

INSPECTION REPORT

PALMARSH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hythe

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118490

Headteacher: M A Alexander-Webber

Reporting inspector: Ian Knight
23031

Date of inspection: 24th – 27th March 2003

Inspection number: 247911

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St George's Place Hythe Kent
Postcode:	CT21 6NE
Telephone number:	01303 260212
Fax number:	N/A
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Frank Smith
Date of previous inspection:	3 rd November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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23031	Ian Knight	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9079	Ann Moss	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30691	Kathleen Coupland	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Equal opportunities Science Geography History Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Palmarsh Primary School is a small primary school serving an area to the west of Hythe in Kent. The surrounding area is one of socio-economic disadvantage. One hundred and fifty-six pupils are on roll, evenly split between boys and girls. Almost all the pupils for whom the ethnic origin is known are of white backgrounds; there are small numbers who are Asian, African or of mixed race. Three pupils speak English as an additional language, of whom two are at the early stages of acquisition. Thirty-two pupils are identified as having special educational needs; this is about average. These needs include specific learning needs, emotional and behavioural needs, hearing impairment, autism and delay. None have a Statement of Special Educational Need. Twenty pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals; a proportion that is about average. Pupils' attainment on entry varies considerably year-on-year; this year it was about average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Palmarsh School provides a sound education for its pupils and continues to improve. Although standards overall are below expectations in Years 2 and 6, pupils are now achieving satisfactorily after a period of uncertainty over staffing and staff absence through illness. Pupils have good attitudes to school and behave well. The quality of relationships in the school is very good, resulting in a warm, supportive ethos. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and good in the Foundation Stage. The headteacher and senior staff provide good leadership and management, soundly supported by the governing body. This is achieved at a cost per pupil that is within the average range; consequently, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- All staff value, care for and respect their pupils.
- The school successfully promotes good attitudes and behaviour.
- Relationships between all members of the school community are good.
- Provision in the Foundation Stage is good, leading to good learning and achievement by these children.
- Pupils with a special educational need receive good support and make good progress.
- The senior managers provide good leadership and management.

What could be improved

- Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are not high enough.
- The use of the results of assessment in planning is not rigorous enough.
- The levels of challenge for the most able pupils are not consistently high enough.
- The monitoring role of co-ordinators is underdeveloped.

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 November 1997. Since then, test results in English and mathematics have improved in line with the national picture and pupils are now making better

progress. The quality of teaching overall has been maintained, and the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced. Progress on the key issues from the last inspection has been mixed: attainment in science is still low and assessment procedures in science and the foundation subjects are only now being developed. The co-ordination of the core subjects is better, but there is still room for improvement in the co-ordination of the foundation subjects. Statutory requirements for the school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are largely met. Schemes of work are improved and ensure systematic coverage of the National Curriculum. Progress has been significantly impeded by turnover of staff and has accelerated over the last year or so, so that the school has made just satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	D	C	D	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	C	D	D	D	
science	D	D	E	E	

Pupils in Year 6 made average progress in English and science, and better than average progress in mathematics during their time in the juniors. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2, reading standards were average, but standards in writing and mathematics were above average. Teachers' assessments in science showed that standards there were about average. This is also true when the school is compared to similar schools. Results at the end of Year 2 have been improving since about 1999; standards in English and mathematics in Year 6 have been improving in line with the national picture. Science standards in Year 6 have also improved, albeit more slowly. The school achieved its targets in 2002; it has set challenging targets for its performance in 2003 and is making some progress towards meeting them. Inspection evidence shows that children in reception are on course to attain the recommended Early Learning Goals; this represents good achievement. In Year 2, standards are below expectations in English, mathematics and science and in line with expectations in most other subjects. This represents satisfactory achievement when the fact that these pupils entered the school with low attainment is considered. In Year 6, standards are below expectations in mathematics and science, but in line with expectations in English. Pupils' progress in the juniors has been affected by staff turnover and the lack of continuity this entails, so these standards represent satisfactory achievement.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils show good levels of enthusiasm and are very interested and involved in their activities.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils show good levels of understanding of the impact of their actions on others.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils show good levels of respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. When they have the opportunity, they demonstrate good levels of initiative and personal responsibility. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory – in line with national averages.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well in the Foundation Stage and soundly elsewhere. Teachers know their pupils well and use this knowledge to plan lessons effectively. Learning support assistants work well to support teachers and pupils. Relationships in most classrooms are very positive and this enhances learning as pupils try hard to please their teachers and lessons can move at a brisk pace. However, the most able pupils are not consistently challenged enough in all lessons and so have not made the progress of which they are capable. By contrast, pupils with a special educational need enjoy good support and make good progress compared with their capabilities.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school makes good provision for extra-curricular activities. The community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision leads to good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good informal provision allows these pupils to make the same progress as their peers
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. There is good provision for pupils' social development and satisfactory provision for their spiritual and cultural development.

How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has very good procedures for child protection and to ensure pupils' welfare. Procedures for assessment and the use of assessment data are satisfactory. However, assessment does not always relate closely enough to learning objectives or pupils' individual targets.
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The school maintains an open door policy which parents value. This engenders a good relationship.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The whole staff work very well as a team, sharing the headteacher's vision for the school. The school's aims and values are clearly reflected in the school's work and in its extremely positive ethos. Not all subjects have co-ordinators and the co-ordination of the foundation subjects is not fully developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors monitor the progress of the school development plan, but are not involved in its construction. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses, but rely too heavily on the headteacher for information.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Test results are analysed and the data used. Teaching and standards in English and mathematics have been monitored in partnership with the local authority. Other subjects are not monitored as rigorously.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school uses new technology soundly, and funds are used for their designated purposes. The school's priorities are soundly reflected in development planning and the budget.

The school has sufficient, appropriately qualified teaching and support staff. The accommodation is satisfactory for the teaching of the National Curriculum. The school is adequately resourced. The principles of best value are applied satisfactorily in the school's work.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school and are making good progress.• Behaviour in the school is good.• They are comfortable in their dealings with the school.• The school is well led and managed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of homework.• How well they are kept informed about their children's progress.• The range of extra-curricular activities.

The inspection team agreed with parents' positive views, though they found progress to be satisfactory. They found that homework is used satisfactorily, and that the range of extra-curricular activities and the information provided for parents are both good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Although standards are mostly below expectations in Year 6, pupils are achieving satisfactorily overall in the school.
2. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2, standards in the school were about average in reading, but above average in writing and mathematics. The picture was the same when the school is compared only to those with a similar intake. Although high numbers of pupils gained the expected Level 2 in reading, the proportion gaining the higher Level 3 was much lower than in other schools, and it is this that caused the average standards to be slightly depressed. Over the last few years, standards in tests have improved in all three areas, and have remained close to the national picture overall in 2001 and 2002. There are no tests in the other core subject of science, but teachers' assessments show that standards are about average overall.
3. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6, results were more disappointing. Compared with all schools nationally, standards were below average in English and mathematics, and well below average in science. When compared to schools with a similar intake, standards in mathematics were again below average, but standards in both English and science were well below average. However, when the results in Year 6 are compared with the same pupils' results four years previously, when they were in Year 2, then pupils made about average progress in English, better than average progress in mathematics, but below average progress in science. High numbers of pupils attained the expected Level 4, but, in each subject, too few pupils reached the higher Level 5, suggesting that pupils with the potential for higher attainment were not challenged enough. The school has recognised this, and set some strategies in place, including booster classes and separate teaching of pupils who have the capacity to gain a Level 5 in mathematics this year. There has been no secure trend of improvement to results recently. Since 1998, the overall trend has been in line with the national trend, but, since 2000, standards in English and science have not kept up with the national trend of improvement. Nevertheless, standards are now higher than they were at the time of the last inspection. Unusually, boys have done better than girls. The school is aware of this, but there does not appear to be a simple reason. It is likely to continue this year because more girls than boys have special educational needs, although the difference was not apparent in lessons. The school set challenging targets for its performance in 2002, based on its knowledge of the pupils, which it achieved. Similar targets have been set for this year's tests, which the school is making progress towards achieving.
4. However, test results can tell only part of the story. They refer to a few subjects and only to pupils in two year groups, many of whom have now left the school. In addition, they can give no indication as to pupils' achievement, that is, whether standards are high enough, given pupils' starting points, progress and background. Inspection evidence can fill some of these gaps.
5. The attainment of children as they join the school in reception varies year on year, but this year it was about average. Good teaching in this class has resulted in good learning and progress across the curriculum. Analyses of children's work and of records in the school show that children are achieving well and are on course to attain

the Early Learning Goals in all the recommended areas of learning. Children with a special educational need also make good progress relative to their capabilities because of the good support they receive.

