

INSPECTION REPORT

WOODLANDS INFANT SCHOOL

Tonbridge

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118466

Headteacher: Ms S Morgan

Reporting inspector: Bob Cross
15917

Dates of inspection: 2nd to 5th June 2003

Inspection number: 247904

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Woodlands Infant School
Name of chair of governors:	Ms S Rhodes
Date of previous inspection:	December 1997

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15917	Bob Cross	Registered inspector	Science, information and communication technology, geography, physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
9691	Jon Vincent	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion including racial equality	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Woodlands Infant School educates boys and girls aged between four and seven years. There are 265 pupils on roll which is bigger than most other schools of the same type. Eighty seven children are in three Reception classes in the Foundation Stage. The school has 60 pupils on its register of special educational needs, which is broadly the level of the national average. Four pupils have statements of special educational need which is also broadly the level of the national average. Pupils with physical control difficulties are the largest group amongst those with special educational needs. One Year R class has uneven numbers of boys and girls. About two per cent of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds which is lower than in most schools. Seven of the pupils speak English as an additional language. Although all are able to take a full part in lessons and all activities, three are receiving additional support. This is a bit higher than in most schools. French is the most common language spoken by these pupils as their mother tongue. Fifteen pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average. During the last school year, five pupils entered the school other than at the usual time of first admission and two left it at times which were not those of the normal leaving or transfer for most pupils. This rate of mobility is low. In the last two years, the full time equivalent of seven and two thirds teachers have left the school and six and a half have been appointed. This rate of turnover is very high. Additionally, the school had three headteachers in a four year period. Children generally enter the school at average levels of attainment although their language, mathematical and personal skills are often below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Woodlands Infant school provides its pupils with a sound education which has a significant number of good and very good features. Standards in Year 2 are average in English (although writing is below average), mathematics and science which represents satisfactory progress. This, in turn reflects the satisfactory teaching and learning that Year 2 pupils have experienced as they moved through the school. However, the teaching and learning observed during the inspection were good. The leadership and management of the school are good and provide it with an effective educational direction. Provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education and their social and cultural development is excellent. This ensures that all pupils are fully included in the school's activities and that relationships in the school are very good. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils make good progress in geography, art, music, physical education and religious education and, as a result, standards are above average in these subjects in Year 2.
- The excellent provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education results in very good relationships in the school.
- Cultural and social development are excellent and successfully promote an ethos in which everyone is valued as an individual and plays a full part in the school's life.
- The quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection was good and promoted good progress.
- Teaching assistants work well with the teachers and make a significant contribution to the pupils' learning especially in the case of pupils with special educational needs.
- The headteacher, who is very well supported by the staff and the governors, is providing good leadership which is helping the school to improve rapidly.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing, which are below average, and in English, mathematics and science in Year 2 which, although average, do not represent the maximum progress of which the pupils are capable.
- Aspects of information and communication technology, for example, its use in other subjects.

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 December 1997. Many aspects of the school, for example, the quality of teaching and relationships with parents remain as strong as they were in 1997. Additionally, although the 1997 inspection had no key issues for action, the school identified points of detail, for example, provision for information and communication technology, mentioned in the report and addressed them effectively. However, some aspects of

the school, notably standards in English, mathematics and science in Year 2 are not as high as they were in 1997. However, the school has faced significant barriers to improvement. It has experienced very high levels of turnover of teaching staff in the last two years and had three different headteachers in a four year period. When these factors are taken into account, the school has made a satisfactory improvement since it was last inspected. The strong leadership of the headteacher has generated a team spirit and a commitment which, along with its meticulous self evaluation, give the school a very good capacity to improve.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	C	A	B	C
writing	C	A	C	D
mathematics	D	A	B	B

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The table shows that standards have risen since 2000, particularly in 2001 compared with all schools although standards have fallen since 2001. In 2002, standards compared with all schools were above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. However, compared with similar schools based on the percentage of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals, standards were above average in mathematics, average in reading and below average in writing. In the assessments made by teachers in 2002 in science, standards were above average. The school was given Achievement Awards in 2001 and 2002 for the standards its pupils reached in the national tests. Details of the school's targets for the number of pupils to reach Level 2 and above in the national tests in 2002 were not available. However, suitably challenging targets have been set for 2003.

The findings of the inspection are that, in Year 2, standards are above average in geography, art, music, physical education and religious education. Standards in all other subjects, including literacy and numeracy, are average although the writing element of English is below average. Overall achievement for these pupils is satisfactory as they entered Year 1 at average standards. However, the evidence of the inspection shows that the current rate of achievement is good. This is because the quality of teaching and learning is now good following a period of high levels of turnover amongst the teaching staff.

Children in the Foundation Stage are on course to reach above average standards in their knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. They are on course to reach average standards in all other areas of learning. This represents good achievement from their starting point on entry.

Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve well and reach good standards relative to their previous learning. The school has good policies and procedures to identify and address the needs of gifted and talented pupils.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They work hard and this promotes their learning well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave well in class and around the school. However, where lessons do not hold their interest, the pupils lose concentration and do not apply themselves. There have been no exclusions in the last year.
Personal development and	Very good. Relationships and personal development are very effectively

relationships	promoted by the school's concentration on these aspects of the pupils' education.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Unauthorised absence is below the national average.

The school's excellent provision for the pupils' personal and social education underpins the strengths in these areas. These strengths promote at least good progress in the pupils' learning except in the case of attendance which supports satisfactory progress.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good. Strengths in the teaching include lesson planning, on going assessment of the pupils' work and the knowledge that the teachers have of the subjects that they teach. The way in which the teachers and the teaching assistants work together and the support that teaching assistants provide to pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, are particular strengths. Weaknesses in some of the teaching include shortcomings in managing some of the pupils' behaviour and the failure to use assessment information sufficiently well to match the work to the needs of the pupils. A particular strength in the pupils' learning is the way in which they work together in groups in order to complete their work successfully. The only significant weakness is a loss of concentration when they are not well managed.

Teaching and learning are consistently good for pupils with special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language. The teaching of English, including literacy, and the teaching of mathematics, including numeracy, is good.

Throughout the school, pupils' needs, including those with special educational needs, and those for whom English as an additional language, are well met. This is enabling them to make faster progress than that made during the period of high turnover of staff.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. In Year R, curricular provision is very good. The National Numeracy Strategy and the National Literacy Strategy have been well implemented. The use of information and communication technology in other subjects is not sufficiently developed. All pupils receive good equality of opportunity. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. Provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education is excellent. Its very good links with the community and other schools promote the pupils' education very well and prepare them fully for transfer to the next stage of their education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Provision for pupils is well managed. These pupils make good progress both in their grasp of basic skills and their confidence and positive attitudes to learning. Teaching assistants provide high levels of expertise and support. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are also cared for well and their needs are well met.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Three pupils whose first language is not English receive additional language support from a specialist teacher. All achieve well and are fully integrated into all aspects of school life.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural	Very good. Cultural and social development are excellent and are very effectively embedded in the life and ethos of the school. Moral development is very good. Pupils clearly know the difference between right and wrong.

development	Spiritual development is good although opportunities to promote conventional spiritual development during collective worship are sometimes missed.
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How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The teachers know the pupils very well and take great care of them. Throughout the school, assessment procedures are very good. In some instances, in Years 1 and 2, the use of assessment information is not good enough to ensure that all pupils are fully challenged at all times.
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The school's partnership with parents is very good and promotes the pupils' learning very well.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher leads and manages the school well. This creates a strong team spirit with an effective determination to improve which all staff support. The monitoring of teaching and learning is a particular strength. The school development plan has good priorities for improvement but does not cover a long enough period to give the school long term strategic momentum
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors support the school fully and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They are committed to its further improvement and the on-going development of their own role.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The monitoring and development of teaching and learning through direct observation are strengths of the school. Self evaluation is rigorous and realistic. It identifies areas of strength and is fully committed to improving the weaker areas recognised.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The way in which the school's funds are used promotes satisfactory progress for the pupils. The school's financial reserves are above recommended levels but it has suitable plans to spend the surplus. Procedures to make certain that money is spent in a way that ensures that good value is obtained are satisfactory.

The school has a very good number of teaching and support staff. Its accommodation supports the teaching of the curriculum satisfactorily. Learning resources are good in quality and quantity. The information and communication technology suite is small for the number of pupils who generally use it at one time and there are some shortages of software in information and communication technology.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The progress made by their children. The quality of the teaching. The expectations the school has of their children. The ease with which they can approach the school. The way their children are helped to mature. The quality of the pupils' behaviour. The closeness with which the school works with them. The provision of homework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The range of extra-curricular activities. Aspects of communication with them, particularly information about how their children are getting on.

The findings of the inspection support the positive views of the parents. In addition, they find that school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities and very good information about the progress that children make.

PART B COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children generally enter the school at average levels of attainment although their language, mathematical and personal skills are often below average. Children in the Foundation Stage are on course to reach above average standards in their knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. They are on course to reach average standards in all other areas of learning. This represents good achievement from their starting point on entry. In the school's previous inspection, the attainment of children in the Reception classes was judged to be in line with expectations for children of this age.
2. In the end of Year 2 national tests in 2002, compared with all schools, standards were above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. Compared with similar schools based on the number of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals, they were above average in mathematics, average in reading and below average in writing. Standards in the tests have risen in all three subjects since 1998 although there has been a fall since 2001. In the assessments made by teachers in 2002 in science, standards were above average. The average scores for the last three years show that boys generally do better than girls in reading, writing and mathematics and that standards in all three subjects were above average. However, no differences in the attainment of boys and girls were noted during the inspection. The school's targets for the number of pupils reaching Level 2 and above in the national tests in 2002 were not available. Challenging targets have been set for 2003.
3. The findings of the inspection are that, in Year 2, standards are above average in geography, art, music, physical education and religious education. Standards in all other subjects, including literacy and numeracy, are average. Within English, standards are above average in speaking, average in listening and reading and below average in writing. Compared with the findings of the school's last inspection, standards are the same in geography, art, music, physical education, religious education and design and technology. However, standards are lower in English, science, mathematics, information and communication technology and history. The inspection also finds that standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are lower than they were in the 2002 national tests and assessments.
4. Overall achievement for pupils in Year 2 is satisfactory as they entered Year 1 at average standards although, for example, in history more able pupils are not always fully challenged. In 1997, achievement was judged to be good. The findings of this inspection are that achievement is good in geography, art, music, physical education and religious education. It is satisfactory in all other subjects. When achievement is compared with the findings of the school's 1997 inspection, it is the same in geography, art, music, physical education, religious education and design and technology. It is satisfactory rather than good in all other subjects.
5. In those subjects where standards are lower and progress is slower than in 1997, the main reason is the very high turnover of teachers. For example, one of the current Year 2 classes had 11 different teachers in Year 1. Additional factors are the disruption of effective management caused by frequent changes of teacher, the increased number of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 2 group and the large proportion of summer born children in the 2003 Year 2 group. The evidence of the inspection shows that the current rate of achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good. This is because the quality of teaching and learning is now good following a period of high levels of turnover amongst the teaching staff. It is also because the settled management of the current headteacher gives a strong and effective focus to monitoring and improving teaching and to raising standards.
6. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress and reach good standards compared with their earlier attainment. This is because they have a detailed programme of support and all members of staff have collective responsibility for meeting their needs.

