

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PETER'S INFANT SCHOOL

Rochester

LEA area: Medway

Unique reference number: 118576

Headteacher: Miss N Carter

Reporting inspector: Bob Cross
15917

Dates of inspection: 23rd to 25th June 2003

Inspection number: 247922

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Community
School category:	Infant
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Holcombe Road Rochester Kent
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, St Peter's Infant School
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs K Beavis
Date of previous inspection:	30 th April 2001

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15917	Bob Cross	Registered inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
9691	Jon Vincent	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion including racial equality.	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
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18083	Judith Howell	Team inspector	Science, art, design and technology, geography, Foundation Stage	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Peter's Infant School educates boys and girls aged between four and seven years. There are 103 pupils on roll which is smaller than most other schools of the same type. Thirty three children are in two Reception classes in the Foundation Stage. The school has 32 pupils on its register of special educational needs, which is above the national average. No pupils have statements of special educational need which is below the national average. Pupils with speech and communication difficulties are the largest group amongst those with special educational needs. The number of pupils with special educational needs has risen significantly since the school was last inspected. The school has 15 fewer girls than boys on roll. This imbalance is most pronounced in Years R and 1. About eight per cent of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds which is higher than in most schools. Six of the pupils speak English as an additional language although none is in the early stages of learning to speak the language. This is a bit higher than in most schools. Hindi is the most common language spoken by these pupils as their mother tongue. Twelve pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average. During the last school year, three pupils entered the school other than at the usual time of first admission and eight left it at times which were not those of the normal leaving or transfer for most pupils. This rate of mobility is not unusual. In the last two years, the full time equivalent of four teachers have left the school and six have been appointed. This rate of turnover is high. Children generally enter the school at average levels of attainment.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with a number of very good features. Its leadership and management are very good. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. As a result, pupils make good progress and reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science in Year 2. Overall provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for moral and social development is very good. This results in an ethos in which everyone is valued as an individual within a strong team and where everyone takes a full part in all aspects of the school's life. Limitations in the development of some subjects of the curriculum make spiritual and cultural development satisfactory. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The excellent leadership and management of the headteacher, who is well supported by staff and governors, have led to rapid improvements in the school.
- The pupils achieve well because of the consistently good quality of the teaching and standards are above average in English, mathematics, science and religious education in Year 2.
- The very good provision for the pupils' social and moral development and for their personal, social and health education results in their having very good attitudes to school and in high quality relationships.
- The implementation of the school's excellent procedures for improving the pupils' behaviour has resulted in good behaviour although this was judged to be unsatisfactory when the school was last inspected.
- The teachers know the pupils very well and take great care of them which means that the pupils are secure and confident learners.
- The school's partnership with parents is very good and supports the progress made by the pupils very well.

What could be improved

- Standards in aspects of reading, using and applying mathematics and using information and communication technology in other subjects of the curriculum.
- The pupils' spiritual and cultural development, for example, by further development of the creative aspects of the curriculum.
- Attendance.

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 April 2001 and, since then, it has made a very good improvement. It has a similar capacity to continue to improve. Of the six key issues for action identified by that inspection, five have been addressed very well and one well. In particular, standards in English and mathematics have risen from

below average to above average and the declining trend has been reversed. Additionally, there have, for example, been improvements in the quality of teaching, relationships with parents and the management of the school. This last improvement is the driving force behind the school's improvement. Strengths and weaknesses are rigorously identified and actions to improve weaknesses are stringent and very effective. This is, for example, evident in the strategies implemented to improve the pupils' behaviour and to assess their work in English and mathematics. However, attendance is not as good as it was in 2001 and there has been no improvement in extra-curricular provision. Additionally, pupils read with little expression and their abilities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge are relatively underdeveloped.

STANDARDS

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

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

The table shows that standards were well below average in the three subjects compared with all schools and with similar schools based on the numbers of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals. There has been a downward trend in all three subjects since 1998. In the assessments made by teachers in 2002 in science, standards were below average.

The findings of the inspection are that the present Year 2 pupils are reaching above average standards in English, including literacy, mathematics, including numeracy, science and religious education. Standards in all other subjects are average. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards in music. The findings of the inspection contrast markedly with the school's national test results although they are supported by the provisional results of the school's 2003 national tests. These show that the very demanding targets set by the school for the number of pupils to reach Level 2 and above in English and mathematics were met in writing and exceeded in reading and mathematics.

Children in Year R are on course to reach above average standards in all areas of their development. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language reach good standards compared with their previous levels of learning.

Improved standards are directly related to the very effective actions taken by the school to address its weaknesses. As a result of these actions, all pupils achieve well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, settle quickly to their lessons and are well motivated.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They fully understand the benefits that their good behaviour has on their learning. There have been no exclusions in the past year.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils assist one another and their teachers unobtrusively and unprompted when required. Relationships are very strong, regardless of age, ability or gender.