6. The current group of pupils in Year 2 entered the school with much lower attainment than usual. They have made solid progress because of sound teaching. They are attaining standards below expectations in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. They are, however, attaining standards in the expected range in the other subjects, although barely so in information and communication technology. The organisation of this year group into two mixed-age classes has an effect on learning in that one group are taught alongside younger infants from Year 1 whilst the majority are taught alongside junior pupils from Year 3. Levels of challenge in lessons can vary, especially for the most capable pupils in Year 2, so that they do not always make as much progress as they should. In addition, their time earlier in the school was disrupted by staff absence through illness, and so some continuity to their learning was lost. Staffing is now stable, and progress is improving. Nevertheless, the levels of challenge seen in lessons, and the progress pupils have made, and are now making, confirm that achievement overall is satisfactory.
7. Pupils in the juniors are also achieving satisfactorily now. They, especially those in Year 5 and, to a lesser extent, in Year 6, have had their progress adversely affected by further staff turnover and absence. The school has identified the consistency of the challenge for pupils with the potential for higher attainment as an area for improvement and is working towards providing better for these pupils. It has done much work to improve matters in English, which has been effective as pupils are now attaining standards in line with expectations in this subject. This group had low standards in their National Curriculum tests in Year 2. Their progress, according to school assessment records, accelerated in Years 5 and 6, having been slower before that. The deficit was too great in mathematics and science, and standards in these subjects are currently below expectations. Standards in the other subjects are in line with expectations too, though only just so in information and communication technology. Throughout the juniors, pupils' experiences have differed, with standards in Year 5, for example, being considerably lower than would be expected as they have suffered the most from staffing instability. This is now well on the way to a full resolution. When this inconsistency across the juniors is considered in the light of their attainment now, their progress and learning, then it is clear that these pupils achieve satisfactorily overall.
8. Pupils with a special educational need are catered for well in the school. Carefully written individual plans and support from teachers and learning support assistants ensure they make good progress compared with their previous attainment. Similarly, informal support for those pupils with English as an additional language ensures they make the same sound progress as their peers. However, the one group that has suffered the most because of staffing instability is the more able pupils. They have not been consistently challenged and are only now being identified in planning. This continues to be an area that the school is working on. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is informal, but effective in ensuring they make the same progress as their peers.
9. At the time of the last inspection, standards were reported as being in line with expectations in all subjects except for science in the juniors, where standards were below expectations and the subject of a key issue. The standards reported here seem to indicate a fall in attainment in the core subjects of English and mathematics, and no improvement in science; however, standards in tests in all subjects have risen

in the school since then, with English and mathematics improving at about the same rate overall as nationally. Further rises in standards have been significantly hindered by the effects of staffing problems in the intervening period, slowing down the implementation of a number of initiatives. Therefore, standards have improved satisfactorily overall.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. As at the last inspection, pupils have good attitudes to school and to learning. Parents report that pupils enjoy coming to school and this ensures that most arrive on time each morning. When they arrive, pupils are happy and look forward to their day. Pupils are polite, cheerful and eager to learn. They have a positive approach to school and try hard to meet their teachers' expectations. This was evident, for example, in a numeracy lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, when pupils were interested and keen to contribute when discussing data handling. All pupils listened well and took part eagerly in the lesson. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning were seen in many lessons, including in the classes for the youngest children. The safe, welcoming and calm atmosphere provides an environment that encourages pupils to do their best and to which pupils respond well. They develop good habits of working and settle quickly to tasks. Pupils sustained high levels of concentration in many lessons, for example, in a music lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 when pupils persevered in learning new songs.
11. Behaviour in and around school is good overall, except for a few incidents of boisterousness at playtimes. Occasionally, a few pupils act in immature and attention-seeking ways in the playground, but these outbreaks are handled very well by the staff. More generally, pupils move around the school and in lessons with a minimum of fuss and without wasting time. There is no evidence of any oppressive behaviour, bullying or racism. The school's very caring and supportive climate for learning encourages pupils to get on very well together and there is good racial harmony.
12. There are very good relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and adults. Pupils co-operated and collaborated very well in many lessons, as, for example, in a literacy lesson for pupils in Year 5 when pupils worked very well together in groups and in pairs to write an extra verse for a poem. These very good relationships were also apparent in an art lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 when pupils collaborated and shared resources very well when creating a textile collage. Higher and lower attaining pupils work well together, readily sharing their knowledge and skills, and this helps them learn better. On occasions, pupils show their appreciation of each other by giving spontaneous applause when one of them achieves well. They understand and follow school rules well and treat each other and adults with courtesy and respect. Teachers use personal, social and health education lessons to help pupils recognise their worth as individuals and to see themselves as others see them. Through these lessons, pupils develop an understanding of the impact of their actions on others, and learn to respect each other's feelings, values and beliefs.
13. Pupils' personal development, including that of the youngest pupils, is good. They readily accept responsibility whenever they are given the opportunity. For example, they set up the hall for assemblies, act as register and milk monitors and as house captains. The youngest children help to sweep up after playing in the sand. The school council meets regularly to discuss issues that arise during the school day. However, pupils would benefit even more by being given further opportunities to show initiative and personal responsibility in lessons.

14. Attendance levels, however, are just satisfactory, having declined since the previous inspection. They are just below the national average for similar schools. A minority of pupils do not attend regularly despite the school's systems for promoting and monitoring attendance. The school is aware of the importance of high levels of attendance and is informing parents through newsletters and the school brochure that these absences can have a detrimental effect on pupils' attainment, progress and personal development. An even more rigorous approach to monitoring and promoting attendance must be implemented to prevent these figures declining even further. There has been one fixed-term exclusion in the past year. The inspection team found that the exclusion process was used as a necessary strategy.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. Teaching and learning in the school are currently satisfactory. Thirty-seven lessons, or parts of lessons, were observed. Of these, teaching was excellent in one, very good in a further seven, good in 13 and satisfactory in 15. Teaching and learning were unsatisfactory in one lesson. Whilst these figures are indicative of satisfactory teaching overall, they must be considered in the light of evidence from other sources – pupils' work, and assessment records, for example, which also confirm that teaching and learning are satisfactory.
16. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage, that is, the reception class, are good. Teachers have a very good understanding of the content to be taught, and of the needs of young learners starting out on their education. This leads to good planning that covers all the expected areas of learning well. The basic skills of communication, numeracy and information and communication technology are taught well because teachers and learning support assistants have very high expectations of what children will do and how they will behave. Good teaching methods, allied with very good management of children and very good relationships, enable children to make good progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding. The teachers and learning support assistants work together effectively as a team, and use the available resources, including information and communication technology, well. Lessons are brisk without wasted time, so that children work productively, making very good levels of effort and concentrating very hard. All adults keep clear records of what children can do, which are used well in planning the next steps in learning. Children with a special educational need are supported well so that they make good progress compared with the targets in their individual plans.
17. This good start is consolidated in Years 1 to 6. Teachers here have a sound knowledge and understanding of their subject matter and plan satisfactorily. However, planning does not always address the needs of all groups in the class, so that the most capable are not always stretched enough. Expectations of behaviour and work rate are appropriate so that pupils make sound progress, and work at a steady pace. Pupils make good levels of effort, but, in Years 2 and 3, this is less pronounced and pupils are sometimes restless. Teachers in the other years ensure that pupils work hard and behave well through good classroom management based on the high quality relationships in the school. Teachers ensure that pupils know what they are intended to learn each lesson, but they do not always allow time for reflection on whether this has been achieved at the end. Pupils with a special educational need are well aware of their individual targets, and supported well, so that they make good progress.
18. Teaching and learning are good in religious education, and satisfactory in all the other subjects of the curriculum, except for information and communication technology in

Years 1 and 2, where there was insufficient evidence to form a view. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. All teachers are aware of these pupils and plan to provide suitable activities that promote learning. Teaching is informed and teachers pay attention to ensuring that the work set is appropriate and progressive. They show patience and understanding and have high expectations of both the academic performance and the behaviour of pupils on the special educational needs register. Pupils are given highly skilled assistance from the well-qualified, experienced and committed learning support assistants, both in classrooms and in small groups elsewhere. The combined attention of teachers and assistants has a most positive impact upon the good progress that the pupils make. Pupils with English as an additional language receive effective informal support that enables them to make the same progress as their peers.