7. The few pupils with English as an additional language make good progress and reach good standards compared with their earlier attainment. This is because teachers and teaching assistants are well aware of their language and learning needs and they also receive additional support from a specialist teacher.

8. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English as an additional language achieve well and reach good standards relative to their previous learning. The school has good policies and procedures to identify and address the needs of gifted and talented pupils. Currently none are judged to be in these categories but the pupils have not been assessed against the recently broadened definition of the groups.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Overall, pupils' behaviour is good and parents appreciate the standards promoted by the school. At the last inspection, this aspect was recorded as very good and this fall in standards is mainly caused by the challenging behaviour of a few Year 1 pupils that demands continual monitoring. The majority of pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy coming to school. Most pupils settle quickly to their lessons, respond well to their teachers, concentrate and work hard. However, when the teaching lacks pace and they are not managed effectively pupils lose interest and do not concentrate as well as they might. The few incidences of challenging behaviour are handled very well and in a pro-active manner and are not allowed to affect other pupils' learning. There have been no exclusions.

10. Relationships between pupils and all staff are very good and are fostered by the family atmosphere of the school. Pupils show respect for each other and school property. During the inspection, there were many examples of pupils collaborating and co-operating with each other. This was particularly noticeable in information communication and technology lessons where space is at a premium and it is vital that pupils take turns and share the use of computers. Most pupils are courteous and polite both to one another and adults. All members of the school staff are excellent role models and contribute greatly to the very strong relationships throughout the school.

11. Pupils' personal development is very good and is constantly fostered by the school. In group tasks, they help and encourage each other when necessary. Routine tasks are carried out with quiet efficiency and self-discipline and contribute well to the smooth running of the school. The school takes every opportunity to encourage pupils' personal development. Every pupil is involved and all tasks ranging from returning class registers to reporting for the school council are rotated regularly to ensure that every pupil is involved. Pupils are encouraged to think about the impact of their actions on other people. The school's very strong social ethos consolidates the growth of their personal development and promotes full racial harmony.

12. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to their work and most of them behave well in lessons and around the school. Those who have difficulty with acceptable behaviour have appropriate targets within their individual education plans to help them develop their social skills. Other pupils are very caring in their support for pupils with special educational needs.

13. Pupils with English as an additional language are generally enthusiastic and well motivated learners who work in happy co-operation with their teacher. They benefit fully from all the activities and experiences that the school offers.

14. Children in the Foundation Stage settle into school well and enjoy coming to school. They have positive attitudes to their work and play. Behaviour is good. They are learning to interact well with their teachers and other adults in the Reception classes. They are given many good opportunities to develop their independent learning.

15. Attendance is satisfactory. The rate of unauthorised absence is below the national average. Pupils are punctual and the attendance registers are completed correctly and comply with statutory requirements.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good although there are significant variations between some parts of the school. In Years R and 2, teaching and learning are consistently good. In these year groups, more than ten per cent of the teaching and learning are very good and no unsatisfactory teaching or learning was seen. In Year 1, teaching and learning are satisfactory. The proportion of good teaching seen was significantly lower than in the other year groups in the school and two of the 17 lessons observed in Year 1 (12 per cent) were unsatisfactory.

17. The school's 1997 inspection also judged teaching to be good overall. However, in that inspection, nine out of ten lessons were at least good, over three out of ten lessons were very good and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. In the current inspection, almost eight out of ten lessons seen were at least good, one lesson in ten was at least very good and two of the 52 lessons judged were unsatisfactory.

18. Strengths in the teaching identified in this inspection include lesson planning, on going assessment of the pupils' work and the knowledge that the teachers have of the subjects that they teach. The way in which the teachers and the teaching assistants work together and the support that teaching assistants provide to pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, are particular strengths. All of these features were also recognised as strengths by the school's 1997 inspection. Weaknesses in some of the teaching include shortcomings in managing some of the pupils' behaviour and the failure to use assessment information sufficiently well to match the work to the needs of the pupils. This means that the pupils' progress is not as rapid as possible, that their behaviour is not good enough and that they do not apply themselves to their work sufficiently. The school's 1997 inspection also noted that, on occasions, insufficient attention was paid to some children.

19. A particular strength in the pupils' learning is the way in which they work together in groups in order to complete their work successfully. The only significant weaknesses in the pupils' learning are the loss of concentration and application when they are not managed well enough.

20. In Year R, teaching and learning are good overall and in all areas of development. This is the same judgement as that made by the school's 1997 inspection. During the current inspection, 12 lessons were seen. Two were very good, nine were good and one was satisfactory. Teaching of this quality means that children learn at a rate appropriate to their abilities and make good progress. The teachers and other adults in the Reception classes know the children very well as individuals and are skilled at developing warm relationships. The teachers' planning is good and is carefully matched to the recommended Early Learning Goals, which links appropriately to the subjects of the National Curriculum. Planning for outdoor play is good, which enhances the children's independent learning. The well-organised routines enable the children to become used to the pattern of the day and respond quickly to the high expectations for behaviour, attentiveness and following instructions. All adults in the three Foundation Stage classes listen with interest to what the children have to say and, when working with them, demonstrate good skills in helping the children to develop their language for communication. A strength of the teaching in the Foundation Stage is the very good teamwork between the teachers and all of the support assistants.

21. Overall, in Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good. However, when taken separately, teaching and learning are good in Year 2 and satisfactory in Year 1. Altogether 40 lessons were judged for teaching and learning during the inspection in Years 1 and 2. One was excellent, two were very good, 26 were good, nine were satisfactory and two were unsatisfactory. Teaching and learning were judged to be good in English, including literacy, mathematics, including numeracy, science, geography, art, music, physical education and religious education. They were satisfactory in design and technology, information and communication technology and history. These findings are the same as those of the school's 1997 inspection except in the case of science which was judged to be very good in 1997 and history and information and communication technology which were good in 1997.

22. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy well. A good Year 2 mathematics lesson in which pupils put numbers in order illustrated the overall good quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 and the effective way in which the school implements the National Numeracy Strategy. The lesson was well planned and prepared and the teacher made sure that the pupils fully understood what they were expected to learn. A quick fire mental mathematics session got the lesson off to a good start and then the class discussed putting random numbers in order. This gave rise to a practical activity to reinforce the concept during which good use was made of a number line to enhance the pupils' understanding. This, and the teacher's effective questioning and knowledge of the subject, enabled the pupils to identify correctly the order in which numbers should be placed. The main task was well matched to the needs of pupils of all abilities. This showed how well the lesson was planned and the effective use of assessment information. During the main work, the pupils were well supported by both the teacher and the teaching assistant. The lesson ended with a discussion of what the pupils had learned and a reminder of what they had been expected to learn. Good progress was evident.

23. Teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs are good. Teachers know their pupils well, have a clear understanding of their needs and take good account of their targets when planning work. In class, very skilled teaching assistants draw upon a wide range of strategies to reinforce and consolidate teachers' questions, guidance and explanations and also to maintain pupils' interest in learning.

24. Teaching and learning for pupils with English as an additional language are good. All teachers emphasise the importance of good listening skills and provide good models of speech and written language. They have a good rapport with the pupils, reinforce and extend language skills effectively and ensure that they receive well focused support in group work.

25. Throughout the school, pupils' needs, including those with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, are well met although in some subjects, for example, information and communication technology, the needs of the more able are not always fully met. However, this is clearly an improvement on the period when the school, and some classes in particular, faced a very high rate of turnover of staff. In Years R and 2, where teaching and learning are good, the pupils' needs are also met well. In Year 1, where teaching and learning are satisfactory, their needs are met satisfactorily. The school has good procedures to address the needs of any gifted and talented pupils it identifies.

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

26. The school's 1997 inspection found curricular provision to be "very broad, balanced and relevant". This largely remains the case as the current inspection finds curricular provision to be good in Years 1 and 2. All statutory requirements for National Curriculum subjects, religious education and collective worship are fully met. Total teaching time meets recommendations and the time allocated to subjects is generally appropriate. The school provides a varied and interesting curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 which promotes the school's aims well and also develops their skills in literacy and numeracy well. The provision of music is a strength. There are some weaknesses in investigative science and the application of information and communication technology in other subjects of the curriculum.

27. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy well. Teachers have a good understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy and ensure that all its elements are well used. The National Literacy Strategy is firmly established in the school so that teachers are confident with the structure of the literacy hour and teach it effectively. The Early Literacy Support programme is particularly successful in meeting the needs of less able pupils in Year 1.

28. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school ensures that requirements in pupils' statements of special educational need are fully implemented and annual reviews are well organised and reported. Good provision is also made in small withdrawal groups mainly for work on basic literacy skills or physical development. In this case, care is taken to provide sessions in rotation so that pupils do not miss vital learning.

29. The school provides pupils with English as an additional language with a good range of learning experiences and an environment that celebrates their languages and culture. They all have full access to the curriculum and their language skills are not a barrier to learning.

30. The quality and range of the learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. The curriculum provided takes full account of the recommended areas of learning. Provision for children with special educational needs in the Foundation Stage is also very good. A strong emphasis is placed on first-hand experiences of quality, such as using the school grounds and a visit to Tyland Barn to extend the children's learning about mini beasts. The good new initiative of a daily show and tell, is helping to improve the children's speaking and listening skills and the plan, do and review sessions enhance their independent learning. Appropriate focused teaching, linked to literacy and numeracy, is carefully planned for and introduced effectively to the children in each class. Resources are very good, including a wide range of good quality large wheeled toys for outdoor play.

