national average in reading, and well above in writing. Compared with similar schools, they were below in reading and above in writing. Compared with the previous year's results, writing showed a big improvement. Test results for eleven year olds were in line with the national average, but below when compared with similar schools. Inspection evidence shows that overall standards in reading and writing, throughout the school, are in line with those expected nationally, except for spelling, which is unsatisfactory. Speaking and listening skills are above the national average. Overall, pupils' achievement is sound across the school, with some higher-attaining pupils achieving well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The school has analysed results carefully and is using the information in planning for improvement.
65. Pupils enter the school with above average speaking and listening skills and there are many good opportunities throughout the school for these to be further developed. Most pupils listen attentively in class, though a small number of boys at Key Stage 2 find this difficult. Pupils are generally very articulate and have a wide-ranging vocabulary. Good opportunities for speaking and listening are a strong feature of all lessons. Good open-ended questioning by the teachers ensures that pupils give full, well-explained answers. In many lessons pupils work in groups or pairs and discuss their work sensibly, listening courteously to each other's ideas. When talking about their reading books, pupils describe the characters perceptively, relate the story clearly and most can predict events confidently. The drama club is well attended and contributes positively to the development of speaking and listening skills. It has also been instrumental in encouraging a good attitude to reading. For example, one reader in Year 3 has made very good progress recently in reading, and explained that she had worked hard at her reading, because being able to read well is important if you want to act. Assemblies provide good opportunities for pupils to speak aloud to a big audience, such as in class assemblies when they present their work to the rest of the school. Some Year 6 pupils led a whole-school assembly very well. They used microphones confidently and read aloud clearly and with very good expression. Pupils also listen well in assemblies.
66. Standards in reading are average overall, with the higher-attainers reading at an above average standard. Phonic skills are firmly established at Key Stage 1, and throughout the school pupils use their knowledge of letter sounds to read unknown words. Pupils enjoy reading and read aloud with good expression. They enjoy reading challenging texts. Their good speaking and listening skills help them to discuss the plot and characters of their books confidently. Older pupils show a wide knowledge of literature and are able to compare the techniques of different authors to show the passing of time from texts such as, *Macbeth*, *The Lion*, *the Witch and the Wardrobe*, and *Lord of the Rings*. Most pupils use the public library as well as the school library, and understand and use the Dewey system to find reference books. 'Big Books' are used well in many classes throughout the school, and texts are displayed on the computer screen in some lessons. Pupils read eagerly from the displayed texts.
67. The literacy strategy is well established throughout the school and within this there has been particular emphasis on developing writing skills. This is having a positive effect on the standard of writing, particularly in writing stories and poems. Higher-attaining pupils in both key stages write imaginatively, and use a wide and varied vocabulary. They write, using correct style, for a variety of purposes, such as letters, book and newspaper reports and technical writing in other subjects, such as

science and geography. In their literacy lessons, pupils learn to use adjectives, adjectival phrases, adverbs and complex sentences to make their work more interesting. Year 3 pupils wrote some very good reports imagining that they were Howard Carter reporting from *The Valley of the Kings*, and their letters of apology from Goldilocks to the Three Bears showed real understanding of the moral of the story. Some Year 6 pupils showed great perception in their character analyses, describing the person's feelings and attitudes with empathy. However these writing skills are not always transferred to work in other subjects. The standard of written work in history was not as good as it was in English. Written work is mostly well punctuated and grammar is generally accurate. Spelling, however, is a weakness in most pupils' work throughout the school, and detracts from the otherwise good standard. Many older pupils continue to spell phonetically.