19. In the best teaching, high levels of subject knowledge and inspirational teaching come together harmoniously to ensure pupils learn as much as possible. This happened in an excellent music lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 taught by a visiting specialist. In this, excellent subject knowledge and planning resulted in a hugely enjoyable experience for pupils. Their quality of singing improved greatly as they responded very well to the instruction they were given. They were confident enough to sing a complex round at the end because they had been so inspired.
20. Teaching and learning were very good in a reception lesson about recognising how sounds can be changed, focusing on loud and soft sounds. Although the focus of the lesson was on sound and music, the teacher seized opportunities to reinforce other areas of learning, for example, when children suggested that the fire bell makes a loud sound, she remarked that it is round, so reinforcing their mathematical development. Social skills were also well to the fore; after three children had played instruments loudly and softly, they were told to give them to someone else who had not had a turn yet. The children chose the song which they sang loudly and quietly, deciding which they thought was best. Several of the activities here involved children in deciding what to do, thus encouraging independence, for example, after the teacher demonstrated 'conducting' the group, children devised their own system of signals for 'loud' and 'quiet' and conducted each other. Throughout the lesson, the teacher emphasised the vocabulary of music in terms of 'loud', 'louder', 'quiet' and 'quieter'. As a result, all of the children hugely enjoyed the lesson and made significant progress in their knowledge and understanding of music.
21. In a very good English lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, the teacher set the scene through animated and exciting story-telling, based on different ways to describe the wolf in 'Little Red Riding Hood'. Pupils were agog, hanging on her every word, as they sought to think of more interesting words to describe the wolf and enliven their text. The teacher accepted all suggestions, including, 'fierce', 'snarl', 'pounced' and 'sharp fangs' before working with a group to assemble these into effective sentences. This lesson included a very good emphasis, from all adults present, on the spoken word and its translation into writing. This process was assisted by the consistent use of a 'writing checklist'. All pupils were included and all knew their ideas were valued, so they grew in self-esteem.
22. A very good mathematics lesson for higher attaining pupils in Year 6 moved at a brisk pace and challenged pupils very well. They moved from solving problems in very basic algebra, ' $3 + \delta = 8$ ', through intermediate steps like, ' $2n + 3 = 11$ ' to ' $n^2 = 100$ '. The pupils rose to the challenge in response to the teacher's very high expectations. They felt able to contribute because of the very positive and supportive atmosphere engendered in the room. This excellent start was consolidated as pupils worked on

types of average. They understood the different types well, although the efficiency of the tallying method was not fully emphasised.

23. Of course, not all teaching can be this exciting. In the one unsatisfactory lesson seen, a mathematics lesson in the juniors, the pace never became quick enough and the lesson became 'stop-start'. One valuable exercise about sums of consecutive numbers was not explained clearly enough so that pupils were unsure what to do and made too little progress. A satisfactory science lesson for pupils in Years 2 and 3 was well prepared, but the teacher directed pupils too much, so that they were unable to explore the plants enough to decide on answers for themselves before the teacher fed them the right answers. Pupils were not encouraged to be independent as the learning support assistant fetched equipment and tidied after them. Nevertheless, the teacher did demonstrate accurate measurement well, so that pupils were able to make their observations effectively.

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

24. The curriculum provided for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory and for children in reception it is good. All statutory requirements are met.
25. At the time of the previous inspection, planning, schemes of work and the allocation of time to some subjects were all found to be unsatisfactory. All of these areas have been addressed and there is now a systematic approach to the teaching of all subjects, which ensures continuity of learning and progression for all pupils. In religious education the school follows the Kent Agreed Syllabus.
26. Staff in reception plan effectively so that children receive a well-balanced and relevant curriculum. All the areas of learning are covered appropriately with good emphasis placed on developing the early learning skills of independence, sharing, communication and number.
27. Provision for special educational needs is good and is a strength of the school. An analysis of documents and discussions with staff together show that most pupils are making good progress towards meeting their individual learning targets. Provision is made very well for those pupils who have specific learning difficulties in English and mathematics. The provision for those pupils who have behavioural and physical difficulties is equally comprehensive and detailed, and they make the same good progress towards targets set.
28. Various opportunities are created to strengthen literacy skills during lessons in many other subjects of the curriculum. For example, in a science lesson, pupils improved their writing skills as they prepared a list of instructions to describe how to design an experiment. Similarly, skills in numeracy are strengthened effectively in geography when, for example, pupils became more proficient in their ability to order facts mathematically as they constructed rainfall graphs. Pupils in Year 6 are receiving targeted support in the form of booster classes, which sharpens children's learning. This is shortly to be extended to pupils in Year 5.
29. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils enjoy clubs devoted to football, netball, information and communication technology, craft, dance, recorders and country dancing. These activities are supported well by teachers and pupils. French is taught to older pupils and the school maintains a useful link with a French school. The Children's Fund Initiative supports learning provision outside the

school day, when there is a good balance between homework and sporting activities.

30. The school makes satisfactory provision for the equality of pupils' access to the whole curriculum. Staff ensure that all pupils, including those who have English as an additional language, and those who have special educational needs are involved in a full range of activities. However, those with the capacity for higher attainment are not consistently challenged in all subjects.
31. The school provides effectively for personal and social education, including health education, sex education and attention to drugs misuse. The local Rotary Club funds a mobile classroom, which promotes drugs awareness effectively. The school council is becoming more involved in the life of the school and the implementation of the 'Golden Rules' is improving behaviour. The use of circle time throughout the school is helping to create a supportive and inclusive ethos.
32. The school enjoys close links with local churches and enjoys regular input from them. Many visitors, including the clergy, local residents, and dance groups are welcomed into the school. A peripatetic music teacher has recently been appointed to support the teaching of music and this is already having a good impact on pupils' learning. Educational visits are arranged annually for all classes and older pupils participate in a residential trip to Kingsdown Scout Camp. These activities make a significant contribution to pupils' personal and social development, as well as to their learning in various subjects. Parents are provided with regular curricular information so that they may support their children's learning.
33. The overall provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
34. There are particular strengths in the very good provision for pupils' moral development and the good provision for pupils' social development. As a result, pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and most show this in their everyday life in school. Pupils' positive behaviour and attitudes are becoming a strength of the school, and this represents a considerable improvement on recent reports.
35. The school places a high priority on equipping pupils with a very clear set of moral values. A very effective, consistent whole-school approach ensures that teachers, all non-teaching staff and parents have high expectations of good behaviour. All adults in the school present very good models of behaviour. Pupils learn by example that it is important to value and respect each other and the environment. The school has a caring ethos based upon mutual respect, care and concern for others.
36. The provision for pupils' social development is good and all pupils are very well supported. Teachers demonstrate clearly respect for pupils, including those with special educational needs, and take every opportunity to promote a positive self-image. Pupils are encouraged to respect each other, to form constructive relationships and to work together collaboratively. All classes have a range of monitors with jobs such as distributing books, collecting and returning attendance registers and assisting with the music centre in assemblies. Pupils raise considerable amounts of money for a number of charities, which teaches pupils about their responsibility to both the local and wider community. Pupils' social confidence is further developed by their involvement in sporting, musical and other community activities and by the annual residential visit to the activity centre.

37. The outcome of the provision for the moral and social development of the pupils is obvious – the pupils are a delight! They are polite, socially adept and a credit to their parents and the school.
38. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils are valued as individuals by all adults and they are given opportunities to express their ideas and concerns. Daily acts of collective worship are simple and well directed, emphasising themes that promote feelings and imagination. They allow pupils to reflect upon their own actions and how these affect others. Through religious education, pupils gain knowledge and insight into the values and beliefs of other world religions. However, there are insufficient planned opportunities across all subjects for encouraging pupils' appreciation of nature and allowing them to experience the awe and wonder of living by the sea.
39. The school is successful in promoting pupils' appreciation of their own cultural traditions through its planned provision in curricular areas such as history, art and geography. Art displays include examples of pupils' work in the style of different artists. Pupils' multicultural understanding is promoted through learning about festivals such as Eid, Diwali and Christmas. They have close links with a partner school in France and enjoy exchange visits. Pupils study British cultural traditions when they visit local churches. Assembly themes are drawn from different cultures and are both taught formally through the locally agreed syllabus and referred to in daily acts of collective worship. However, there are insufficient, planned opportunities for pupils to get to know, understand and respect the great variety of traditions, literature, music and art that characterise the multicultural society of which they are a part. Nor are there enough planned opportunities for them to appreciate the great historical significance of this part of England. Provision for pupils' overall cultural development is satisfactory.
40. Good links are forged with local secondary schools to which pupils transfer and also with the nursery provider, which is shortly to move onto the school site and further enhance good relations. The Children's Fund, sponsored by the local authority, sponsors new initiatives such as a Family Liaison Officer, a Local Learning Group and an After School club. These are having a positive effect on children's learning and well-being.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. Pupils continue to be very well cared for by the staff, as they were at the last inspection. Parents and pupils appreciate this very good provision. All pupils are valued and the school's very caring ethos promotes good racial harmony. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for monitoring and eliminating any oppressive behaviour. The implementation of the 'Golden Rules' and the introduction of 'Golden Time' has had a very positive impact on the behaviour of the pupils. The headteacher and his senior management team ensure that there is a shared understanding by all members of staff of the necessity to consistently follow the school's behaviour policy. Teachers and learning support assistants make a significant contribution to providing a caring atmosphere and a safe and calm environment for all pupils, both in and out of lessons. Good behaviour is encouraged in ways that make sense to the children. Playtimes and lunchtimes are supervised well. The occasional outbreaks of boisterous behaviour by a few pupils, who act in immature and attention-seeking ways, are handled very well.
42. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good.