31. Equality of opportunity provided for the pupils is good. Curricular provision is arranged so that all pupils are fully included in all appropriate activities. Assessment information is generally used well so that pupils are given work which challenges and extends them and helps them to achieve their potential.

32. Some parents expressed the view that they felt that the school's extra-curricular provision should be improved. The findings of the inspection are that extra-curricular provision is good. The pupils in Year 1 and 2 are provided with a range of clubs, for example, in computing, music and sport. The clubs are well attended by large numbers of pupils. In addition, a range of educational visits such as those to the Bethnal Green Toy Museum, the Bedgebury Pinetum and the National Gallery, enhance the curriculum. Visitors to the school also contribute to the enrichment of the curriculum, for example, in music, drama and religious education.

33. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is excellent and a strength of the school. The school has a comprehensive policy that provides for very good teaching in a structured manner. There is evidence of the school's commitment to this element of the curriculum in every classroom. Pupils decide their own individual PSHE targets and these are displayed on imaginative collages. Lessons are planned in depth and every opportunity is taken to ensure that pupils demonstrate their understanding of various values. For instance, in one Year 1 lesson observed, the class had to debate whether looking after the school environment was a good or bad thing. Logical and mature discussion took place and, at the end of the lesson, not only were the results of anti-social behaviour understood but also the structure of and reasons for debate.

34. Apart from formal lessons the school takes every opportunity to exploit ways to reinforce personal and social education and to encourage pupils to take responsibility. The school council has 'reporters' for each year group throughout the school. They report on the decisions made by their classes on the various aspects of school life they have been asked to review. Lunch times are used as social occasions where pupils mix and meet and enjoy one another's company. Whole school assemblies address subjects such as 'things that are important to us'. In addition, there are weekly assemblies dedicated to celebrating and acknowledging pupils' birthdays. Participation in many different charitable causes and the reasons for doing so all reinforce pupils' social education. The very varied range of extra curricular activities ranging from dance classes to science clubs ensure that all pupils develop and make excellent progress in both social and personal aspects.

35. The school encourages a healthy life style through physical education and takes every opportunity to promote 'healthy eating' and the understanding of the misuse of drugs. Other health

education issues, such as sex education, are discussed whenever the appropriate opportunity arises. The commitment of the whole school staff to the personal, social and health education of pupils is extremely effective.

36. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is very good. The very active 'Home School Association' raises considerable funds which are used to benefit pupils' learning. This has resulted in the provision of class libraries and the association is now working towards the provision of an outside canopy for the Foundation Stage classrooms. The school also has strong links with the local Methodist church which enhances collective worship and religious education apart from involvement in Harvest Festivals and carol services. The school makes every effort to involve the community in helping with pupils' learning.

37. The school has very good links with partner institutions. The school has co-hosted a training convention on art and drama for schools in the local area. Opportunities for both teaching practice for students from Christchurch College and work experience for local secondary school pupils are fully taken up. Strong links with pre-school organisations and the neighbouring junior school prepare pupils very well for the smooth transfer to the next step of their education.

38. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall and has been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils' spiritual development is good and tends to be extended informally and continually through lessons rather than 'set pieces' such as assemblies. Some opportunities to promote spirituality were missed in assemblies observed during the inspection although there was very evident joy in the singing. Pupils were encouraged to reflect later on what had been discussed rather than at that time. However, several examples of awe and wonder were witnessed during lessons. These ranged from a gasp of wonder when a teacher produced pictures of stained glass windows in a lesson following a visit to a church to 'I didn't know you could do that' to an experiment in which water was frozen in a balloon. This wonderment was also present when pupils were searching for mini beasts. The provision and maintenance of a garden in memory of a pupil who died suddenly in school some years ago also gives pupils spiritual food for thought. Pupils are constantly encouraged to explore the way they influence others and this is exemplified by the both the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural and personal, health, and social education policies. Every pupil benefits from the school atmosphere that promotes a climate of mutual respect in which they can grow and flourish. Visiting faith representatives hold assemblies and engage pupils in the various aspects of spirituality.

39. The very good provision for pupils' moral development continues to be a strength of the school. Assemblies have a very strong moral and social content. The whole school staff provide very good role models for pupils. The school's behaviour policy is based on positive reinforcement rather than the use of sanctions. Class rules continue to be agreed with pupils and are prominently displayed around the school. The school is dedicated to encouraging children to care for each other and to be kind and courteous in their relationships with each other and adults. Moral issues are promoted not only by PHSE lessons but also more informally by the use of the school council where issues for the good of the whole are discussed. The school encourages pupils to take responsibility for their actions, respect people and property and care for the environment. Pupils are proud of their school and are well behaved in and around the school.

40. The school makes excellent provision for pupils' social development. The school provides a supportive and caring 'family' community where everyone is included. Pupils and all school staff treat each other with mutual respect. Pupils support and understand various charities appropriately. The school council provides opportunities for social development. All pupils benefit from taking responsibility in turn for differing tasks. They set out classrooms for particular lessons, have many specific responsibilities and work sensibly both independently, in pairs and in groups. Visits outside school in connection with their lessons further enhance their social skills. Co-operative skills are promoted in many different ways. A comprehensive range of extra curricular activities is provided by the school to cater for all tastes. Pupils are involved in a variety of after school clubs.

41. The provision for the pupils' cultural development is also excellent and has developed significantly since the last inspection. The school has arranged visits from musicians from different cultures and members of different faiths. Each week a different musical theme is adopted for assemblies. Large, colourful collages throughout the hall headed 'Celebrate our differences' feature multi-cultural aspects of life in many different countries. They highlight language, food and the differing ethnicity within the United Kingdom. One class is in regular contact with a school girl in India. There are displays of handiwork from different cultures throughout the school and the school enjoys the presence of a few pupils who speak English as an additional language. The total involvement of these pupils aids cultural awareness and development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The school looks after its pupils very well. The caring culture promoted throughout the school by all staff ensures pupils' well being. This was also found by the school's 1997 inspection.

43. Procedures for monitoring attendance are rigorous and effective. Parents ensure that their children arrive promptly for the start of school at 8.55am and registers are usually completed before 9am. Attendance requirements are published in the school prospectus and a comprehensive policy ensures compliance with statutory requirements.

44. The school has adopted the Local Education Authority's child protection policy with the head teacher as the appropriately trained child protection officer. All school staff are aware of the necessary procedures and, despite some being relatively new to the school, know their pupils and their backgrounds well. Several members of the school staff have received training in first aid. At the end of the school day, teachers and ancillary staff wait with children until they see the parent or carer known to them. The pupil is not released from the classroom until this identification. This is just one example of how well the school looks after pupils. The school has a comprehensive health and safety policy with regular risk assessments carried out.

45. The very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are based on positive reinforcement and ensure that the good behavioural standards are maintained. Parents acknowledge and appreciate these good standards of behaviour.

46. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic performance are very good. Pupils' performance is tracked throughout their time in school and is supported by targets agreed by teacher and pupil. Procedures for monitoring personal development are very good. Progress in personal development is recorded in the reports parents receive termly. The support for personal development is very good and is exemplified in the personal, social and health education lessons. The whole culture of the school and the example set by all staff encourages personal development throughout the school.

47. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are very good. Pupils' levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science are recorded regularly and this helps teachers set challenging, but realistic targets for the future. Pupils' results in the last national tests are monitored carefully to see where more work needs to be done.

48. On a day-to-day basis, teachers make effective use of guidance in the curricular documents to see whether pupils are working at the expected levels. This provides a clear picture of how well pupils are progressing and provides teachers with very good information on which areas of the curriculum need to be revisited.

49. The caring ethos of the school is well reflected in the good support given to pupils with special educational needs. They have opportunities to take part in all school activities. Their contributions are highly valued and their achievements well recognised. The school's very good systems for tracking pupils' performance means that their needs are identified at an early stage. In general, individual education plans are well organised and targets are clear and achievable. They are reviewed at least

termly. There is close liaison with outside agencies such as the educational psychology service and speech and language support.

50. The caring atmosphere of the school enables pupils with English as an additional language to become confident and valued learners. Very good attention is paid to tracking the progress of these pupils and setting challenging targets.

51. Children in the Foundation Stage are cared for very well and are very happy to come to school. They share very good relationships with their teachers, learning support assistants, teaching assistants and other adults in the school. Soon after children enter school, they are assessed using a procedure designed specifically for this age range. The evidence from this provides a precise insight into the stage of development of each child, which enables the teachers to plan a very good range of activities to meet their needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is very good and this has been maintained since the last inspection. Consequently, the school enjoys very good relationships with parents. They appreciate the standards of behaviour and the strong encouragement of moral and social values the school promotes. Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems and appreciate the high expectations the school has of their children, whatever their ability. Parents are encouraged to become involved in the life of the school. Many parents help in school. They, and the school's site manager, also assist with supervision on outside visits.

53. The home, school association raises large sums of money to purchase materials and resources for the school. It works closely with the school and has recently provided classrooms with a library system. It is now working towards providing a canopy for the outside classroom.

54. Most parents consider that they are well informed about their children's progress. They receive a comprehensive report each term. There are weekly newsletters and a curricular newsletter every term. Notices and information for parents are posted in conspicuous places. They also receive copies of the academic targets that have been set by their children and teachers together. Parents can also use the home reading book to communicate with the school. The governors' Annual Report is comprehensive and includes all the required information. The school prospectus is very informative and helpful to parents. Both these documents comply with legal requirements.

55. Parents have a curriculum meeting at the beginning of each academic year. In the summer term, there is an opportunity to discuss the good quality annual reports provided and consultation meetings are held in the autumn and spring terms. In addition, there are opportunities to talk to teachers at the end of each school day. Parents feel that teachers are friendly and accessible and that there is a genuine 'open door' policy. Overall, parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning at school and at home.

56. Induction procedures for children starting school are very good, which help to start very good home/school partnerships. Before the children start school, the teachers visit the pre-school nurseries at least twice a year to get to know the children in their own environment. The teachers invite the children to come to a pre-school picnic and to come into the school for two play afternoons. Parents are invited to come into an evening meeting to meet the teachers, to hear about what their child will experience and to receive the school's documentation.