68. The quality of teaching was good overall and ranged from sound to excellent. Lessons were introduced well, starting with a review of previously learnt knowledge and sharing of learning intentions with the pupils. This ensured that pupils of all abilities understood the purpose of the lesson and were generally well motivated to learn, though some boys in Year 6 were less inclined to be co-operative. Teachers and teaching assistants have established very good relationships in their classes, consequently pupils feel valued, their opinions are respected and most have very good attitudes to work. Lessons are well planned to ensure that resources and time are effectively used. In most lessons teachers had high expectations of the pupils, so that tasks were matched well to the attainment level of the pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher-attaining pupils. Where the teaching was satisfactory there was comparatively little difference in what had been set for pupils of different attainment. At times when the same work was set to the whole class, it was too difficult for the lower-attainers. The work using the Internet to research proverbs was an example of this, with the result that pupils were more interested in exploring the computer program than in the English work.
69. Teachers use a variety of strategies successfully to develop pupils' writing skills, such as in a Year 5 lesson aimed at developing descriptive writing. The teacher read a brief description of a *Fantastic Beast* while pupils closed their eyes and visualised the beast. They then used their own words to describe the picture in their minds, and compared theirs with a picture in a book, identifying differences. They then analysed what further description was necessary to convey a truer picture. However, in most classes writing skills relating to content, grammar and vocabulary are well developed, but not enough emphasis is placed on accurate spelling. In most lessons very good use is made of the plenary session at the end of lessons for teachers and assistants to reinforce and assess learning. Marking is constructive and helps pupils understand how they are progressing. Pupils draft their work after correcting and produce well-presented pieces of work for books and display. Pupils use ICT appropriately to support their English work.
70. Procedures for assessment are good. The introduction of tracking pupils' progress and setting targets is designed to raise standards and targets are reviewed regularly. The improvement of reading levels to match the writing levels at Key Stage 1 has been identified as a priority for development. The subject is led enthusiastically by two knowledgeable co-ordinators. Co-ordination of the subject across the school is sound, though there is no whole school approach to the teaching of spelling, which is resulting in an unsatisfactory level of spelling throughout the school. Resources to support the English curriculum are very good. These include an attractive school library, a good selection of fiction and reference books, story tapes, a large selection of 'big books' and a good selection of reading books. ICT supports the curriculum well. The school has maintained similar standards in English since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

71. By the end of Year 6, pupils' overall attainment is similar to the national average. This is reflected in the 2002 test results for Year 6 and in current pupils' work. However, the 2002 test scores were well below average when compared with similar schools. This was because of the low number of pupils who attained above average results (Level 5). The more able pupils performed much better in the 1998 tests when they were in Year 2 and this indicates that, overall, this group did not make enough progress between Years 3 and 6. Weaknesses in the performance of the more able pupils were also highlighted in the last inspection report, when overall attainment was also average. Year 6 test results have declined in the last two years, from being well above average in 2000. Overall, there has not been sufficient improvement in standards since the last inspection. However, the work completed in the last term shows that all pupils are now achieving satisfactorily. This is because of effective leadership and management of the subject during the past year. Strategies have been introduced which are sharply focussed on raising standards, especially for those pupils who have the potential to reach high levels of attainment.
72. Test results for pupils at the end of Year 2 have fluctuated over the past few years. They have ranged from below to well above the national average and were above average in 2002. For current pupils, attainment is broadly average and their achievements are satisfactory. The differences are mainly accounted for by the varying abilities of year groups when they start at the school.
73. Average-attaining Year 6 pupils' skills with numbers are those expected for their age. They accurately multiply and divide numbers by 100 and have an understanding of the value of digits, for example when calculating that 0.6×100 is 60. They have a satisfactory knowledge of various shapes using correct terms such as *diagonals* and *vertices* and construct line graphs to convert, for example, Fahrenheit temperatures to centigrade. Higher-attaining pupils demonstrate more advanced skills, especially when working with number. They calculate that 2 divided by 1000 is 0.002 and find the lowest common denominator to solve $\frac{2}{3} + \frac{4}{7}$. Lower-attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties work with simpler numbers, for example multiplying whole numbers by 10 or recognising from a diagram that fractions such as $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{4}{8}$ are the same. Average attaining Year 2 pupils add and subtract to ten, although at this stage of the year several still require objects to help them with their calculations. Higher-attaining pupils add single digit amounts to numbers under 100, whilst those with learning difficulties are developing their ability to count to ten accurately.
74. The quality of teaching and learning was at least satisfactory in all lessons observed, in one in it was good and in another it was very good. These lessons were taught at a good pace, work was particularly well matched to the pupils' needs and, in the very good lesson, demanding questioning encouraged pupils to think hard about the various strategies they could use to solve problems. All teachers introduced lessons enthusiastically and this enlivened pupils' interest. Several pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they enjoyed their mathematics lessons. The purposes of lessons were nearly always shared with pupils and this helped them to understand what they were learning. Teachers expected pupils to use the correct mathematical terms such as *partitioning* or *numerator* when talking about their work. In addition, lively classroom displays provided a useful reminder to classes about the correct mathematical vocabulary. Teaching assistants were effective in lessons, especially when supporting pupils with learning difficulties. They worked closely with these pupils to ensure that they were fully involved in all parts of a lesson and this helped them to make the same progress as the rest of the class.
75. Teachers regularly test pupils to check on their progress and to set group or individual targets for improvement. This information also provides a useful overview of pupils' achievements as they progress through the school, and helps the co-ordinator to measure how well the subject is being