Although no formal profiles for the personal development of each pupil are kept, pupils' personal development is monitored effectively. Staff know pupils very well and respond sympathetically to them individually, taking good account of any personal circumstances that may affect their learning and general well-being. Teachers give good praise and encouragement during lessons, and achievements, large and small, are all celebrated. Circle time is being used to help pupils express their thoughts and feelings and to learn to understand about themselves and others. The school provides opportunities for pupils to take responsibility by, for example, setting up the hall for assemblies, acting as monitors for delivering milk and taking registers back to the office. The school council allows pupils to represent their peers and to discuss any issues that may arise during school time. However, pupils would benefit by being given even wider opportunities to take initiative and personal responsibility.

43. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are just satisfactory. Attendance rates have declined since the previous inspection and are now a little below the national average for similar schools. The school follows appropriate procedures for registering pupils each day and works closely with the Education Welfare Officer who visits regularly. However, to prevent these attendance rates from declining even further, a more stringent approach to monitoring and improving attendance is necessary.
44. There are very good procedures in place for child protection; the headteacher is named as the designated person in charge. Appropriate systems are in place to monitor personal and academic progress of pupils who are in the care of the local authority. Staff are receiving appropriate training to enable them to keep up to date with aspects of first aid. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy and regular risk assessments are carried out.
45. The previous inspection report identified the need to develop continuous assessment procedures for science and the foundation subjects. Current inspection findings show that the procedures for collecting and using information on pupils' progress and attainment are effective in English and mathematics, but they remain an area for development in all other subjects. Information gained from tests in English and mathematics is recorded and thoroughly analysed to help the school take action to improve achievement. This includes the analysis of differences in achievement of boys and girls, and of all pupils with special needs. The necessary adjustments are then made to planning in order that the school continues to monitor how effective it is in meeting the needs of all the pupils in their drive to raise standards. The tracking of individual pupils' progress has commenced in the school, but it lacks depth at present.
46. For all other subjects, other than English and mathematics, assessment is not sufficiently rigorously carried out in order to accurately guide curricular planning. Consequently, teachers do not have a full enough picture of pupils' strengths and weaknesses in order to plan work to help them achieve to their highest potential.
47. Co-ordinators are in place for all subjects, except design and technology, but the use of assessment procedures in the form of target setting against learning intentions is not receiving a sharp enough focus. The school has begun to monitor pupils' work and to evaluate their progress at weekly meetings, but records of this are insufficiently detailed and not stringently matched to appropriate targets.
48. There has been an improvement in the reception class where teachers now use assessment effectively. The information gained, through direct and focussed observations, is now used well to plan carefully for future work. This is helping to raise

standards of children's learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. Parents approve of the school and its work. They warmly praise what the school achieves. They value its caring attitudes and are satisfied their children make good progress. They believe teachers know their children well and that such secure personal relationships help pupils to want to succeed. Parents responding to the questionnaire stated their children like school and those seen during the inspection said their children are eager to come. They say that the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best and is helping them to become mature and responsible. Parents state that the behaviour of the children in school is good, and feel that the school is well led and managed.
50. A minority of parents felt that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons. The inspection team found that this provision is good and the activities are popular and well supported. The vast majority of parents said they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. They particularly appreciate the availability of the headteacher. They like the open door policy whereby they can approach members of staff at any appropriate time if they would like to discuss their child. They see these links as a two-way process ensuring pupils' interests are to the fore. Some parents felt that they were not kept well informed about how their child was getting on. The inspection team found that the quality of information to parents is good. They are given regular information on the curriculum area and topics to be studied and they receive regular newsletters. End of year reports on pupils' progress to parents are satisfactory. However, they do not consistently give particulars of pupils' progress in all subjects and the targets for improvement are imprecise. There is no space given for parents' and pupils' comments. There are regular parents' evenings. The school brochure now meets statutory requirements but the governors' annual report to parents still has minor omissions.
51. Some parents were dissatisfied with the amount of homework that their children receive but the inspection team found the homework given across the school was satisfactory.
52. The inspection team agrees with the positive views of the vast majority of parents. The school is trying hard to work closely with parents and to involve parents in the life of the school. The recent appointment of the Family Liaison Officer is having a positive impact on involving more parents, and her work is appreciated by the school and parents alike. For example, she has started a computer course for parents, a parent and toddler group and also runs regular coffee mornings. Parents make a contribution to their children's learning at home and at school. Some parents come in to help, for example, with reading and general activities in the classrooms, and many volunteer to help on school visits. Parents are also involved in helping to run some extra-curricular clubs. Palmarsh School Association is a dedicated, hardworking group of people who have raised money to fund, for example, carpeting and some equipment in the computer suite.
53. Induction procedures for children entering the school are good. Parents are pleased at how their children settle in and enjoy school. They also like the care taken when the oldest pupils transfer to secondary school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The headteacher and senior managers are providing good leadership and

management. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities. The school's performance is monitored adequately, and specific grants and other resources are used satisfactorily. The principles of best value are applied soundly.

55. The headteacher provides positive leadership to the whole school community. He has, with the other senior managers, ensured that the school has a positive ethos for learning and has built a close-knit team including teachers, learning support assistants, administration staff, lunchtime supervisors, the site manager and cleaning staff, all of whom pull together towards a common goal. All staff share the headteacher's vision of excellence for the school. The quality of teamwork on the staff, together with the extremely supportive relationships between them, show that the capacity to further improve is very good. The headteacher is very visible around the school and is known well to all members of the school community. The school's aims concerning the provision of a safe and caring environment in which young minds can learn are clearly evident throughout the school. There is, however, some way to go before the aims concerning academic excellence are fully met, as the school acknowledges.
56. The headteacher and senior staff also manage the school well. Over the last three years or so there have been a number of problems with staffing that have hindered the school's progress. These are well documented and were managed well. Whilst the senior managers have delegated duties and carry them out effectively, the nature of the staff team at the moment precludes full delegation. Currently, the staff includes a newly-qualified teacher and temporary staff alongside more experienced and established colleagues. Because of this, senior managers, especially the deputy headteacher, carry a heavy administrative burden with minimal time in the school day in which to complete it. In addition, some subjects, like music and design and technology, do not have a permanent co-ordinator. The overall co-ordination of mathematics and physical education is good, and of the other subjects satisfactory. However, elements of the co-ordination role in some subjects are not being carried out well enough – for example, the monitoring role in design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology and music is not carried out effectively. The special educational needs co-ordinator is very experienced, enthusiastic and most diligent in her co-ordinating role. She ensures that all pupils have access to any necessary support and that their needs are met in lessons and in-group withdrawal sessions. The co-ordinator liaises well with fellow teachers and support staff, and is in regular contact with relevant external agencies.
57. The governing body carries out its statutory duties satisfactorily. There are some minor breaches of statutory requirements, for example, not all the required information is in the governors' annual report to parents. Although governors approve the school improvement plan, they rely on the headteacher and other staff to draft and prioritise the targets within it. Through their links with staff members and the headteacher's reports, governors have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, but their roles as critical friend and in the strategic planning of the school are limited.
58. The school has very appropriate targets for improvement in its improvement plan. These include all the significant areas that the inspection team identified as requiring attention. The school monitors its own performance soundly. It has closely analysed internal and external test results and taken action to improve matters in the core subjects, although some of that improvement is only now beginning to show. However, the emphasis placed on the core subjects of English and mathematics has meant that the monitoring of the provision in other subjects has lagged behind.