57. There are good links with parents of pupils with special educational needs. When these pupils join the school, the special educational needs co-ordinator talks with their parents who are also given a booklet which outlines provision. There is plenty of contact between home and school to give regular information and discuss concerns. Annual reviews for pupils with statements of special educational need provide a good picture of how they are progressing and are a forum, in consultation with parents, for appraisal and improvement.

58. The school works hard to ensure good links with parents of pupils with English as an additional language and gives them plenty of information to support their child's learning at home. Parents are very supportive of their children's learning and regularly attend consultation meetings.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The leadership and management of this school are good. This is not as good as the judgement made by the school's 1997 inspection which found leadership and management to be very good. However, between the two inspections, the school had three headteachers in a four year period. Furthermore, the current headteacher has only been in post since September 2002. These factors fully explain the difference between the judgements of the two inspections.

60. Since her appointment, the headteacher has successfully identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school through meticulous self evaluation. Effective strategies to address weaknesses have been put into place, for example, the rigorous monitoring and development of teaching and learning through observation and analysis of work. These strategies are already paying dividends. For example, the findings of the inspection show overall good progress in the pupils' attainment throughout the school in spite of recent very high turnover amongst the teaching staff. The findings also show that the school is a good location for the provision of training for teachers.

61. The headteacher gives the school a clear educational direction and all staff support her very effectively. Their roles are clearly defined and good delegation makes them effective. Support from the relatively recently formed senior management team and the acting deputy headteacher is particularly important. As a result, there is a strong team spirit in the school with an effective commitment to improvement which gives it a very good capacity to succeed in the future. These factors also mean that most of the school's aims are well implemented and are well reflected in its work. This is shown by the very good quality of relationships in the school, the good equality of opportunity which all pupils receive and the way in which all pupils are fully included in all aspects of the school's work. The most significant aim that is not well met is the full development of the pupils' intellectual capacity as standards are not high enough in some subjects particularly, English, mathematics and science. However, the findings of the inspection indicate that the actions taken by the school are successfully addressing this issue.

62. The governors perform their duties well. They have a good knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses which they obtain through appropriate strategies such as visiting the school to look at a specific aspect of its development. The governors support the school fully and are committed to its further improvement. The governors have a suitable range of committees to support them in their work. The records show that they hold very frequent meetings some of which last for long periods. They plan to evaluate the way in which they fulfil their role including the frequency and length of meetings. Governors have ensured that the statutory requirements for a code of practice on equality of opportunity and race equality are fully met.

63. Overall, the resources available to the school are used satisfactorily. The school development plan contains appropriate priorities for development and is produced following dialogue with staff and governors. Spending is carefully linked to the educational priorities identified in the plan. However, the plan only covers one year which restricts its strategic value and the forward planning of finances. The management of the school's finances is rigorous and prudent and is carefully checked. However, the school's financial reserves are higher than recommended levels although it has suitable spending plans to reduce this surplus. The school is careful to obtain good value for money and assesses this satisfactorily. Three quotations are obtained for major items of expenditure, the standards reached by the pupils are compared with other schools and the school challenges its performance well through effective self evaluation. However, governors have not compared its spending patterns with those of similar schools and there is limited consultation about spending decisions with the parents.

64. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator provides very good leadership and has very good understanding of how young children learn. The quality of relationships within the Foundation Stage department is very good and, together, all the adults form a very effective team. The indoor accommodation is very spacious, bright and well organised. The outdoor area for free play is good, including a very good range of resources. However, the lack of a covered area for inclement weather limits the full use of the outdoor area. Learning resources are very good to support the children's learning.
65. The co-ordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and the funds available to support them are well used. The organisation of this provision is carried out very efficiently. The co-ordinator tracks pupils' progress carefully, keeps concise records and liaises closely with agencies outside the school as well as with the junior school. Resources are good. Teaching assistants are well prepared, knowledgeable and appropriately trained and draw upon a very wide range of skills and strategies to support pupils in their learning.
66. The management of provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good. The co-ordinator has a good overview of pupils' progress in language development as they move through the school so that time and resources are appropriately deployed.
67. There are comprehensive performance management procedures in place. All staff (teaching, support and administrative) are involved. Newer staff have not been in post long enough to have had annual reviews. Staff say that it is very positive, training needs are recognised and met where possible. Training needs are related well to the needs of the individual and to those of the school. The funds available for training are spent effectively. The school holds the 'Investors in People' award which also indicates good practice.
68. The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum is very good. The support staff are very well trained and provide a seamless support system which has a significant impact on pupils' learning. This is a strength of the school. Newly qualified teachers and those new to the school have a detailed support programme. All staff fully understand each other's roles and work very well together as a strong team.
69. Overall, the school's accommodation satisfactorily supports the implementation of the curriculum. Most classrooms are adequate but the information and communication technology suite is overcrowded with a full class present. The hall enables the full physical education curriculum to be delivered and is also large enough for assemblies and other activities. The Reception class toilets offer little privacy and are separated from the washing facilities. Plans are in hand to rearrange the layout to restore privacy and improve hygiene. This will also give the school the opportunity to create a toilet for use by the physically disabled. In conjunction with this, the school also has an action plan to improve access for the physically disabled. The outside environment of the school allows full implementation of the National Curriculum. There is a woodland walk, wildlife area, plenty of hard playing area, adventure playground and a playing field shared with the neighbouring junior school. The whole school site is very well maintained.
70. Resources are good overall. Satisfactory use is made of new technologies including information and communication technology. This is because there are some shortages of software for cross-curricular applications. It is also because the small size of the information and communication technology suite presents some problems in its use. In addition, the school does not use information and communication technology for some aspects of administration – such as attendance – where it is commonly used.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

71. In order to improve the quality of education offered to the pupils, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

A. *Raise standards writing, which are below average, and in English, mathematics and science in Year 2 which, although average, do not represent the maximum progress of which the pupils are capable, by continuing to implement and refine the strategies already in place.

(Paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 18, 61, 89 to 106)

B. Enhance information and communication technology through:

- extending its use in other subjects;
- increasing the range of software available;
- considering more effective methods of using the school's information and communication technology suite.

(Paragraphs 3, 4, 21, 26, 69, 70, 106, 121, 122 to 126, 135 and 139)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- *Extending the period covered by the school development plan.
(Paragraph 63)

- *Carrying out a self-review of the governing body's work.
(Paragraph 62, 63)

*Issues already identified by the school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	4	35	10	2	0	0
Percentage	2	8	67	19	4	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage points. NB. Two lessons not graded as observations too short.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	265
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	15
Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	60
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	42	48	90

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	35	37	41
	Girls	45	47	47
	Total	80	84	88
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (92)	93 (98)	98 (96)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	36	40	41
	Girls	47	47	47
	Total	83	87	88
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (98)	97 (96)	98 (98)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	132	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	37	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.5
Average class size	29.4

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	310

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	564371
Total expenditure	517724
Expenditure per pupil	1917.50
Balance brought forward from previous year	29800
Balance carried forward to next year	76447

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7.63
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6.47

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	265
Number of questionnaires returned	93

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	30	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	40	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	58	1	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	54	3	2	1
The teaching is good.	58	40	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	53	12	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	28	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	45	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	41	53	5	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	48	41	0	0	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	34	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	42	19	9	14

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

72. The school has maintained the good provision for children in the Foundation Stage since the previous inspection. The well-organised day-to-day routines enable the children to feel secure. The good teaching and learning in all areas of development has having a positive impact on the children's learning.

73. Children are admitted to one of the three Reception classes at the start of the autumn or spring term during the year in which they are five years old. They are taught within a warm, caring, supportive environment where they feel secure. Most of the children have attended a nursery or pre-school group before starting in the Reception classes. Overall, when children enter the school, their attainment is average for their age in most areas of the curriculum, but many have below average attainment in their personal and social, speaking and listening, and mathematical development. By the end of the Reception year, most children make good progress and are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals in their personal and social, speaking and listening, and mathematical development. They achieve above the expected levels in their knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development.

Personal, social and emotional development

74. Children make good progress from their below average standards on entry to the school and they are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area by the time they leave the Reception classes, due to the good provision to develop their skills. The children are frequently encouraged to feel confident about what they can achieve through praise, smiles and gestures. Their behaviour in and around the school is good with only a few disagreements. They work and play beside each other well. They are aware of the teachers' high expectations and show a good understanding of classroom procedures. Most respond well to them. When given the opportunity to choose activities for themselves, they do so in a sensible way and most sustain concentration well for their age. Most settle well to the more structured activities, such as literacy and numeracy, and show ability to concentrate for an appropriate length of time. The children attend to their personal hygiene appropriately and most are able to undress and dress themselves independently before and after movement lessons.

75. Personal, social and emotional development is promoted very well in all areas of learning by careful planning. A strength of the teaching is the warm, caring relationships that adults develop with the children, which helps them to grow in confidence. The adults provide very good role models for the children, always treating each of them with courtesy and respect to which they respond positively. There are very good opportunities to develop the children's independent learning, which is promoted well by the plan, do and review sessions. The children enjoy the many moments of fun and time for reflection, which helps to strengthen the bond between them. Each day, a small group of children prepare the snack-time treats for all the children in the Reception classes, which enhances their social development very well, when they sit together in small groups to chat and enjoy the fruit and milk.

Communication, language and literacy

76. Most children make good progress in this area of learning from their below average attainment on entry to the school and most are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals for this area of the curriculum. Children who have special educational needs make good progress due to the very good support which they receive. All adults make very good attempts to communicate with the children. They talk to the children individually, in groups and as a class to help all children extend their vocabulary and start to use their language and communication skills for a range of purposes. Adults show the children that they value their efforts at communicating. Most children are eager to talk about the things that interest them, such as their favourite toys. The children enjoy listening to stories. The teachers have introduced Big Book sessions in preparation for the literacy hour in Year 1. The children enjoy fiction

stories, such as *The very hungry caterpillar* and use the illustrations well to extend their understanding of the story. Looking at books to gather information about mini beasts provides them with a real reason to use books. This helps to extend their understanding that pictures convey meaning and enhances their early reading skills. It also extends their learning well of the use of non-fiction books.