taught and to adjust the mathematics curriculum. However, teachers are not always using this information as well as they could to prepare work suited to the needs of different groups of pupils. For example, much of the work completed by Year 2 pupils is based on worksheets, with the above-average pupils usually completing the same work as the average pupils before moving on to more challenging tasks. This is appropriate for investigative work and when new topics are introduced, but in other cases the more able pupils have found the initial tasks too easy. In a few lessons in other year groups, the tasks for a few of the average pupils were too difficult and they needed significant help to make progress. Occasionally, some pupils with learning difficulties did not have enough practical work to enhance their understanding of fractions. Although ICT is suitably used to support work in the subject, in two lessons the focus on teaching ICT skills restricted the amount of mathematical learning possible. In a few lessons, teachers had to spend time encouraging some pupils to pay attention and to concentrate on their tasks; consequently, the classes' rate of learning slowed.

76. In all year groups, there has been a strong focus on developing pupils' mathematical investigation and problem solving skills. This was identified as a weakness in pupils' work by the co-ordinator, and as a reason why the more able pupils had not attained the levels that they should have done in national tests. The co-ordinator has provided staff training and purchased a variety of resources to tackle this weakness. She is systematically checking pupils' work and the quality of teaching to ensure that this aspect of learning has improved. The outcome of this effective leadership and management was evident during the inspection. Problem solving featured well in nearly all of the pupils' work and they are being encouraged to be creative in their investigations. For example, in a very good Year 5 lesson, pupils used skills of halving and doubling a given number to create new numbers. Pupils got deeply involved, and explained the mathematical links between the numbers, including, in some cases, the use of decimal fractions to three places. In other subjects, suitable opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their mathematical skills, for example measuring accurately in design and technology, producing graphs of results in science and investigating shapes and patterns connected with past cultures. A mathematics club helps to develop the skills of the most able Year 6 pupils, and a chess club for Year 2 contributes to the development of strategies for problem solving.

SCIENCE

77. There are no national tests for pupils in Year 2 but in last year's teacher assessments their attainment overall was above average, although the more able children achieved less well than those in similar schools. The evidence for the inspection is that attainment of the current Year 2 pupils is in line with national expectations mainly because of differences in the intake in the two year groups. Pupils study a wide range of scientific topics with an increasing emphasis on practical investigation to extend the more able. This is similar to the comments made in the previous inspection.
78. Attainment by Year 6 is above average. This shows good achievement for all pupils. Those with special educational needs are supported in class to achieve average standards. The focus on practical investigations is providing the higher-attainers with more challenge for their ability. This emphasis is maintained throughout Years 3 to 6, which, together with a broad curriculum, provides pupils with good opportunities to consolidate and apply their learning. This approach is improving standards which are currently better than the results of the 2002 national tests would suggest. Those results were average, but below average when compared with similar schools. Attainment was also judged to be good at the last inspection, although it has fluctuated over the last four years. Over the last three years, boys have consistently outperformed girls but the school is now actively working to raise girls' achievement.
79. The teaching of science is good overall, but is currently stronger in the lessons seen in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. Teaching and learning is often good or very good at the upper end of the school. Good planning and the developing use of assessment information ensures that work is well matched

to pupils' abilities, and those with special needs are well supported so that they are fully included in lessons. The school has rightly recognised the need to provide children with more opportunities for practical investigations and this is having a positive effect on the quality of teaching seen.