Attendance	Poor. Attendance is well below the national average and shows a declining trend. The school is adopting stringent procedures to address this issue. Unauthorised absence is broadly at the level of the national average.
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Pupils' very good attitudes to school, and their very good personal development and relationships are a strength of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Throughout the school, the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. Particular strengths in teaching are the way in which the teachers manage and control the pupils and the range of teaching strategies they use to help them to progress. The teaching of English, including literacy, and the teaching of mathematics, including numeracy, is good. Weaknesses in some of the teaching include the failure to use assessment information to challenge fully all pupils in subjects such as history. Particular strengths in the pupils' learning are their interest and concentration and, in Year R, the children's independence. There are no significant weaknesses in the children's learning in Year R. In Years 1 and 2, the limited use of personal targets restricts their understanding of their own learning and, when lessons are slow paced, some pupils do not apply themselves as well as they usually do.

Teaching and learning are consistently good for pupils with special educational needs. Teaching and learning for those pupils with English as an additional language are good in class and satisfactory when they receive specialist support.

Overall, the needs of all pupils are well met.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. All statutory requirements are met. Curricular provision for children in Year R is good. In Years 1 and 2, the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies have been implemented well but there are some weaknesses in the creative aspects of the curriculum. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory as although most pupils receive good equality of opportunity there are some shortcomings, for example, in provision for disabled pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Early identification of their needs and regular reviews of progress ensure that pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Individual education plans are generally well organised with clear and achievable targets that relate well to the pupils' needs. Close liaison between class teachers and support staff and the special educational needs co-ordinator contribute significantly to the good quality of the school's provision.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good overall. Teachers are keenly aware of the specific learning needs of the few pupils whose mother tongue is not English and reinforce and extend their language skills well. As a result, the pupils quickly gain confidence in their understanding and use of English and take a full part in all aspects of school life.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for the pupils' social and moral development is very good and has made a significant contribution to building the very good relationships found in the school. Spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory as parts of the curriculum which contribute significantly to this are not taught in

	sufficient depth.
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How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The caring culture promoted throughout the school by all staff ensures the pupils' well being and creates a secure learning environment. The school has adopted the Local Education Authority's child protection policy. Procedures for monitoring personal development are informal but satisfactory. Assessment procedures and the use of assessment information are good in English, mathematics, Year R and for pupils with special educational needs. They are satisfactory in science and information and communication technology but underdeveloped in other subjects and for pupils with English as an additional language.
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The school's partnership with parents is very good and helps to promote the pupils' good progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The leadership and management of the headteacher are excellent and she is well supported by the staff and the governors. A strong team spirit has been developed which has resulted in very effective work on addressing the weaknesses identified by the school's last inspection.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are committed to its continuing improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. Strengths and weakness are identified with great objectivity. Very successful actions are taken to improve the weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Budget setting and the monitoring of spending are rigorous. Good care is taken to ensure that good value is obtained when money is spent. However, the school maintained its financial reserves at a level significantly above those recommended at a time when standards in the school were low.

The school has a good number of teaching and support staff. Its accommodation and leaning resources support the implementation of the curriculum satisfactorily.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The progress made by their children. • The quality of the leadership and management. • They are comfortable about approaching the school. • The way in which the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. • The quality of teaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school.

The findings of the inspection support the positive views of the parents. In addition, they find that the school's provision of extra-curricular activities is unsatisfactory.

PART B COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Overall, children enter the school at average levels of attainment. The findings of the inspection are that children in Year R are on course to reach above average standards in all aspects of their development when they enter Year 1. This represents good achievement. These judgements are the same as those made by the school's 2001 inspection.
2. In the end of key stage national tests in 2002, standards were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics compared with all schools and with similar schools based on the numbers of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals. There has been a downward trend in all three subjects since 1998. In the assessments made by teachers in 2002 in science, standards were below average. The average scores for the last three years show that there are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls and none were noted during the inspection.
3. The findings of the inspection are that the present Year 2 pupils are reaching above average standards in English, including literacy, mathematics, including numeracy, science and religious education. Standards in all other subjects are average. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards in music. Compared with the findings of the school's 2001 inspection, standards have risen in English, mathematics, science and religious education and have remained the same in all other subjects where a judgement was made.
4. The findings of the inspection contrast markedly with the school's national test results although they are supported by the provisional results of the school's 2003 national tests. These show that the very demanding targets set by the school for the number of pupils to reach Level 2 and above in English and mathematics were met in writing and exceeded in reading and mathematics. Improved standards are directly related to the very effective actions taken by the school to address its weaknesses and, particularly, the improved quality of teaching and learning.
5. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress and reach good standards relative to their previous attainment. This is because all staff work together to provide carefully planned and targeted support for these pupils.
6. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in developing fluency in English and reach good standards compared with their earlier attainment. This is because their learning needs are identified and targeted at an early stage. Teachers plan effectively for the needs of these pupils and all staff make the most of opportunities to develop their language skills.
7. All pupils are now achieving well in this school. This is a marked improvement compared with the findings of the school's 2001 inspection when achievement was judged to be satisfactory in Year 2 and unsatisfactory in Year 1 and overall. When achievement is compared with the findings of the school's 2001 inspection on a subject basis, achievement has improved from unsatisfactory to good in English, including literacy, mathematics, including numeracy, and science, from satisfactory to good in religious education and from unsatisfactory to satisfactory in information and communication technology. In all other subjects, it has remained satisfactory. No comparison was possible in music. As in the case of improved standards, improved achievement directly reflects the effective actions implemented by the school to address the weaknesses identified in 2001. These, for example, include much improved use of assessment information in English and mathematics.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good and have improved since the previous inspection where they were judged to be satisfactory. Pupils try hard to meet the expectations of their teachers, demonstrate a willingness to learn and apply themselves enthusiastically. Pupils listen attentively, follow instructions sensibly and co-operate and collaborate with school staff and each other. They