77. Some children are learning that spoken words and print can have the same meaning and that, in the English culture, text is read from left to right. In the good phonic sessions, they are learning initial phonic sounds, and many are starting to use this skill to attempt to read simple words. Linking the phonic work with correct letter formation is good, as this helps to reinforce the children's understanding of both concepts. Some children have difficulty with their pencil control, but there is not always sufficient intervention by an adult to correct these mistakes, so children continue to practise incorrect letter formation. Most children make a good attempt at writing their own name. The acceptance of developmental writing is good as this enables the children to be confident and to feel they are writers. Children are encouraged to take books home to practise their early reading skills. Many still call out, but teachers and other adults in the Reception classes encourage the children to listen carefully to instructions.

78. Children are provided with a good range of purposeful activities to develop their use of language for reading, writing, speaking and listening, whatever their stage of development. The children are provided with good role-play areas, such as the space pod, the vets, Jack's cottage and the Giant's castle. These are used very well, often with an adult involved to extend the children's vocabulary. The children are provided with paper and pencils for a good range of activities, including when acting out the role of the vet and writing prescriptions for the sick animals. The teaching assistants are used very effectively with individual children and small groups, when direct teaching is involved. They are well briefed and assist the teachers in maintaining ongoing assessments of individual children's progress. The programme of work is well structured and linked to the National Literacy Strategy for young children. Classroom displays are rich in language clues intended to reinforce learning and a good emphasis on language development is evident throughout the whole programme of work. There are good ranges of books in each class, both fiction and non-fiction. The book corners are inviting areas for children to browse and enjoy the books.

Mathematical development

79. This area is taught well and most children make good progress from their mostly below average starting point on entry to the school, and are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals for mathematics. Teachers are helping the children to develop their mathematical understanding well by providing a good structured programme of practical experiences, which enables them to make good progress. The children are learning to recognise and name common shapes such as square, triangle and circle. Most can count by rote numbers to ten and many can recognise numbers to ten. A few children have a good understanding of numbers beyond ten. They regularly practise these skills when singing nursery rhymes, number jingles and playing sorting and ordering games.

80. Teachers and the other adults in the Reception classes provide good support by playing games with the children, which enable them to experience practical counting, and early addition and subtraction in a realistic way. The work on mini beasts is helping the children to understand how the numbers two, four, six and eight relate to the actual number of legs on different species. The practical experience of making a mark for each mini beast found in the school grounds, such as a worm or a snail, enables the children to gain well in their understanding of a one-to-one concept and of making groups of five for a tally. A few children are able to add together the sets of five to find a total number, such as fifteen. They enjoy working with sand and water, filling and emptying differently sized containers. Most children can make a two-colour repeating pattern with beads. Cutting the fruit for snack time enables the children to learn at first hand about halves and quarters.

81. Teachers use every opportunity to extend the children's understanding and reinforcement of basic skills through practical experiences. They ensure that all adults in the Foundation Stage classes use

correct mathematical vocabulary and provide many activities, which build upon the children's understanding at that time. Questions are used skilfully to encourage children to organise their thoughts and build on their understanding. In a good lesson, the teacher helped the children to gain in their understanding of numbers by linking this with their work on mini beasts. By asking questions such as "How many spiders did you find?" and "How many snails did you find?" the teacher enabled the children to gain well in their understanding of different numbers. The work is well planned and tasks are appropriate and in line with the recommendations in the National Numeracy Strategy for young children.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

82. On entry to the school, the children's knowledge and understanding of the world are average for their age. During the Foundation Stage, the teachers effectively build on the children's knowledge, and help them to learn more about the world around them. The teaching and learning are good and most children are on course to exceed the expected standard by the end of the Reception year. Many activities are planned and organised well in order that the children can gain in their understanding through practical experiences. Good practical activities with the interaction of an adult enable the children to learn at first hand about mini beasts, when they find worms, caterpillars and ladybirds, while exploring the school environment. Caring for the caterpillars to watch them change into butterflies, the tadpoles, the vivarium and the ant farm, extends the children's learning well. They use magnifying glasses to carefully observe the similarities and differences, patterns and changes in the small animals. They plant bulbs and seeds, which help them to learn about what plants need in order to grow.

83. A wide range of construction toys and materials are provided for the children to explore and use their skills to make models. Many children competently use a computer and the programmable toy Sam the slug. They confidently use the computer mouse and the keyboard, when using the Paint program to create their own ideas of a ladybird or a caterpillar. They create prints of their own Treasure Island maps and pictures of my family and ourselves. Handling old wooden and new plastic toys helps the children to gain in their understanding of how things have changed over time. The children enjoy listening to stories from other times and cultures; such as *Noah's Ark* and an Aboriginal story *Warnayarra*.

84. The use of correct vocabulary and practical demonstration extends the children's learning well of information and communication technology. Teachers provide a wide range of planned activities, most of which start with what the children already know, and this enables them to extend their understanding and knowledge of the world. There are good ranges of role-play resources, such as the space pod, which help to further their learning about outer space.

Physical development

85. Most children are achieving above average attainment in their physical control. They make good progress in their physical control, mobility and awareness of space outdoors. The children have the benefit of using a good range of large wheeled toys in the spacious outdoor area. They enjoy their physical development lessons in the hall, where they move freely and develop well their awareness of the use of space and of others. They move rhythmically to music, such as to *The Aquarium*, combining and repeating a large range of movements.

86. Teachers provide them with many good opportunities to develop their hand control through the use of a range of mark-making tools, and cutting and gluing activities. However, some have weak pencil control and have difficulty forming their letters correctly. They enjoy using construction kits. Most are able to dress and undress themselves, but a few need help with buttons and zips. Teachers give clear instructions during physical education lessons and allow children to demonstrate good examples of their work.

Creative development

87. The children make good progress in developing their creative skills and most are on course to exceed the nationally recommended levels of attainment by the end of the Reception year. They use their imaginations well when playing in the role-play areas, such as in the vet's and in the Giant's castle. They enjoy using appropriate resources and dressing up in the good range of clothes, including some wild animal outfits, which extend their imaginative play well. The children enjoy their music making, using a good range of musical instruments. They enjoy singing and taking part in action songs. The children use junk modelling materials well to make large insects, which they cover with paint or different types of paper to create realistic effects, such as translucent green film for a dragonfly's wings.

88. The quality of teaching and learning is good and activities are well resourced and organised. Role-play activities are carefully planned for, which enables the children to play out imaginary situations well. Teachers provide a good range of stimulating creative activities, which enhance the children's learning well. The children are provided with a good range of practical activities, which enable them to experiment, and to explore creatively and imaginatively.

ENGLISH

89. Overall, standards in English are average in Year 2. They are above average in speaking, average in listening and reading and below average in writing. These judgements are lower than the standards reached in the national tests and assessments for Year 2 pupils in 2002. However, the present Year 2 group contains a higher number of pupils with specific learning difficulties and more summer born children. These findings also represent a decline from the last inspection in 1997 when standards in English were above average and well above average in some aspects. Since that time, there have been very high levels of turnover of staff so that pupils in Year 2 have not always benefited from the good teaching and learning which they are now receiving in the subject. As a result, their overall rate of achievement has been satisfactory as they moved through the school. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because, in class, they have well planned, sensitive support and their progress is regularly reviewed. The Early Literacy Support programme effectively helps pupils to make up lost ground in reading, writing and spelling. Teachers also deal well with the language and learning needs of pupils whose first language is not English so that they soon become fluent in English, achieve well and are able to take a full part in lessons. The school has a strong focus on raising standards in writing but there has not been enough time for some of the initiatives to have their full impact.

90. Pupils are given good opportunities in class, in assemblies and in activities outside the classroom to develop their self confidence as speakers and communicators. As a result, many speak confidently, with good expression and convey their ideas clearly in well formed sentences. In a literacy lesson when Year 2 pupils were explaining what a temple was to someone who did not know, most of them offered relevant information with a good range of vocabulary and obviously liked contributing their views during the class discussion. However, some needed support and encouragement from the teacher to develop simple and appropriate responses. When "Cluck" the puppet asked Year 1 pupils to recount their holiday experiences some used interesting words and phrases so that others enjoyed the humour of the stories. Teachers are also good at introducing and reinforcing key vocabulary so that pupils, in turn, use it accurately in their own conversations and responses. A frequent and effective device is the use of talk partners which enables pupils to listen carefully to others' views and test out their opinions with a partner before offering an answer. Many pupils are careful and responsive listeners and this helps them to absorb new ideas and information and apply it to their work. In an assembly on the theme of "What is important?" pupils were generally quiet and reflective as they considered the importance of valuing the contributions of others. However, although teachers consistently reinforce to pupils the importance of good listening skills to promote their learning, some pupils, especially in Year 1, find it difficult to listen to others and to take turns in speaking.

91. Reading skills are average in Year 2. Pupils' obvious enthusiasm for books is a strength of their learning and many read with lively expression and great pleasure. They talk happily about how they practise their skills at home. Most of them are keen to make simple comments about characters and

their responses to a story and to identify favourite books. More able pupils have a good range of strategies for tackling unfamiliar words using their knowledge of sounds and letter combinations effectively as well as their understanding of the context. They also use their knowledge of sequencing and story language well when they are retelling the stories they have read. Less able pupils read simple texts carefully but they often have to refer to picture clues and need help to enable them to appreciate fully what they are reading. Most pupils have a sound grasp of phonic skills and a basic sight vocabulary but a few have weaker strategies and have to guess what the word might be. Through their work on non fiction texts, Year 2 pupils are developing early research skills. The school has placed a strong emphasis on the development of guided reading and groups are generally organised satisfactorily. Those pupils in the focus group led by the teacher or teaching assistant and those engaged, for example, in story writing or research topics, make good progress in developing skills. However, other pupils lack direction so that they do not understand the task set for them or choose a book that is too difficult for them and quickly become distracted.

92. Skills in writing are below average in Year 2. Most pupils show a developing awareness of the structure of a story and write in a variety of styles such as instructions, letters, poetry, posters, speech bubbles and booklets. More able pupils sustain the pace and interest of the story, use vocabulary imaginatively and bring ideas to an appropriate conclusion. Less able pupils write simple words and phrases but they do not always convey meaning and often run on without punctuation. “Come and Read our wonderful poetry!” invites a notice in Year 2. Pupils’ enjoyment in writing poetry is seen in Year 2’s work where they have followed the structure of rhymes like *One, two buckle my shoe* and *Spaghetti, spaghetti* to create their own poems. Similarly, Year 1’s Beach poems are full of sparkling images. In Year 2, most pupils realise the importance of using capital letters and full stops. Some write in a fluent joined style but others produce writing that is inconsistent in size with poorly formed letters. Spelling is variable. Some pupils are making use of their knowledge of phonics and growing awareness of spelling patterns to help them spell simple words correctly. Pupils of all abilities generally try to be careful with the presentation of their work.