80. In the best teaching, lessons moved at a brisk pace and little time was wasted. The teacher's good subject knowledge meant that activities were well planned and secured the pupils' interest. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils were writing an account of an experiment on condensation. The teacher set time limits for completing the individual tasks, ensured the pupils included information to show that their experiment was a fair test and checked their understanding by careful use of questions. The good support for lower-attainers ensured they achieved the object of their lessons and were able to explain what they had done. In a Year 6 lesson on electric circuits, for example, two boys with special educational needs were able to experiment with wires and bulbs to make a tilt switch. The teaching assistant's sensitive questioning and prompting enabled them to give a clear oral account of what they had done and how the switch worked. In a mixed Year 1 and 2 class the first hand experience of seeing chocolate melt and then solidify again helped pupils to understand the idea of liquid and solid states and that, for some materials, the change in their state is reversible. Good use is made of homework to research or apply factual information which has been acquired at school.
81. Where teaching had weaknesses it was because teachers had underestimated what pupils already knew and the task was not challenging enough so that very little new learning took place. Opportunities to challenge more able pupils are also sometimes missed. For example, teachers of the oldest pupils do not always emphasise the need for them to evaluate the accuracy of their results and suggest improvements to their methods.
82. Work in books is generally neat and well presented. The judicious use of worksheets helps lower -attaining pupils to record their results without difficulty. At all levels pupils write up accounts of practical investigations well following a standard structure. They have not yet been given the opportunity to develop their own methods of recording experiments or investigations, with appropriate emphasis on the prediction of, and conclusions drawn from, their results. Staff have worked hard to make their marking more meaningful to pupils and this has significantly improved its quality. More emphasis is needed on comments which help pupils understand what they need to do to improve. Assessment is not yet being used rigorously enough to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching, and ways to improve the achievement of higher-attainers.
83. The subject co-ordinator has recently been appointed and has begun to monitor planning, pupils' work and the curriculum in Years 1 and 2 but has not yet had the opportunity to observe teaching. There is a coherent curriculum plan for the whole school, which means that knowledge and skills are taught through a broad and balanced range of topics. The subject is well resourced and, as shown in a recent science week, very good use is made of the local environment and visits further a field to enrich pupils' learning. ICT makes an effective contribution to the subject; children use sensors to record temperature changes in experiments, for example, and are able to view microscopic organisms through a microscope linked to a computer.

ART AND DESIGN

84. By Year 2 and Year 6 standards are above average. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were in line with national expectations.
85. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have been encouraged to develop their investigational skills in matching the qualities of materials and processes to the work's purpose. They have created their own collages using a range of media, including paper, paint, pastels, and card of different shapes and textures. Pupils manage the material well and can bend and stick card to make 3D structures like bridges and cones. In Year 3, pupils cut out a shape from card, which they stencilled or stippled and then used

these printing blocks to make patterns on paper. They thought carefully about spacing and what contrasting colours to use to create a spectacular effect. In Year 5 pupils could explain their choice of mixing colour for effect and use colour mixing strips as a guide when painting their own designs. They have based some of their work on the pictures of Van Gogh as they emulate his style. In Year 6 pupils used pastel and charcoal to create different effects and apply this to feelings. They effectively used lighter colours to show coldness and warm bright colours to show excitement and frenzy.

86. Pupils show a keen interest and enjoyment in their art and design work and apply themselves well. They work collaboratively and are quick to praise each other's work, and that of their teachers. They are inspired to achieve high standards. A pupil in a Year 3 class after listening attentively on how to stipple paint to create a pattern, announced that when she grew up she wanted to be an artist.
87. Pupils' work reflects good teaching in this subject. Pupils are encouraged to develop a wide range of skills and acquire relevant knowledge. A teaching assistant in a Year 1 class asked a pupil if he could bend the card in another way to make a different shape. Pupils in Year 3 use a range of techniques when they were investigating patterns, drawing on their knowledge of other subjects. The pupils were therefore using their spatial awareness and knowledge of 2 D shapes to make their patterns.
88. The resources used for teaching have been appropriately developed since the last inspection and as well as centralised resources there are classroom-based resources, which focus upon the development of investigative skills.
89. There is good co-ordination of the subject. The co-ordinator has conducted a recent policy review and provided guidance for the staff on the teaching of art skills. Plans are now being prepared to assess pupils' work more systematically and use the information in planning. There are good community links and links with other subjects. A mosaic being made on transition from the old to the new school site records the history of change. All staff and pupils have placed their mosaic on the design. This will be placed at the school entrance for visitors to view.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