Nevertheless, the action taken to meet the school's targets has been effective. One notable example is the introduction of the 'Golden Rules' and the rewards and sanctions that accompany them. Staff and parents confirm that behaviour and motivation have been much improved since this initiative, to their present good levels.

59. Overall staffing in the school is satisfactory. Teachers' qualifications and experience broadly match the demands and range of the National Curriculum. A strength of the school is the provision of a good number of experienced and very effective learning support assistants. They work closely with the teachers and provide high quality assistance, particularly when supporting literacy and numeracy with less able pupils and with those pupils on the special educational needs register.
60. The school secretary very effectively carries out her administrative duties and is central to the efficient running of the school. The site supervisor and staff maintain the school in very good order, and the cooks and mid-day supervisors all perform their roles in a friendly, capable way and are all valued members of the school.
61. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are good. Sound appraisal procedures are in place. The school has good procedures for the induction of newly qualified and newly appointed staff to the school, with a member of staff nominated to give help and guidance.
62. The accommodation is adequate for the numbers on roll and provides an appropriate learning environment for the National Curriculum to be taught effectively. There are ample playground areas and good grassed playing fields. However, the hall is cluttered with equipment, which reduces the space available for physical education, and at present the school is not readily accessible to disabled pupils.
63. Overall learning resources throughout the school are satisfactory. The exception is information technology where the number of computers and available software is good. However, currently some resources are stored in a disorganised way which hinders their accessibility, particularly in music.
64. All pupils benefit from the availability of the computer suite, and learning support assistants are improving their knowledge in order that they may assist pupils in this important area of learning. The school is making sound use of new technology in its work. The governing body takes a keen interest in the performance of the school and the way it is perceived locally. Best value principles inform the decisions made about all projects, such as the development of the new outdoor area for reception children. The headteacher and the administrative staff comprise an efficient and effective team. Financial planning is effective and ensures that all specific funding is used effectively for the purposes intended.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. In order to improve the school further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- 1) raise standards, especially in English, mathematics and science, by:
 - a) making more rigorous use of the results of more effective assessment in future planning in all subjects;
(Paragraphs 46, 47, 85, 96, 97, 104, 109)
- 2) ensuring that all pupils, including the most capable, are consistently challenged to make the best possible;
(Paragraphs 3, 6, 7, 8, 17, 76, 87, 108)
- 3) strengthen the monitoring role of curricular co-ordinators in order to ensure that the actions outlined above are effective.
(Paragraphs 56, 97, 104, 124)

The above issues are already identified for action in the school's development plan.

In addition, the school may wish to include the following, more minor points, in its action plan:

1. Devise and implement a more stringent approach to improve the attendance of the minority of pupils who do not attend regularly.
(Paragraphs 14, 43)
2. Improve pupils' spiritual development by identifying opportunities in planning for pupils to reflect and wonder at things which amaze and puzzle them in the natural and man-made worlds and life in general.
(Paragraph 38)
3. Improve the provision that prepares pupils for life in today's multicultural society.
(Paragraph 39)
4. Ensure that all the required content is published in the governors' annual report to parents.
(Paragraphs 50, 57)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

37

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	7	15	13	1	0	0
Percentage	3	19	41	35	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	156
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	20

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	32

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	6	11	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	16	16	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (96)	94 (96)	94 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	16	16	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (100)	94 (100)	94 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	18	12	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	17	16
	Girls	9	8	9
	Total	23	25	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (64)	83 (57)	83 (86)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	16	16
	Girls	8	7	8
	Total	21	23	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (63)	77 (74)	80 (70)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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	111	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	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	1	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	18	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.38
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.13
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	117

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A
Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
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	£
Total income	341773
Total expenditure	328135
Expenditure per pupil	1976
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	13638

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0.4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.4
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	156
Number of questionnaires returned	49

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	31	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	45	4	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	63	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	49	31	14	6	0
The teaching is good.	51	33	14	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	45	16	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	20	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	31	6	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	49	41	2	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	65	29	2	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	29	6	2	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	59	31	8	2	0

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

66. Children receive a good start to their education in the reception class and the good, and on occasions very good, quality of the teaching enables all children, including those with special educational needs, to make good progress. At the time of the inspection there were 23 children in the reception class.

Personal, social and emotional development

67. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good. Pupils make good progress and by the end of their reception year it is likely that all children will achieve the standards expected in the Early Learning Goals. The teachers and other adults have high expectations of behaviour and enjoy good relationships with the children who know the daily routines well, and develop good levels of concentration.
68. Children enjoy coming to school, and are confident and happy. Adults consistently encourage children to share and show consideration for others and are duly rewarded by the children who behave very well, and respond positively to the caring ethos of the class. They show respect for school equipment, and tidy up efficiently at the end of lessons. They learn to take turns and share and co-operate well when working on the computer, playing with construction equipment or in the role-play corner. Resources are well prepared, attractive, clean and inviting. Children are given regular encouragement and praise to raise their self-esteem, show pride in their work and take considerable responsibility for their own learning.

Communication, language and literacy

69. Teaching in this area is good, pupils make good progress, and most children are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals, with a few more able children working within the early levels of the National Curriculum. Books are displayed prominently to encourage children to browse and share them with friends as well as adults. In a lesson, children enjoyed listening to the story of 'The Hungry Caterpillar' and the majority contributed well to class discussions. They apply their learning of new vocabulary well, for example, 'cocoon' and 'life cycle' are terms they used very confidently to describe the various stages in the development of a butterfly. The majority of pupils hold a pencil correctly, form their letters accurately and know the names and sounds of the most commonly used letters. They write their names neatly. Some children recognise frequently occurring words in the text and read books in the school reading scheme. Teachers support the children well and encourage them to speak about their experiences in a variety of situations through skilfully asking open questions and by giving them opportunities to 'read' their writing.
70. Effective use is made of the role-play area, which is currently set up as a garden centre, where children busily engage in answering the telephone and serving customers with seeds, bulbs and compost. Children are encouraged to take reading books home to share with their parents and evaluative comments are written in their homework diaries.

Mathematical development

71. Teaching is good and, as a result, children make good progress in mathematics, and by the time they enter Year 1, the majority should achieve the Early Learning Goals, with some pupils working at the early stages of the National Curriculum. Teachers take every opportunity to use numbers daily and encourage the children to see pattern in number. Most children match objects to numbers accurately, and correctly place missing numbers into the sequence of numbers to ten. They confidently count backwards and forwards to ten, and a few know their numbers to 100. The majority understand 'one more than', and 'one less than' and can calculate simple problems involving addition and subtraction mentally. Mathematics is linked very securely into themes; for example, counting first, second and third, while waiting to be served in the 'garden centre'. The vocabulary of measurement is successfully introduced, for example, when two children discussed which of two leaves was longer or shorter. Most children confidently recognise simple shapes such as circle, triangle, rectangle and square.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

72. Teaching in this area is very good and during the inspection there were some very effective activities planned around the theme of 'Growth and Change' that increased pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world. Children make good progress, and most pupils are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals before they leave the reception class. They confidently talk about the cress, bulbs and beans they have planted and competently explain that they need water, warmth and light to help them grow. Children were keen to investigate the flowers, learn the names of the hyacinth and compare it to the tulip and daffodil. They used language well to identify that they are similar because they are all grown from bulbs, but also recognised that there are differences in colour and that only the hyacinth has a smell. Those children who can use the computer confidently showed their friends who are not quite as competent how to select roots, a stem, leaves and petals to make a plant picture. Teachers celebrate children's success by displaying their pictures in the class.

Physical development

73. Teaching is very good in this area of learning and most children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals before they leave the reception class. Children demonstrated increasing control as they manoeuvred wheeled toys around a tyre track in the newly created outside play area. This has greatly enhanced their opportunities for learning. They run, jump and balance with an increasing awareness of space. They control their movements well when they change direction and speed and develop skills in throwing and catching and working in pairs. Children show growing control when using small tools such as scissors and knives as they roll, pat, squeeze and shape pizzas and pears, reinforcing their learning of the letter 'p'. They are becoming more skilful when attempting jigsaws and when assembling Lego to construct, for example, a car park for the garden centre.