93. In all classes, standards in literacy are the same as those found in English and the development of literacy skills across the curriculum is good. For example, in history, pupils research simple information about Florence Nightingale, write evaluations of their star products in design and technology and describe the life cycle of the frog in science. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to support teaching and learning. Drama is used well through activities like role play, freeze framing and hot seating to develop pupils’ communication skills.

94. Overall the quality of teaching and learning and in English is good. The teaching of basic skills is also good. This broadly reflects the findings of the previous inspection. This good teaching and learning are founded upon the joint planning sessions so that teachers share their skills and experience but ensure that activities are well defined to meet the needs of pupils within the different classes. Their good subject knowledge means that presentations are lively and well informed, constructive links are made between subjects and new knowledge is introduced in a clear and systematic way. This was evident in a Year 1 teacher’s very careful presentation of the use of the present and the past tenses to enable her pupils to recount their visit to the local church. Linked to this subject expertise are teachers’ skills in asking questions. This helps pupils to think more precisely about what they are saying and how to express their ideas clearly. In a Year 2 lesson about non fiction books, the teacher’s probing questions encouraged pupils to think very carefully about the differences between an index, glossary and contents page and made the best use of their previous learning.

95. Teachers’ careful and sensitive management of pupils’ behaviour means that they develop confidence and enjoy a sense of achievement. Pupils are not afraid to make mistakes, seek help or express their feeling because teachers value their contributions. In a Year 2 lesson when pupils were finding it difficult to grasp the idea of one word containing many syllables, the teacher perceptively turned this into a challenge for them. In some classes, the management of pupils is not firm enough to

ensure that all benefit fully from the lesson. Pupils are allowed to call out and time is wasted re-establishing routines and the focus of the lesson. Most teachers move lessons along quickly by their lively approach so that pupils remain eager and alert and cover a lot of ground. However, when the pace is comfortable rather than challenging, pupils settle into a relaxed rate of working. Teachers' good instructions and explanations about activities mean that pupils settle to work quickly but they do not make their expectations of the quality and quantity of work clear enough to pupils. This lack of rigour means that vital learning is lost. In all classes, the complementary skills of teachers and teaching assistants instil confidence and enhance pupils' learning.

96. The subject is well led and the co-ordinator has a key role in monitoring, developing and evaluating the subject including regular classroom observations. Resources are satisfactory. Priorities for development in the subject are appropriate. Assessment procedures are very good and are used very effectively to track the progress of individual pupils and plan challenging work for them. Very specific personal targets, which are particularly well defined in Year 2, enable pupils to know exactly what they are working towards. The marking system is easy for pupils to understand but does not always give them clear pointers about how they can improve their work. The profile of the subject is raised effectively by drama workshops, puppets, a Christmas performance and an Indian storyteller. English makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as they write their own Easter stories, share their ideas with talk partners, examine moral issues in their reading and write letters to Shompa asking about her life in India.

MATHEMATICS

97. Pupils in Year 2 attain average standards in numeracy and in all other areas of the mathematics curriculum. This finding is lower than the 2002 end of Year 2 national tests and the judgement of the previous inspection. The difference is due largely to high levels of turnover amongst the teaching staff. When compared with similar schools, the end of Year 2 national tests for 2002 show that Year 2 pupils achieved above average standards in 2002. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs, are currently making good progress. Pupils who have English as a second language are also making good progress and are achieving similar standards to their peers. The standards achieved by the pupils in the present Year 2 classes represent satisfactory achievement and reflect the turbulence of changes in staff over the past two years.

98. At present, the quality of teaching and learning is good and gives rise to good progress. However, due to the many changes of staff, pupils in the present Year 2 classes have not had the benefit of this consistently good teaching. Pupils are now benefiting from the good teaching, which is promoting good learning.

99. In the lessons seen, good quality teaching and learning was observed as it was in the school's last inspection. Most Year 2 pupils are working appropriately within Level 2 of the mathematics curriculum, except for a minority of below average attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs, who find some aspects of this work too challenging. Approximately a quarter of pupils in Year 2 are achieving above average attainment. Teachers are well organised with resources ready for use and support staff aware of what they are required to do. Good control of the pupils is maintained with a friendly, but firm atmosphere within the classroom. Teachers successfully involve pupils by naming them and switching the focus of their questions from one to another. Pupils respond well to this method and are attentive and willing to explain their mental strategies. Most pupils in Year 2 can use mental recall of the addition and subtraction facts to ten and can order numbers correctly up to 100 and beyond. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 can identify pairs of numbers that total 100 using multiples of 10, such as 60 and 40.

100. Some pupils have difficulty when finding missing number problems, especially when the missing number is the initial one, such as $X - 2 = 5$. Higher attaining pupils achieve well with numbers to 100 in missing number problems, but find it more difficult with numbers above one hundred and with multiplication and division. They are able to solve simple money problems, are beginning to use

centimetres to measure length and can tell the time, when on the hour or half-hour. They can estimate, measure and compare using standard units in capacity. Other methods, such as open-ended questioning, enable pupils to reflect and think for themselves. In practical situations, for example, they use their knowledge of mathematics well to round up or down to the nearest ten. From the analysis of pupils' work, it is apparent that good use is made of on-going assessment for pupils. Work is matched well to the needs of pupils, who have varying abilities, which enables them to receive work appropriately suited to their individual needs.

101. Teachers are secure with the National Numeracy Strategy, which they apply effectively. Year 1 pupils use number rhymes and songs to help build up their basic knowledge and skilful questioning develops this further, as mental addition and subtraction is required before they can start the next verse. They can record simple addition and subtraction sums. Good activities engage high levels of interest from the pupils. The pupils enjoy using shapes to make repeating patterns and to create symmetrical patterns. They can plot the directions on a number grid to move from a given number to another number, but most find it difficult to express their thoughts about the route. The pupils can give directions to turn left or turn right, but have difficulty remembering to then say forward. They can use a block graph to compare their weight with other pupils in the class. Most recognise the hours on a clock and are learning half past. Many can give change from ten pence and the most able pupils can give change from 20 pence.

102. A very able co-ordinator, who clearly understands what is required to maintain high standards, manages and monitors the subject very well. Strengths include the range and use of the assessment procedures, the individual targets set for pupils, the effectiveness of the strategies for teaching numeracy skills and the clear education plans for pupils with special educational needs. Mathematics is used well across the curriculum and is satisfactorily supported by information and communication technology.

SCIENCE

103. In Year 2, standards in science are average. In the school's 1997 inspection report, standards were judged to be well above average and, in the assessments made by teachers in 2002 in science, standards were above average. The differences are explained largely by two factors, the very high rate of turnover of teachers the school has experienced and the greater number of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 2. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls. Achievement for the current Year 2 pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, is satisfactory. This is because they entered the school at average standards and leave it at the same level. The achievement of these pupils represents the satisfactory nature of the teaching and learning they received as they moved through the school at a time of turbulence amongst the staff. The findings of the inspection are that current achievement is good because of the current good nature of the teaching and learning pupils are receiving. However, in some instances in Year 1, the teachers' control of the pupils is not strong enough to promote maximum progress.

104. In Year 2, the pupils, for example, understand basic life cycles and the fundamental factors associated with staying healthy. They understand how heating and cooling can change materials and how a torch works. Some useful links have been made with information and communication technology. For example, Year 1 pupils have created and labelled the parts of a plant using a computer and Year 2 have used a program to create electrical circuits. There have also been links with music through looking at materials to consider how instruments are made and with physical education through forces and movement. Investigative science is an area of comparative weakness although the school is well aware of this and has suitable plans for its further development. The pupils' literacy skills are not always fully developed in this subject as some of the recording work is too restrictive.

105. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is good. When the school was inspected in 1997 teaching and learning were judged to be very good. The difference is accounted for by the

factors mentioned earlier. A good Year 2 lesson about fair tests illustrated the good quality of the teaching and learning seen in science during the inspection. The well planned lesson began with revision of the pupils' earlier work on reversible changes to materials which are heated or cooled. Resources were well used to stimulate and motivate the pupils. Water frozen in a balloon generated awe and wonder and aided spiritual development as a pupil said "I didn't know you could freeze a balloon!" The pupils also applied their earlier learning well as they were asked why they would not put ice on a hot computer – "Water and electricity don't mix. You might get a shock," a pupil responded. The pupils worked well with their partners when asked to decide how to make a fair test relating to the speed at which the ice would melt. This aided their social development well and helped them to apply their scientific knowledge creatively. The pupils then put their ideas to the test. A pupil with special educational needs was well supported by a teaching assistant but was fully integrated into the class through working with a partner. The pupils shared their ideas clearly with the rest of the class and quietly recorded their work in their books. Good progress was made during the lesson.

106. Standards in science have fallen from well above average in 1997 to average in 2003. Allowing for the difficulties faced by the school, this means that improvement since 1996 and the management of the subject are satisfactory. Resources are suitably matched to the needs of the curriculum. The co-ordinator took on the responsibility for science in September 2002 at the start of her second year of teaching and is not a subject specialist. Nevertheless, her monitoring of teaching and standards is very strong. Good assessment procedures are in place although there are plans to improve these still further. Other areas identified for continuing improvement are the school's woodland trail and pond area. A well attended science club enhances curricular provision for Year 1 pupils. There is some use of information and communication technology in science but this is not fully developed.

ART AND DESIGN

107. Pupils' work in art and design, including that of pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, is above average. This is similar to the standards reported in the school's previous OFSTED inspection.

108. The quality of teaching and learning is good and promotes good progress. This is the same as the judgement made by the school's 1997 inspection. Teachers are confident in their knowledge of art and design and this ensures that pupils learn the basic skills of drawing, designing and painting well. Teachers provide stimulating materials, with which pupils enjoy experimenting, such as the pastel Picasso-style portraits. These are to be exhibited at the Kent County Show in July 2003. Pupils refine their skills well as they progress through the school and show increasing confidence in using various media and techniques. Year 1 pupils imaginatively use a wide range of materials well, including their own tie-dye materials, for their weavings, which are to be used to decorate the back of the piano in the hall. They effectively use natural materials for their animal sculptures and collages. They use paints well for their Van Gogh style vases of flowers. Studying the styles of various artists helps to improve pupils' own work. Year 2 pupils use charcoal and pastels well for their observational drawings of leaves. Their pencil self-portraits show close observation to detail. They print with different materials, linking the prints to shapes they have observed on houses, such as Tudor houses. They use information and communication technology well to create Mondrian style pictures. However, sketchbooks are not used to record observations and for pupils to develop their ideas.