90. Standards are above average by Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be in line with national expectations. The school has successfully taken measures to improve curriculum provision in the last two years, in order to comply with national recommendations regarding the revised teaching of this subject.
91. Pupils throughout the school are given a wide range of opportunities to develop their design and technology skills. For instance, in Year 2, pupils designed a fruit salad and were encouraged to identify the properties of the fruit and then plan the appropriate positions to place them to make an attractive meal. This was developed later when pupils peeled, cut and washed the fruit, made the fruit salad and then discussed the importance of flavour and appearance. Year 5 pupils learning about the stability of structures, accurately measured and cut paper and plastic straws to construct triangular prisms and hexagonal pyramids. They predicted outcomes and placed extra straws in diagonal positions to add strength to structures they thought might collapse. The teacher guided them to think about objects and buildings in real life as groups used websites on 'shelters' in preparation for their future designs. By Year 6, pupils were able to evaluate progress while designing and making, identifying possible improvements to the product. For example, in making bread a pupil suggested that more time should have been spent on mixing the dough, as this would have improved the taste. Another praised good teamwork for making bread of good quality. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are positive and they achieve well. They are keen to learn and show good concentration and attention to task.

92. The teaching and learning was very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and lessons were very well prepared and organised. In the very good lessons the teacher's clear explanation of the learning outcome meant pupils understood the tasks expected of them and made very good progress. The planning of open-ended investigations and good use of questioning challenged high-achieving pupils to make even further progress. A teacher told her class that before deciding which structure to make they would have to examine the techniques necessary in the construction process. Teaching in this area develops skills such as accurate measuring, which are applicable across the curriculum. Good use is made of ICT in recording of results. The digital camera is frequently used to photograph products. The teachers and teaching assistants offer good support to pupils with special educational needs, and this ensures that they participate fully in activities.
93. The co-ordination of the subject is very good. The schemes of work have recently been reviewed resulting in an improved plan for coverage of the curriculum. This contains guidance for teachers in the form of lesson plans and help sheets. There is an excellent portfolio of work that identifies high standards of work at each national curriculum level, and this, together with improved resource provision and support for teachers, is having a good impact upon the teaching and learning. The next priority is to assess pupils' work more regularly.

GEOGRAPHY

94. The evidence from lessons and pupils' work show that attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average. Examples of good achievement by older pupils were seen in lessons. Pupils study mountainous regions, learning to use correct vocabulary such as *U shaped valley* and *erosion* and to recognise these features in photographs, but more opportunities for more challenging work such as developing ideas for sustainable development are missed. Pupils reflect on the differences of life in another country such as St Lucia and the advantages and disadvantages of building new hotels there. They use the Medway as a basis for the study of rivers and observe and record evidence of how water drains away from different surfaces.
95. Standards are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2, showing satisfactory learning. In Years 1 and 2 pupils study their local area. They carry out surveys of traffic and identify features such as the school on a local map and seaside towns on a map of England. They are introduced to differences, such as the shape of buildings, to be found in other countries.
96. The teaching and learning seen in Key Stage 2 lessons were very good. The teachers' subject knowledge was good and they made effective use of questions to extend pupils' thinking. For example, pupils were asked to think about how a scouring pad that the teacher provided is used, in order to help them understand the scouring effect of glaciers. Pupils with special needs were well supported by the teaching assistant and contributed pertinent comments and ideas to the general class discussion. The pace of teaching was brisk and so time was well used. The level of difficulty was well matched to individuals' abilities. In Key Stage 1, teaching and learning were satisfactory. Teachers have been particularly imaginative in bringing the study of other countries to life using their own photographs taken in different locations, for example Turkey, and using them as pictures or computer presentations in lessons. In this way pupils were able to compare the shapes of buildings in Istanbul with those in Maidstone and to begin to understand the differences and similarities in our cultures.
97. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has reviewed the school's schemes of work and has identified aspects that need developing to ensure that the full curriculum is being covered and that the most able children are being presented with challenging work. Teachers make good use of resources, including information technology. The school's outdoor weather station is used well to record regular information on temperature, wind speed and humidity, and the data gathered is a

valuable resource in itself. Through study of the local area and other countries, geography makes a good contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and the co-ordinator's planned improvements to develop advanced skills of geographical enquiry and critical thinking should ensure that the subject continues to improve.