Creative development

74. The majority of pupils should achieve the Early Learning Goals in creative development before they leave the reception class. The quality of teaching is good and careful monitoring ensures that a good balance of activities is achieved, with every child having numerous opportunities to express themselves. Children worked confidently as they drew flowers such as daffodils, hyacinths and tulips, and selected

the appropriate pastels to represent colours. They gain skills in cutting and sticking activities, for example, when they make Easter baskets. In the well-resourced role-play corner, a variety of bulbs, seed packets and tools encouraged children to use their imagination in their roles at the garden centre. They achieve this most enthusiastically and show their growing understanding of respect for one another in their play, for example, when one child volunteered to leave because 'we have got five in here and only four people are allowed in at once'. Children showed their ability to distinguish between loud and soft sounds as they listened to and sang, for example, 'I hear thunder' and later, softly, 'ten in the bed', linking their singing effectively to mathematical ordering of felt puppets. Teachers, assistants and parental helpers value all of their work.

ENGLISH

75. At the time of the last inspection, standards in English were judged to be close to the national average in Years 2 and 6. The results of the 2002 National Curriculum tests showed that pupils in Year 2 attained average standards in reading and above average standards in writing, both when compared to all schools nationally and when compared only to schools with a similar intake. However, fewer than average numbers of pupils attained the higher Level 3 in both areas. The number of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 in Year 6 was in line with national expectations, but fewer than expected reached the higher Level 5 and this depressed standards so that, overall, standards were below average when compared to all schools, and well below average when compared only to schools with a similar intake. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in Year 2 are below those expected nationally and in line with national standards in Year 6. Considering their ability on entry to the school, as measured by the local authority's tests, pupils in Year 2 are making at least satisfactory and in many cases good progress.
76. Older, more capable pupils are not being challenged enough and they do not make consistently good progress. However, those pupils who have special educational needs make good progress towards meeting the targets set in their individual education plans. They are often withdrawn individually and in small groups during literacy lessons for extra support. During these sessions and in lessons they benefit from the knowledge and experience of a learning support teacher and from the well-informed, skilled help of the team of learning support assistants.
77. Most pupils enter school with an appropriate vocabulary but many enter with attainment in speaking that is below average and they do not listen well. A good feature in this school is the emphasis placed on active listening. Teachers work hard and successfully so that most pupils make satisfactory progress and meet expectations in speaking and listening by the age of 11. However, their ability to consider alternative viewpoints and develop ideas and arguments is limited.
78. The school gives a high priority to the teaching of reading. It aims to raise and maintain standards by encouraging pupils to read regularly at school and at home. The standard of reading in Year 2 varies, but overall is in line with national expectations. The more capable pupils read with confidence, expression and obvious enthusiasm. They readily discuss characters and events and talk animatedly about favourite books and videos. The school has securely introduced the teaching of letter sounds and pupils have developed strategies to help them read unfamiliar words by either using picture clues to make sense of what they are reading, or by building up the sounds that the words make. Throughout Years 1 and 2, pupils are introduced to

- a range of texts that develop and reinforce their reading skills systematically.
79. Most pupils in Year 6 enjoy reading and cover an appropriately wide range of fiction, non-fiction and poetry. They read accurately and use their skills to undertake research in other subjects such as history and geography. However, many pupils read aloud without expression or consideration of dialogue. In addition, a number of lower attaining pupils are not enthusiastic readers and consider the activity to be school based and not something to be engaged in for enjoyment. Older pupils understand the organisation of a library. They know the function of the contents and index sections of books and are able to describe the basic skills of information retrieval. However, library skills are not well developed and it is usual for books related to particular topics to be kept in class, thus limiting the opportunity to gain experience in the use of the library.
80. The standard of writing in Year 2 is below expectations, although many pupils are achieving well considering their poor attainment on entering the school. A minority of pupils write well, constructing interesting complex sentences using a variety of connectives. However, too much writing is very directed and does not always allow pupils to develop their stories using interesting vocabulary, dialogue and imagery. Many pupils write simple stories, short accounts, and understand the importance of order and clarity in instructional writing.
81. The standard of writing for pupils in Year 6 is in line with national expectations overall, although a significant minority needs additional support and encouragement. Much humour is displayed when, for example, Year 3 pupils wrote postcards from and to the main characters of traditional tales. For example, The Wolf wrote to the Three Little Pigs: 'One day you will have to come out. I will be waiting!' and 'All the King's Men' wrote an apology to Humpty Dumpty! Pupils write book reviews, expressing preferences – Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings appear frequently. Good links with history are made. Too many lower attaining pupils have limited literacy skills and this affects their overall attainment. Some pupils still spell based on sounds, for example, '*I must of...*', and have not learned the common letter strings that would help them become more accurate. Much of the work is heavily structured and teacher directed. Consequently, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to express their thoughts and feelings in extended, imaginative writing or to develop their literacy skills when writing up investigations in mathematics, science and design and technology.
82. The school has placed importance on improving handwriting and the presentation of work, which has been criticised in the recent past. As a result of regular handwriting practice in lessons, which contain some good teaching, handwriting is developing satisfactorily. In these lessons, many pupils produce joined-up writing which is well formed in an increasingly mature style. However, the written work in subject books across the curriculum does not always reflect this, and often teachers' own handwriting in lessons and in marking is not helpful.
83. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of informed, structured teaching and skilled, experienced help from the team of learning support assistants. The targeting of pupils using a range of assessments, carefully structured phonic work and detailed individual education plans has a positive impact upon the standards that pupils achieve. Despite this, their literacy skills are still well below average and this makes learning in other subjects difficult for them.
84. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In the lessons seen, teaching and learning were very good in one, good in a further three and satisfactory in two. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen, although there were instances when teachers were

too dominant, and as a consequence, pupils lost interest. In nearly all classes, pupils have very good working relationships with their teachers who know them well. This means that, for instance, humour can be shared successfully and pupils' engagement and confidence in their learning grow. Teachers across the school are confident and competent in the methods of the National Literacy Strategy. They make good use of questioning to reinforce understanding and extend learning. Teachers are enthusiastic, and this has a positive effect on pupils' confidence and interest. Learning support assistants are very well used. They work closely with teachers to develop pupils' skills. In the best lessons, suitable challenges are presented to all pupils, and teachers expect high standards of work and effort. However, there are occasions where the overuse of commercially produced worksheets does not address the needs of individual pupils or extend the more able pupils.

85. The leadership of English is satisfactory. The co-ordinator provides very effective management through her monitoring of planning, and in the revision of relevant policies. Her development plan for English is a well-considered and detailed document. There are good assessment procedures in place and the school makes detailed analyses of the results of assessments. However, as yet, the detailed analysis of test results has not been used to guide particular changes in the English curriculum, nor have individuals been given specific targets which would allow them to make the most of their potential. The school recognises that assessment needs to be developed further to set specific targets to improve teaching and learning.

MATHEMATICS

86. Provision in mathematics has just improved satisfactorily since the last inspection. Then, standards were in line with expectations. Although they are now below expectations, test results at the end of Years 2 and 6 have improved in line with the national trend. Standards in the 2002 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2 were above average nationally, both when compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. The results for pupils in Year 6 were below average nationally when compared both to all maintained schools and to similar schools, although a comparison of this group's performance in 2002 with their performance four years earlier, when they were in Year 2, shows good progress has taken place.
87. The current group of pupils in Year 2 entered the school with attainment that was below average nationally. They are currently attaining standards below national expectations. The most able pupils understand place value up to 100 and are beginning to learn about multiplication as repeated addition. They can use the idea of doubling to solve problems. There is good emphasis on investigational work, for example, in an exercise in which pupils explored the outcome when adding different combinations of odd and even numbers, consolidating their understanding of both these concepts as well as honing their problem-solving skills. They are now making good progress, including those with a special educational need or with English as an additional language, following a time when their education was disrupted by unavoidable staff absence. When the progress they are making now is compared with what might be expected, then pupils are now achieving satisfactorily after a period when this was clearly not the case. This is the result of them having a more consistent experience in classrooms now. However, most Year 2 pupils have lessons in a class alongside pupils in Year 3, and the teaching here does not always fully reflect their needs.
88. Pupils in the juniors have had their progress hindered by some staffing difficulties too.