109. A Year 2 lesson illustrates well the strengths of the teaching and learning in the school. The teacher aroused pupils' curiosity by explaining that they were going to create a large mural for the school. At the start of the lesson, she showed pupils a variety of prints of buildings from different times and cultures, such as a Tudor house, the Taj Mahal and a wooden African hut. She clearly explained that they were to work in small groups and to base their design on one of the buildings. Each group worked well together to create their design on a piece of A3 paper, clearly expressing their ideas and adding more details as the design progressed. The teacher enabled them to gain well in their concept of how to enlarge their drawings to a bigger scale by explaining that they were to carefully fold and cut the

paper into four quarters. They were then to each take one of the quarters and reproduce that part of the design on a piece of A 4 paper, enlarging it to fill the paper. They responded well to the teacher's clear explanation and their positive attitudes made them receptive to this new learning experience. While enlarging their designs, the teacher reminded them to refer closely to the original design and to check with other members in their group to ensure that the four parts would line up to make one building. When the drawings were completed, each group chose the media they would use for their building, such as paint, pastels, chalks or charcoal. The good plenary enabled pupils to evaluate their work and to suggest which part they were pleased with and which area they would improve in their next art lesson. The teacher's innovative approach, good subject knowledge and lively teaching engaged pupils' interest at all times and enabled them to extend their learning well and achieve a high level of attainment in their artwork.

110. The headteacher is temporarily managing art, as the previous co-ordinator has left the school. A new co-ordinator will take on the role in September. The policy is to be reviewed in the autumn term 2003. The scheme of work is based on national guidelines for art and adapted to the needs of the school to ensure progression of skills across the school. Teachers create relevant links with other subjects, such as designs on Tudor houses and mathematics to enlarge their designs. Resources are good. Visits to the National Gallery enhance pupils' understanding of art very well. Throughout the school, colourful displays are used effectively to enliven classrooms and enhance communal areas.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

111. Due to timetabling arrangements, it was not possible to observe any lessons during the inspection. Judgements are based on an analysis of pupils' work, photographic evidence, teachers' planning and discussions with teachers. Indications are that standards are average by the end of Year 2, which is similar to the findings of the school's previous inspection in 1997. Pupils' achievement in the subject is satisfactory, including pupils who have special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language.

112. From the evidence available, it is judged that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory as it was at the time of school's last inspection. Year 1 pupils looked at different types of playground apparatus before drawing and labelling their own designs. They used a satisfactory range of different materials, such as lolly-sticks, straws and pipe cleaners to make swings and slides. The pupils satisfactorily use information and communication technology to create their designs for a playground and for Easter cards. They design, make and evaluate a fruit salad for their puppet Cluck, thinking about the colour, taste and overall presentation. Year 2 pupils design, make and evaluate vehicles, which have axles, card or cotton reel wheels, and a chassis. They painted and decorated the vehicles, some for Black Beauty, Mickey Mouse, and Belle and a coach for Cinderella. They designed and made different styles of stars, which were used to decorate the school Christmas tree.

113. A new co-ordinator is to be appointed in September 2003. At present, the subject has a caretaker co-ordinator, who provides sound leadership in the subject. She provides informal advice to colleagues and ensures that resources are easily available. She has liaised with the design and technology co-ordinator in the adjoining junior school to ensure smooth continuity of design and technology work, when pupils transfer from the infant school. The policy has recently been reviewed and updated. The scheme of work is based on national guidelines and is adapted to the needs of the school. There is a trolley of good quality resources, but resources are insufficient if more than one class wants to use them at a time. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and are undertaken at the end of each topic.

GEOGRAPHY

114. In Year 2, standards of attainment are above average. All pupils achieve well. This is the same finding as that of the school's 1997 inspection. Judgements are based on the two lessons seen, an

analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning and monitoring files and discussions with pupils and teachers. No differences in the attainment of boys and girls were observed.

115. In Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of many aspects of life in India, they have compared Tonbridge with a coastal location and are aware of some of the effects that weather has on people, for example, the type of clothing worn. In addition, they have studied aspects of the fiction island of Struay such as its physical features and have an awareness of how to get to France and some of its features, for example, climate. They are also able to use books well to research information. Aspects of the subject which are comparative weakness are mapping skills and the use of information and communication technology.

116. Teaching and learning are good as they were in the school's previous inspection. A Year 2 lesson in which the pupils undertook research of a specific area of life in India exemplified this judgement. The lesson was well planned which provided a good basis from which to promote further progress. This was further enhanced as the teacher revised and built carefully on the pupils' earlier knowledge. The teacher asked the pupils to suggest areas they would like to research about India and they suggested aspects of life such as schools, food and clothes. The pupils then worked very successfully in pairs to decide exactly what they would like to find out about and to frame explicit questions to answer in their work. The teacher made sure that the pupils fully understood how to use the books provided to seek the information they needed, for example, by using the contents and index pages. The teacher's good control and knowledge and understanding of the subject encouraged confidence and motivation in the pupils. As a result, they worked hard, behaved well and made good progress.

117. The subject has maintained the strengths noted in the 1997 inspection in spite of the difficulties faced by the school. This represents good progress since the last inspection and good management of geography. The co-ordinator took up post in September 2002 and has already met all of her initial objectives which included the monitoring of teaching and learning. In addition, good assessment procedures have recently been introduced and the satisfactory resources have been reviewed and organised. The co-ordinator's action plan for the subject centres on a range of activities to develop further the pupils' mapping skills. Geography promotes social and cultural development well through charity work and the study of other cultures. Good use is made of the school grounds and the local area in the teaching of the subject. A digital camera has been used to take photographs of the local area.

HISTORY

118. Standards in history are average in Year 2. This judgement is different from the previous inspection when standards were above average and teaching was reported to be good. Teaching and learning in the subject are now judged to be satisfactory overall and pupils' weaker literacy skills especially in the recording of their work, have led to lower attainment. The achievement of all pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. No lessons were observed in Year 2 during the inspection because of timetabling. Judgements are, therefore, based on an analysis of pupils' work, observations of classes in Year 1, scrutiny of teachers' planning and displays and discussions with teachers and pupils.

119. Across the school, teachers effectively channel the natural curiosity and enthusiasm of pupils in finding out about the past. There is a good emphasis on the language of time and teachers encourage a thoughtful response from pupils about the differences between their own lives and the past. Pupils in Year 1 are developing a sound understanding of past and present through looking at homes and household objects that change over time. In one lesson, they were actively and imaginatively engaged with the past when they examined objects such as mixing bowls, hot water bottles, clothes pegs and telephones and compared them with their modern equivalents. They asked simple questions about the past and identified similarities and differences between old and new objects. Pupils' sense of chronology, use of historical vocabulary and knowledge of the importance of artefacts were developed effectively as pupils enjoyed being time detectives. This was the result of well-planned and structured teaching which made pupils think how it must have been like to have been living at that time.

120. Pupils in Year 2 are also soundly developing their sense of time and change by comparison with the past in their study of the Great Fire of London. They understand why the fire broke out and burnt for so long, realise the importance of eye-witnesses like Samuel Pepys and have written about the feelings of the people caught up in the disaster. Pupils have also studied the life and legacy of Florence Nightingale and have compared her work with that of Mary Seacole. They have learned about the appalling conditions in the Crimea and the importance of hygiene in hospitals. Pupils understand the significance of Remembrance Day, the symbols associated with it and why such events are still commemorated worldwide. This is given added meaning and relevance by a visitor who talks about life in World War II. As part of their work on non-fiction writing, pupils are developing good enquiry skills. However, the range and depth of their recorded work are too limited for this age group so that not all historical skills are sufficiently developed and more able pupils are not challenged enough.

121. The subject is satisfactorily led and resourced. The coordinator has a sound overview of the subject through monitoring planning and classroom observations. Targets for development are appropriate. Assessment is good and procedures are simple and accessible. Information and communication technology is not used enough to support teaching and learning in the subject. History makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development when they discuss simple moral issues, examine artefacts together and listen to a visitor talking about a childhood in India. Visits to places of interest like Bethnal Green Toy Museum, the Museum of Kent Life and Golden Jubilee Celebrations effectively enliven pupils' learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

122. Standards in Year 2 are average and achievement is satisfactory. This represents a fall in standards compared with the findings of the school's 1997 inspection which judged standards to be above average. This difference is largely due to the high levels of staff turnover and changes in management experienced by the school which have adversely affected the school's ability to implement an increasing complex curriculum. There are no differences in the attainment of boys and girls. All pupils have good access to information and communication technology which is well used to support pupils with special educational needs.

123. In Year 2, pupils, for example, construct and interrogate simple databases. They present information in word processed and picture form and combine text and graphics. The pupils program a robotic toy so that it follows a predetermined course and use information and communication technology to explore imaginary situations. They also show understanding of the functions of some keys, for example, the space bar, the shift key, how to change the font and how to save and print. However, the pupils' general keyboard skills are weak and many are slow at locating the keys they need. Nevertheless, their skills when using the mouse controller are average. Pupils also use information and communication technology skills in other subjects such as science, for example, when learning about materials. However, the lack of some software places restrictions on the development of this work. The school does not have its own website and limited use is made of the Internet and E mail. There was little evidence of pupils reviewing and modifying their work.

124. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In 1997 it was judged to be good. The difference is due to the reasons already given and to the fact that the limited space available in the computer suite creates difficulties for teachers. A Year 2 lesson in which the pupils' information and communication technology skills were applied in literacy exemplified the generally satisfactory nature of the teaching and learning in the subject. The lesson was well planned and information and communication technology was used in the classroom and in the suite in order to overcome the small size of the suite. The teacher's good knowledge and understanding of the subject were evident as she clearly explained the purpose of the lesson to the pupils so that they fully understood what they had to do. Although the general pace and variety of the lesson motivated the pupils well, the introduction was too long and some became restless towards the end of this part of the lesson. There was strong support by a teaching assistant for a pupil with complex difficulties throughout the lesson. The pupils worked

well together in pairs which promoted their social development well and which also reflected the teacher's good control and the pupils' response to it. The major weakness in the lesson was the lack of challenge for more able pupils in terms of the demands made on them in both information and communication technology, but, particularly in literacy. Nevertheless, most pupils made satisfactory progress.