HISTORY

98. History was being taught in Year 6 only during the inspection, and pupils had only just started to learn about a Victorian childhood. Judgements about standards and the quality of teaching and learning are therefore based mainly on the work in pupils' books and on display. This evidence suggests that by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards are broadly in line with national expectations. This is much the same as at the last inspection.
99. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 study the lives of famous people as well as the history of familiar objects such as toys. They have looked at a range of evidence for the work of people such as Florence Nightingale. Most pupils in Year 2 were able to put pictures showing events in her life into the correct chronological order, and their letters asking for the supplies needed at Scutari showed a good understanding of the hospital conditions during the Crimean War. The work on the Aztecs in Year 5 showed that most pupils had understood the main features of the Aztec Empire and the events leading to its collapse. The work in other year groups, for example on Ancient Egypt and the Ancient Greeks, gave a more fragmented picture of life in a particular period of time. Relatively little written work was completed in any great depth. However, there was some good work in English where pupils had produced imaginative accounts of life in Tudor England. In the Year 6 work on a Victorian childhood, a good range of old toys and games prompted pupils to ask pertinent questions and draw sensible conclusions about the differences between their toys and pastimes and the ones they were investigating. An appropriate website also enables pupils to do some more independent research though the task itself was not particularly demanding and most pupils could have been challenged more.
100. Very little teaching could be observed. However the evidence from the lessons which were seen, and from pupils' work suggests that overall, the teaching is satisfactory. Planning shows coverage of the requirements of the National Curriculum and a suitable range of topics and activities in all year groups. In much of the teaching, particularly in Years 3 to 6, the topics are dealt with in a rather fragmented way which does not help pupils make links between different aspects of the same historical period. ICT is integrated effectively into planning. It is particularly effective in helping pupils to develop research skills, though on one occasion the work in history was affected by the time taken for the whole group to log on to the Internet and find the right website. The staff make some good links with literacy through imaginative writing, but opportunities are also missed to enable pupils to write about historical topics in more depth. Written work is generally not as accurate as it is in English and key words are often spelt incorrectly. Numeracy skills are developed satisfactorily through the use of timelines and charts. Resources are good and used well, and the school has steadily built up its stock of artefacts. The local area and the South East of England are used well for appropriate visits.
101. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic about the subject and about the importance of stimulating pupils' interest through a wide range of activities, visits and visitors and by using first hand evidence. She has recently revised the school policy and monitors planning carefully to ensure that National Curriculum and school requirements are met. The action plan for history is manageable and sensible with developing more effective assessment as a priority.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

102. Standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection and are better than national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. Almost all pupils are achieving well and some are achieving very well. They use a range of ICT applications confidently. Year 1 pupils were learning to load a program and to save and print their work. Year 2 pupils were using word processing to develop their spelling skills and in Year 3 they were using a spreadsheet to help them practise addition. Pupils of all ages learn to use the Internet sensibly for example, in Year 6, pupils were using a website to find out information about Victorian leisure activities and toys. Evidence from displays and pupils' work showed their use of graphics programs, data handling to construct graphs and charts, and sensors in science experiments involving control and measurement. For example, they learn to program a robot to follow instructions either on screen or as an actual device. Pupils work with enthusiasm and concentrate well, using equipment sensibly. They understand that ICT is a useful tool, though at times they were considerably more interested in the ICT than in the subject being studied.
103. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. The teachers and teaching assistants were confident in their own use of ICT. They have secure subject knowledge and plan the work well to ensure that key elements of ICT are taught, and that it is used as fully as possible across the curriculum. The use of laptops in conjunction with the ICT suite means that teaching groups are relatively small. This enables teachers and assistants to give good individual support and ensures that pupils' progress and attainment are carefully tracked and planning can be adjusted to meet needs. The interactive whiteboards were being used well to allow teachers and pupils to demonstrate skills to a whole class. Where ICT is most effective, as for example in the Year 2 spelling lesson, it was clearly being used as a tool and the work was well matched to the range of needs in the class. The relative weaknesses in the teaching were that at times the teaching of ICT skills took precedence over the teaching of the particular subject, and sometimes the work was too challenging. For example, in a geography lesson in Year 1 the main focus of the lesson was teaching pupils the ICT skills they needed to load the program. This quite significantly limited the time spent on geography. In an English lesson in Year 6, the Internet based program on proverbs was too hard for most of the lower-attaining group.
104. The development of ICT has been greatly aided by good planning and a clear understanding of the potential of ICT to support teaching and learning. The school has invested heavily and sensibly in ICT equipment and the new building has made it possible to have an impressive computer suite as well as computers in classrooms and secure laptops. This ensures that access to ICT is very good. Effective staff training has given teachers and teaching assistants knowledge and confidence. Very good leadership and management have ensured that ICT is well integrated into the curriculum and that the best possible use is made of expensive resources. In all subjects the planning has to show how ICT is being used. Current sensible priorities for increasing the provision include improving software, particularly for mathematics, extending the use of whiteboards, increasing the number of laptops and ensuring that further relevant training is provided. Security issues are taken seriously, not simply in relation to the storage of laptops and other portable equipment, but also in relation to the use of the Internet. The policy for Internet and email use is made very clear to pupils, parents and staff. The school is now considering how best in future to manage the ICT facilities so that teachers do not have to spend too much time dealing with technical issues.

MUSIC

105. Pupils throughout the school attain standards that are broadly in line with those expected nationally. In the lessons seen, pupils make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress. They sing tunefully and participate enthusiastically in choir, hymn practice and during assembly. They sing well in rounds,

in two or even three parts. They enjoy the practical involvement, such as miming to animal songs and the hand movements to *The Building* song. Younger pupils clap rhythmically and are confident when using instruments, such as wood blocks. They recognise when the double woodblock gets 'higher and lower'. Older pupils show satisfactory knowledge of rhythm and beat. They listen to music and identify how many beats for each phase. They fit their own words to a rhythm and demonstrate their compositions confidently to the class.

106. In the lessons seen, teachers showed good subject knowledge and successfully used a variety of strategies to involve pupils fully, such as the use of puppets with younger pupils to demonstrate how musical instruments are played. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were successfully introduced to timbre by saying nursery rhymes, such as Humpty Dumpty first softly, then gruffly. Although most teachers planned their lessons well, sometimes they planned more than could be achieved in the time available, resulting in lessons ending abruptly, with no time either to meet the objective of the lesson, or to assess pupils' learning fully.
107. There is a very good hall for music lessons, with very good resources. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and leads the subject very well, assisted by a number of very good visiting specialist teachers. Extra-curricular provision is good and significantly contributes to the standards achieved. The many clubs are well attended by pupils. These include a handbell club for younger pupils, orchestra, choirs, recorder groups and a rock band for Year 6 pupils which they manage themselves. The school choir participates in community events such as music festivals. The orchestra is very well led with pupils playing a variety of instruments including percussion, wind and string, with which they successfully played a crescendo for the National Anthem. The strength of music provision has been maintained since the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

108. Standards in physical education are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This represents satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. The school has done well to maintain and broaden the range of extra curricular activities, and these make a significant contribution to standards in gymnastics and games, especially for those pupils who have a particular interest. Achievement is satisfactory.
109. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 learn to swim in a nearby pool and standards are above average. By the time they leave school, nearly all pupils can swim at least 25 metres (the standards expected nationally), and many can do much more. Pupils enjoy working towards gaining their distance awards and feel considerable pride when presented with these in assembly.
110. Standards in dance in Years 1 and 2 are below average and pupils make unsatisfactory progress in this aspect. Teachers lack expertise in teaching dance and schemes of work do not give them sufficient guidance on how to develop the skills and elements of dance. There are not always enough opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own performance and to describe what is good about each other's performance. Therefore, pupils are not gaining knowledge quickly enough in how to identify what they need to do next to improve the quality of their sequences.
111. Considerable strengths in teaching of dance in Year 6 means that pupils quickly improve their skills to attain average standards by the time they leave the school. Lessons are brisk and focus throughout on the pupils' specific skills and ideas. Lessons are interesting due to the relevant contexts. In a very good lesson, pupils were highly motivated by the lively choice of music. The contrasting melody, and speech extracts, sparked the pupils' imaginations and gave them ideas on how they could vary their movements and sequences. As a result, they performed very well in a group interpretation on the

theme of express trains. The teacher's skilful questions, directed the pupils' thoughts towards their own personal relationships and feelings when considering how they would portray the emotions of the characters in their dance. This made a significant contribution to the pupils' personal development.