This is most marked in Year 5, but it has also had an effect in Year 6, and standards here are similarly below expectations overall. The most able pupils can cope with place value in large numbers and the standard methods of long multiplication and division. They understand the angle properties of triangles and quadrilaterals. Their weaker peers have completed less challenging work as appropriate and have, for example, used decimals in the context of measurement. They understand how a multiple digit number can be multiplied by a single digit, but are not using the standard short method as yet. When their progress is tracked through internal tests, then it is apparent that most have made progress that is at least satisfactory, and which is accelerating this year. However, the most able are not doing as well as they should. The school is aware of this and has set up a class purely for these pupils three mornings each week to enable them to be presented with more challenging work. This strategy is working well, and they are learning well, but they are unlikely to do as well as they ought because of past problems and the amount of ground they need to make up. Pupils with a special educational need are supported well in the classroom and in small groups outside of it and make good progress against the targets in their individual plans. Boys do rather better than girls – which is continuing this year because the proportion of girls with a special need is higher this year. The school has examined this trend, but there is no single reason behind it, and it was not apparent in lessons.

89. In the lessons seen, teaching and learning were very good in one lesson, good in two, satisfactory in two and unsatisfactory in one. Further evidence from the analysis of pupils' work shows that the unsatisfactory teaching is atypical and that teaching and learning throughout the school are now satisfactory and improving. The main strength in teaching is the discreet management of behaviour in lessons, based on the very good relationships in class. Pupils behave well, and try hard to please their teachers. Lessons are closely based on the methods of the National Numeracy Strategy and tasks are appropriately matched to pupils' needs so that they make solid progress, which is good in Year 6. There is a pleasing emphasis on using mathematical skills to solve problems, an area that was found to be a weakness through the analyses of tests. Pupils have opportunities to explore and investigate mathematics in lessons, as well as learn the important rote skills. Time is used to good effect to maintain the pace of lessons. Learning support assistants also play a very good role in supporting pupils' behaviour and learning so that teachers can concentrate on their main objective – to teach.
90. Pupils know what they are going to learn because most teachers share this at the beginning of lessons. However, the final plenary section of the lesson, which is intended to be a time of consolidation, extension and reflection on learning, tends to be directed by the teacher and to summarise what activities the pupils have completed rather than what they have learned as a result. This happened in a good lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Their speaking and listening skills were very well developed through a discussion on how they could sort out a large collection of toy vehicles into sets with similar attributes. Pupils got a lot out of this activity while their weaker peers consolidated literacy and numeracy skills as they sorted their names and other words into order by the number of letters in them. In a good lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, pupils learned well about simple fractions and how to add them. However, following an effective mental session with the whole class, the highest attaining pupils were held back slightly as they were ready to tackle equivalent fractions and how they can be used but were not able to do so, as this aspect was planned for the following day. When teaching was unsatisfactory, pupils were unclear about their task and so lost time as they waited for further help to get on.

91. The school has adopted the National Numeracy Strategy and is implementing it satisfactorily. The skills of literacy and information and communication technology are also reinforced in lessons when appropriate. Teachers know their pupils well and set appropriate work for them, assessing it soundly, although recorded marking is not always helpful in helping pupils improve further. The co-ordinator is offering good leadership and management. She is knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and is monitoring the provision soundly. There are sufficient resources for the teaching of mathematics.

SCIENCE

92. At the time of the previous inspection standards in science were in line with the expected levels at the end of Year 2 and progress was good. At the end of Year 6 the standard of attainment in scientific enquiry was unsatisfactory; this was identified as a key issue for the school to address.
93. Current inspection findings show that over the past three years test standards in science have been rising, but not as fast as standards nationally. Teachers' assessments in Year 2 show that, in 2002, standards were about average. In Year 6, the results of the 2002 National Curriculum tests were well below average because few pupils attained the higher Level 5. The attainment of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 is now below the expected levels. It should be noted that there is a higher than average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs in the current group of Year 2 pupils. Many have poor literacy skills, which slows their understanding and their ability to carry out investigations successfully. This is equally true of pupils in Year 6 who have special educational needs, although there is a smaller proportion in this class. Nevertheless, pupils in Year 6 have suffered from disruptions to their education through staffing difficulties, and this has hindered their learning.
94. Most pupils, including those with a special educational need, and those for whom English is an additional language, make satisfactory progress in science during their time in the school. Where teachers' subject knowledge is secure, pupils make better progress. At the time of the previous inspection planning was unsatisfactory, as was the level of pupil involvement in scientific investigations. Long-term planning for the subject has improved with the school adopting a two-year rolling cycle of work to cater especially for mixed-age classes. The scheme of work now indicates the study units to be taught and when, in order to ensure a development of skills.
95. In contrast to the previous inspection there is now good provision for pupils to participate in investigational science throughout the school. Pupils in Year 2 have used first-hand experience to investigate the conditions necessary for growth. They predicted what might happen in differing circumstances and understand the need for water and light. Most pupils understand what a 'fair test' is and how to carry one out. Pupils make good gains in developing scientific enquiry skills and in understanding. The learning is the result of good class management, subject knowledge, skilful questioning and planning by the teachers.
96. Pupils are managed well in all classes and on most occasions they are eager and enthusiastic to be involved in learning. The good behaviour of pupils means that lessons proceed at a brisk pace and so pupils make more progress. In a Year 5 lesson where teaching was good, activities set were closely matched to the needs of individuals. For example, since there were no learning support assistants in this lesson, pupils with special needs were sensibly supplied with worksheets, which

broke learning down into meaningful stages. This enabled them to keep focussed and to make good progress. In a Year 6 lesson, teaching was less successful because the teacher's subject knowledge was insecure, there was a lack of assessment information to inform short-term planning and too much time was spent listening to the teacher. Pupils were allocated insufficient time to develop their own ideas, to make predictions unaided and to record their findings independently. Pupils used appropriate scientific vocabulary of 'positive', 'negative', 'terminal' and 'circuit' as they ably revised how a circuit is made. In all classes, improvements have been made insofar as pupils are using a wider range of methods to record their findings, including the use of computers, but this is not planned for sufficiently.

97. At the time of the previous inspection the school lacked a teacher with specialist knowledge in science and procedures for continuous assessment were not in place. The school now has a recently appointed co-ordinator who intends to develop the subject appropriately. The co-ordinator is aware that procedures for assessment are underdeveloped and do not inform teachers' planning. She has well-developed plans to deal with this. The monitoring of science is a priority for development. Resources are now adequate in all areas.

ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

98. Two art and design lessons were observed during the inspection, but no design and technology lessons could be observed. On the evidence of these, along with displays, pupils' sketchbooks and a portfolio of pupils' previous work, standards in both subjects are in line with those expected in most schools. There is a limited range of attractively displayed artwork in classrooms, in the hall and in corridors that shows pupils have used a range of media, such as paint and pastels. The range of displays also shows appropriate links between art and other subjects; for example, Henry's portrait adorns the history display of the Tudors in the juniors and a nature collage links science and art in an infant display. The work is carefully presented, which reflects the importance that teachers place on celebrating pupils' efforts.
99. Pupils in the infants draw and paint imaginative scenes using pastels and paints. In their illustrations, most pupils represent people with acceptable proportions and show acceptable skills when working with paper and card. Older pupils are developing good knowledge of different artists; for example, pupils in Year 5 have created works in the style of Rousseau, Monet and Van Gogh. Pupils in Year 6 used a colourful wash when presenting good geometrical shapes in the style of Kandinsky.
100. Art and design is managed well. Although the co-ordinator is relatively new in her post, she is enthusiastic, knowledgeable and diligent in her role. She has compiled a portfolio of pupils' work that will be moderated to national standards. The intention is that teachers will refer to this to be better informed about expected standards. Currently, the headteacher is acting effectively in a 'caretaker' role as co-ordinator for design and technology. The policy statement and a scheme of work are based upon national exemplar documents. Plans are in place to increase the contribution of information and computer technology to the provision of design and technology.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

101. At the time of the previous inspection standards in both subjects were in line with the expected levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Although it was only possible to see

a small number of lessons in each subject, current inspection findings show that this is still the case. Evidence from displays, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils indicates that progress is satisfactory in both subjects.