125. Weaknesses in the teaching and learning seen included inadequate control of the pupils who, consequently, did not work hard enough which slowed down the pace of learning. The objectives of the lesson were not always met due to crowding in the computer suite when a whole class was in it and the constraints of time.

126. Since the school was inspected in 1997, standards have fallen from above average to average and the quality of teaching is now satisfactory rather than good. However, allowing for the barriers to improvement faced by the school and for the increased complexity of the information and communication technology curriculum, this represents satisfactory improvement. It also indicates satisfactory management of the subject. There is a satisfactory action plan for the further improvement of the subject. However, although this has raising achievement as its first priority, the plan does not specifically state how this will be done or how it will be measured. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching and learning in order to ensure that the objectives for lessons were clearly focused on information and communication technology. Assessment procedures are good and are being appropriately further developed. The school's resources are satisfactory overall. The ratio of pupils to computers is at the level of the national average and the school has a good range of other information and communication technology hardware. There are some shortages of software which the school is addressing. The school has an appropriate Internet access policy.

MUSIC

127. As in the previous inspection, standards in music are above average in Year 2. Music has a high profile in all year groups and the school's aim 'Music is Fun!' is shared by staff and pupils. As a result, pupils delight in their music making and achievement is good across the school. This also includes pupils with special educational needs and the few whose first language is not English as a lot of work is carried out in groups where pupils support each other well. Judgements in this inspection are based on lesson observations, assemblies, scrutiny of planning and the music portfolio and discussions with teachers and pupils.

128. In lessons, assemblies and even among daily classroom routines, there is a sense of lively enjoyment in music. Pupils experience the sheer joy of singing and use their voices very confidently, maintaining a tuneful melody even when unaccompanied. They know the words to many songs and are able to add rhythmic actions and keep a steady beat. They can change the mood of their singing effectively from the vivacious *If you're happy and you know it* to the more reflective worship song *Thank you for my friends* and perform both with great conviction and enthusiasm. This is similar to the last inspection when standards in singing were reported to be well above average.

129. The quality of teaching and learning in music is good in Years 1 and 2. From an early age, pupils are given a rich variety of musical experiences so that they bring increasing confidence, control and imagination to their work. Teachers work hard to ensure that pupils listen intently to what they hear and that they treat instruments very carefully. A sense of fun and energy accelerated learning well in a Year 1 lesson as part of the topic 'What's the Score?' The teacher made inventive use of various rhythmic chants to set the scene and then gave pupils a good degree of independence in choosing instruments to create the sounds of a building site. Pupils enjoyed exploring, creating and recognising the sounds of building machinery and paid close attention to cues for action from the leader. Teachers are skilled at motivating pupils and boosting confidence so that pupils learn a great deal without realising it because they are enjoying themselves so much. In another Year 1 lesson on how symbols can be used to describe changing sounds, the teacher used lots of praise to reward pupils' efforts so that, when

performing their class composition, they were able to change the way they played their instruments by following simple signs.

130. In a Year 2 lesson about how sounds can be combined, the teacher's confident, knowledgeable approach also led to happy relaxed music making. Pupils were keen to work out how they could combine different vocal, body and instrumental sounds to give different weather effects such as sunshine, lightning and wind. The teacher explained that silence was an important part of music and encouraged pupils to think for themselves about the techniques they were using and the patterns they were creating. All groups successfully developed their musical ideas about the weather which resulted in a dramatic performance. The power and excitement of music in the school were also evident in a weekly whole school music class. The teacher moved the lesson along at a breathless pace so that even the youngest pupils were carried away by her infectious enthusiasm. The clapping activities to develop their awareness of rhythm and tempo gradually increased in complexity and rose to a dramatic crescendo. Singing was rhythmic, energetic and expressive and pupils were caught up in the air of excitement as they sang *Boris the Spider* following the teacher's very lively example. They sang *Jack be Nimble* well in a round and kept an ostinato. A key feature of this very successful session was the teacher's high level of expertise which she used to challenge and extend pupils' creative abilities by treating them as real musicians. All pupils are introduced well to the language of music but there is not enough individual recording of simple notation and pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to evaluate and improve their work. Pupils are given good opportunities to discuss how music can create mood and atmosphere, for example, comparing music by Vaughan Williams and Rimsky Korsakov and expressing themselves through drawing and writing.

131. The subject is very well led and promoted by the very experienced coordinator who has a very good overview of the subject through classroom observations and weekly whole school lessons in which all staff are involved. Resources are good especially multicultural instruments and there is plenty of listening music from different cultures although not from other ages. Assessment is good with simple but effective procedures. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to support teaching and learning. The subject is enriched by guitar and recorder clubs, a Christmas production *The Jolly Woodlands Postie*, links with the community and, for example, a visit from the brass group Just Trombones. Music makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development when they joyfully sing *He's got the whole world in his hands*, improvise rhythms in a group, support one another in performance and play a wide range of multicultural instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

132. In Year 2, standards of attainment in physical education are above average. All pupils achieve well. This is the same as the findings of the school's 1997 inspection. No differences in the attainment of boys and girls were observed. Aspects of gymnastics, games and dance were observed. However, the school's planning shows that Year 2 pupils also swim in the nearby junior school's pool in the summer term.

133. In Year 2, in gymnastics, pupils create sequences of movements involving balancing and twisting with above average co-ordination and poise. In games, their passing and catching skills are good and, in dance, they respond rhythmically and in time to music with a sound degree of imagination. The pupils' technical vocabulary is well developed in this subject, for example, they understand and respond to terms such as "darting" and "dodging". Pupils' social development is promoted well through working together in various situations. Weaker areas in the pupils' skills are their evaluations of the work of others which tend to concentrate on the strengths of the work, their understanding of the effects of exercise on the body and the reasons why it is important to warm up and cool down.

134. The quality of teaching and learning is good as it was at the time of the 1997 inspection. A good Year 2 gymnastics lesson involving twisting movements exemplified the good quality teaching and learning seen during the inspection. This lesson was well planned and started promptly and in an orderly manner. This meant that no time was wasted and learning was maximised. The pupils listened

carefully to the teacher's instructions so that the warm up activity was effective. The teacher's good expectations of the pupils were shown as they were challenged to use their imagination to improve their movements. Praise was well used to motivate the pupils who worked quietly and well because of the teacher's good management of them. The pupils received good support from the teacher and the teaching assistant. Pupils were used to demonstrate good quality work effectively and other pupils were asked to evaluate it for strengths and weaknesses. Strengths were clearly identified but useful areas for improvement were less frequent. After the evaluative session, the pupils were given time to apply their skills and imaginations freely in order to improve their work. Good progress was made in this lesson.

135. Standards and the quality of teaching and learning have been maintained since the last inspection in spite of the barriers to improvement faced by the school. Many of the other strengths noted by the 1997 inspection, for example, safe working, enthusiastic co-ordination and comprehensive schemes of work have also been maintained. Assessment procedures, monitoring of teaching and learning, extra-curricular activities and provision for pupils with special educational needs have improved. Year 1 pupils with physical difficulties are given additional help weekly. This is provided by teaching assistants supported by the local hospital. For these reasons, improvement in the subject since the last inspection has been good and physical education is well managed. The co-ordinator has a suitable plan for the further improvement of the subject. This plan includes reviewing the storage of equipment in the hall which remains an issue from the 1997 inspection. It also includes developing links with other subjects. Mathematics is mentioned in the plan but the use of information and communication technology in the subject is also limited. The length of time devoted to the teaching of physical education is lower than in most schools.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

136. As in the previous inspection, standards in religious education are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Judgements in this inspection are based on an analysis of work, scrutiny of teachers' planning and displays and discussions with teachers and pupils. The warm caring ethos of the school, where pupils are strongly encouraged to develop a sense of self worth, supports teaching and learning well in religious education. All pupils are achieving well. Pupils with special educational needs and the few for whom English is not their first language are involved in all activities and discussions and, with careful guidance, make good progress.

137. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in Year 1 and 2 is good. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Teachers generally have good confidence and expertise in teaching the subject. They have an effective balance between imparting knowledge and enabling pupils to reflect on important questions and to make a personal response. Pupils in Year 1 study the values, beliefs and key stories of Christianity and Judaism and teachers encourage them to think how they can relate this learning to their own lives and feelings. Pupils have written their own rules for a happy and safe life based on their study of the Torah and have also examined whether they spend their weekends in the same way as a Jewish family. They also know that a church is a special place for Christians and, following their visit to the local Methodist church, they can recognise the important features of a church building. Year 1 pupils gasped in wonder when the teacher showed them paintings of stained glass windows and explained some of the symbolism contained in them. This stimulated a thoughtful discussion about how they felt when visiting the church and the feelings it would inspire in Christians.

138. Pupils in Year 2 have discussed belongings that are special to them in order to understand why religious artefacts are important to believers. They have looked at the significance of religious festivals such as Christian harvest festival and why Hindus worship at home and in the Mandir and why they celebrate Divali. Pupils have been looking at the reasons why Jesus told stories, and have explored simple meanings of parables like the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan and have identified their universal messages of love, family, kindness and forgiveness. Teachers also create a reflective and focused atmosphere in class where pupils can effectively develop new thoughts and ideas. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher's calm, sensitive approach meant that pupils were able to follow the common thread

running through the parables. This was because the teacher insisted that they should explain the messages conveyed in their own words and because her thought provoking questions enabled them to understand the deeper meanings in the text. As a result, pupils discussed the story thoughtfully and with good maturity for their age. However, there is not enough evidence of teachers developing pupils' spiritual growth through observation and reflection on the beauty, order and mystery of the natural world.

139. The subject is well led and resourced. The co-ordinator has a good overview of teaching and learning through looking at pupils' work, modelling lessons and classroom observations. Targets for development are appropriate. Assessment is good and is a simple and effective method of recording achievement. Information and communication technology is not used enough in the subject. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development when they write harvest prayers, describe their feelings when visiting the church together and listen to the story of Rama and Sita told by an Indian visitor.