112. No judgement was made about standards in gymnastics at the end of Year 6 and games across the school, as no lessons could be seen. Standards in gymnastics at the end of Year 2 are average. Pupils develop sequences on and off the apparatus, joining together travels, rolls and balances with some imagination. They repeat these to consolidate the skills and through the teacher's evaluation of what they do well, some pupils are beginning to make improvements to their moves. Year 2 pupils who took part in games club had satisfactory skills of running, skipping and bouncing large balls, and those who took part in football and netball clubs had good levels of skill, tactics and techniques.
113. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. There is good emphasis given to the importance of warming up and cooling down and as a result pupils have a good understanding of the effect of exercise on their bodies. However pupils are not always given enough responsibility in lessons to get out and put away apparatus, nor enough opportunity to evaluate what they do well and describe what they need to do to improve.
114. The curriculum is satisfactory. The schemes of work give teachers suitable guidance on skill development in games and gymnastics and this helps them identify suitable learning objectives for lessons. Suitable thought has been given to include dances from different cultures. During the inspection some younger pupils took part in country dancing activities and older pupils were creating a dance for the Hindu festival of Holi. There are currently no formal assessment procedures. Therefore learning does not always build systematically enough on pupils' previous learning and skills. The co-ordinator is new to the role and has already identified these areas for improvement in the subject action plan. She has made a good start by evaluating and replacing resources, so that there is now a good range and quality of resources for games and gymnastics. She plans to identify future resource requirements for dance on completion of a scheme of work. Additional low level gymnastics tables would enhance provision for younger pupils. There has been no opportunity to monitor the delivery of the subject, so weaknesses in teaching and learning have not been picked up. This is a weakness in the management of the subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

115. By Year 6, standards meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. All pupils including pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language make good progress overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
116. Since the last inspection there has been good progress in improving the quality of teaching and learning. These have improved from satisfactory to good overall. The school has recently changed its curriculum and is following the Kent LEA agreed syllabus. A strength of the curriculum is the links with ICT, art, design and technology, English and history.
117. Pupils make sound gains in their learning as they progress through the school. By Year 1 pupils know that God created the natural world and that Shabbat is an important day in the life of the Jews. They have prepared and eaten a Shabbat meal. Year 2 pupils understand that Jesus was on a mission to save mankind and started this from an early age. They have designed moving pictures out of card and paper fasteners illustrating Jesus' visit to the temple. Year 3 pupils have produced computer-designed book covers showing an analysis of the Bible into its different types of books. Pupils in Year 5 know that Mohammed was the prophet and founder of Islam and understand the significance of the Shahadar and the beliefs it represents. Pupils in Year 6 have studied some Christian social reformers

like Thomas Barnardo and Elizabeth Fry and have learnt about the life of William Wilberforce and how his beliefs had affected his actions. They have explored through group discussion what they understand by the terms freedom and slavery, and have written persuasive speeches in the role of the reformer to be read to the class.

118. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Lessons are well planned and the learning intentions are closely linked with pupils' moral and social development. Pupils in a Year 2 class were shocked by the description of Newgate prison. They were given time to express their feelings, as a result they had a good idea of the importance of prison reform. Effective use of questioning helps pupils to think independently. A teaching assistant in a Year 6 class encouraged pupils to 'think your own thoughts' when discussing the rights of slaves to be freed, in a lesson on William Wilberforce. This stimulated thought as the less confident pupils took part in the discussion. There were a few instances when the more able-pupils had not been given difficult enough work to challenge their ability. Pupils show interest and enthusiasm for their work and work well together. Stories taken from the Bible are regularly included in school assemblies.
119. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory though the assessment system is not regularly used in every class. The co-ordinator has plans to extend the current system to include the assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding of other faiths. Resources are good.