102. History and geography are successfully linked. For example, pupils in Year 1 know that Egyptians made statues of their gods, and they brought mathematical and designing skills into their learning as they constructed pyramids for Tutankhamun. They know that scribes wrote on paper made from papyrus plants, which grew beside the River Nile. Pupils in Year 2 show an appropriate understanding and knowledge of major events and people. For example, they cite Samuel Pepys as being famous for writing a diary to record events. They know how the Great Fire of London was started and extinguished, and the key events in the life of Florence Nightingale. Pupils can contrast the modes of transport Florence used to get to her destination of Scutari in Italy with those we might use today. Some pupils can plot her journey and accurately locate the Mediterranean Sea.
103. In their study of Britain since 1948, pupils in Year 5 enthusiastically compared pictures of streets, houses and music, then and now. Parents are regularly informed of the topics pupils are to study and this helps them to be able to contribute to pupils' learning. For example, pupils are able to discuss music from the Beatles era and football information about the 1966 World Cup when England played West Germany. This ensures history becomes more meaningful and helps the children to develop an interest for the subject. Pupils in Year 6 know about the long reign of the Tudors and the fate of Henry VIII's wives. Pupils have demonstrated their skills of observation by producing detailed portraits of some of the wives.
104. In the few lessons seen, there were good relationships between teachers and pupils. Teachers share what they hope pupils will learn so that pupils have a clear focus for their learning. Learning support assistants provide valuable aid to pupils with special educational needs, for example, when they are encouraged to use geographical terms, such as 'aerial' to describe a view. In contrast to the findings of the previous report, planning is now satisfactory. The school has devised rolling two year programmes to ensure balance, breadth and depth of learning for all pupils. This allows teachers to cater for pupils in mixed-age classes suitably. Schemes of work indicate which study units should be taught and when in order to ensure skills are developed. Although there is now a co-ordinator for both subjects, procedures for monitoring and assessment are still not fully in place. Assessment is only carried out at the end of units and is not being used systematically to guide curricular planning enough for the needs of individual pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

105. At the time of the last inspection, standards were in line with expectations in Year 2, but rather less secure in Year 6. Few lessons could be observed and a number of aspects of the subject were underdeveloped. In particular, schemes of work were not rigorous in the way they developed skills and not all staff had the knowledge and understanding to plan challenging work. Since then, improvement has been good. Standards now are just in the average range. The profile of the subject has been raised and a small suite of networked computers has been installed. A nationally recognised scheme of work has been introduced, teaching staff have undergone training and a new co-ordinator has been appointed who is offering sound leadership.

106. Few lessons could be observed and there was little prior work to analyse. Nevertheless, the work actually seen is in line with national expectations in both Year 2 and Year 6, and planning indicates that all areas will be covered over the year. Pupils in Year 2 have started to explore word processing and the use of different fonts. They have used painting software to produce pictures in the style of Mondrian and have used various tools, for example, the spraycan, in producing pictures. They know the parts of a computer system and can label them. In a lesson, they were able to search CD-ROMs to discover information to answer questions, and compare this method to the use of books.
107. Pupils in Year 6 have used the computer language LOGO in a sophisticated way, using the 'Repeat' command to produce geometrical drawings. They have produced multimedia presentations, including, in the lesson observed, the use of hyperlinks for easy navigation around a presentation on Henry VIII and his wives.
108. All of the teaching seen was satisfactory, although too little was seen for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to form a secure judgement overall here. Pupils enjoy using the computers and mostly share computers sensibly. They help each other to overcome problems. Teachers know the systems well enough to be confident; however, a significant amount of teaching is undertaken in smaller groups by learning support assistants who are less confident of some aspects and would welcome further training. Pupils with a special educational need are supported well so that they can make the same progress as their peers, but higher attaining pupils are not always challenged enough. For example, one pupil in Year 6 was clearly very able when constructing his presentation. However, he was allowed to digress into the various transitional effects rather than insert the hyperlinks that comprised the intended learning with little comment.
109. Teachers know pupils well, but formal assessment is unsatisfactory at present, as procedures are not in place. This is well known to the school, and is a target in the subject action plan. The scheme of work is adequate for the school's needs, but there has been little monitoring of the provision in the subject to share good practice. Teachers do use technology effectively to reinforce learning in other subjects like English, mathematics and science. The school has a good number of computers and plans to further improve the provision in the computer suite as funds allow.

MUSIC

110. Standards of attainment in music are similar to those found in most schools with pupils aged seven and 11.
111. Only one lesson in the juniors was observed during the inspection. Judgements are made on the evidence of this lesson, on planning documents and on the observations of pupils singing in assemblies.
112. Throughout the school, pupils sing a range of songs and hymns to a satisfactory standard, with younger pupils being much more enthusiastic than their older peers in assemblies. Pupils have a good understanding of the beat in music and can vary the dynamics, singing softly or loudly as the song requires. In the lesson observed, older pupils varied the tempo and volume in their performances and very effectively sang rounds in two parts. Diction was clear and pupils showed that they were able to sustain their own parts whilst listening to others.

113. No music lessons were seen in the infants. The one lesson observed in the juniors, delivered by a teacher from the Kent Music School, was excellent. Her subject knowledge, splendid management and engaging enthusiasm resulted in excellent learning by pupils in Year 4. The school has recently employed the expertise of the Kent Music School to raise standards and improve teachers' confidence. On the evidence seen, the prospects are very good. There is no designated co-ordinator for music, so the headteacher is acting in a caretaker co-ordinator role. There is an appropriate policy and the satisfactory overall planning is based upon a nationally recognised exemplar scheme of work.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

114. One whole junior games lesson was seen. From this and from observing pupils at play and engaged in extra-curricular activities, it is clear that standards in physical education are in line with those expected of pupils at the ages of seven and 11. A number of pupils reach above average standards in games and swimming at the end of Year 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress
115. In Year 2, most pupils have developed sound co-ordination when using large body movements and can travel and stop with good control. Pupils in Year 6 move around the playground with increasing control, and can demonstrate a good range of passing and catching skills in a variety of games. They show appropriate understanding of attacking and defending techniques and work well as a team.
116. Given the coastal and canal proximity the school has rightly prioritised swimming early in the juniors. Instruction is provided in a local pool and most pupils meet the swimming requirements of the National Curriculum before they leave the school. Pupils with special needs are supported well. They make sound progress and achieve results that enhance their self-esteem.
117. From the lesson seen, and other observations, the majority of pupils work with enthusiasm, enjoyment and commitment in physical education. They clearly enjoy the sessions. Pupils are willing to share ideas, work co-operatively and make good use of opportunities to practise their skills. Pupils behave well, use apparatus sensibly and, in games, show due regard for laws and fair play.
118. No secure judgement can be made on the quality of teaching, however in the lesson observed it was good. Teachers managed pupils well, and used their subject knowledge and observations of pupils' performance effectively to demonstrate achievement and to encourage others. Pupils were very active and involved in the lessons and made good progress in developing specific games skills, such as hockey, soccer and netball.
119. The good provision for a number of successful extra-curricular activities considerably enhances the curriculum, as does the experience gained by pupils on residential visits to activity centres. The headteacher, acting as co-ordinator, provides good leadership and management of the subject. Resources overall are satisfactory, with a suitable hall, adequate playground area and good playing fields.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

120. At the time of the previous inspection, standards in religious education throughout the school were in line with the expected levels and progress was satisfactory. Standards of attainment continue to be in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, but, because of the good teaching observed, progress is now good for all pupils including those with special educational needs, and those for whom English is not their first language. The school is following the Kent Agreed Syllabus for religious education effectively.
121. There is appropriate attention to other religions, and work in displays indicates pupils' understanding of some of the principles of other faiths, and their respect for other people's beliefs. For example, pupils in Year 2 learn that the Hindu Festival of Divali is a time when Hindus celebrate the triumph of good over evil and that this is symbolised by a row of lights.
122. The teaching of religious education is good throughout the school. Good emphasis is placed on practical approaches to the teaching of the subject. For example, in a mixed-age class of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, where the teaching was very good, the pupils gained a very clear idea of the Easter Story through role play. Pupils were very well motivated by the teacher's enthusiastic approach. All pupils were very well behaved throughout the lesson. They discussed in small groups what it would have felt like to be there when Jesus arrived and then they enacted the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem, waving a welcome with branches and laying down their jumpers to acknowledge the arrival of a king. The teacher made the little play come alive, captured pupils' imagination and furthered their understanding by playing the music of, 'We have a king who rides on a donkey' during the role play. The pupils so enjoyed the lesson they were sorry when it ended.
123. Teaching and learning were good in a lesson for pupils in Year 5 when the teacher's questions were probing and helped pupils to explore the complexities of relationships, to think for themselves and to make connections between stories they hear and everyday life. Pupils gained a greater understanding of the kind of qualities that promote good relationships and contribute to harmony among siblings. They analysed ideas well and reflected on their own and other people's relationships. Pupils enjoy the variety of approaches teachers encourage them to use, and, once their interest is engaged, they respond positively, concentrate well and listen respectfully to others.
124. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator monitors planning and looks through pupils' work, but there is no monitoring of teaching. Resources for religious education have improved and there are now sufficient to support teaching of all the major faiths. During the week of the inspection, there was no evidence of information and communication technology being used to support religious education. Occasional visits are made to the local church.