remain focused on their tasks and work well both independently and together. They respond very well to effective teaching, discuss enthusiastically and have fun while learning. They are sensitive to the needs of others and are confident and courteous in their approach to adults and each other.

9. Pupils' behaviour overall is good and has improved significantly since the last inspection. This is re-inforced by the excellent examples set by all school staff and the commitment of pupils to the school's 'Golden Rules'. In school assemblies, observed the behaviour was very good with pupils participating enthusiastically and demonstrating strong self-discipline. Although behaviour in and around school is good the pupils are not passive. Pupils work and play well together, regardless of race, age and gender. No examples of inappropriate or oppressive behaviour were seen during the inspection. Pupils are confident in their approach to adult visitors and extend basic courtesies and polite treatment to both themselves and adults.

10. The personal development of pupils is very good and has improved since the last inspection. The school constantly promotes the personal development of pupils in various ways. The presence of pupils of pupils with English as an additional language helps to develop an understanding of the different needs that can arise. This, together with many more opportunities the school offers pupils to use their initiative, enhances the personal development of pupils. The 'Caring Crew' takes responsibility for various tasks. 'Playground Friends' ensure good social and personal interaction at play times. Lunch times are used as social occasions where pupils mix and meet and enjoy one another's company.

11. Children in the Foundation Stage behave very well and have very positive attitudes towards their work and play. They interact with adults extremely well and play harmoniously with other children when unsupervised. Children thoroughly enjoy coming to school and take full benefit from the range of activities, which is provided for them. Developing initiative and personal responsibility in learning is strongly encouraged by the teachers and many children are able to organise themselves well.

12. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into all classes, activities, rules and expectations of the school. Their good progress is helped by their very positive attitudes to learning and by the thoughtfulness and support of other pupils.

13. The welcoming ethos of the school where pupils are made to feel confident and valued means that pupils with English as an additional language soon benefit from all the activities and experiences that the school offers. They are usually highly motivated and keen learners and behave well inside and outside the classroom.

14. The attendance rate is poor and well below the national average. The rate has declined over the past three years. However, the percentage figures of attendance are exaggerated by the relatively low numbers of pupils on the school roll and the shortfall in attendance has been mainly caused by two families taking unauthorised extended holidays during term time. The school is adopting suitable strategies to address this problem. Unauthorised absence is broadly in line with the national average and the rate is steadily dropping, aided by the school's rigorous control systems. The school works closely with the appropriate agencies should the need arise. Registers are called promptly at the start of lessons and pupils settle down to work straight away.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. This is a significant improvement on the quality of teaching and learning found by the school's 2001 inspection. In that inspection, teaching and learning were unsatisfactory overall and in Years 1 and 2 although all of the unsatisfactory teaching occurred in Year 1. In this inspection and in 2001, the quality of teaching and learning in Year R was good. In 2001, six per cent of the lessons seen were very good, 39 per cent were good, 38 per cent satisfactory, 15 per cent unsatisfactory and two per cent poor. In the current inspection, 12 per cent of the lessons seen were very good, 76 per cent were good and 12 per cent were satisfactory. The

improvement is due to the fact that many different teachers were involved in the two inspections and to the effectiveness of the school's monitoring of teaching and learning.

16. Strengths in teaching identified by this inspection and in 2001 include careful planning, clear explanations and questions which make the pupils think for themselves. Particular strengths in teaching identified by this inspection include the way in which the teachers manage and control the pupils and the range of teaching strategies they use to help them to progress.

17. In 2001, weaknesses identified in Year 1 included lack of challenge for more able pupils, inability to control the pupils adequately and a slow pace to learning. Pupils are now well controlled and managed throughout the school. In English and mathematics particularly and, to a lesser extent in science and information and communication technology, assessment information is well used to set challenging work for pupils of all abilities. In other subjects, assessment procedures are underdeveloped and work is still not always challenging for all pupils. In a few lessons, slowness of pace is also still an issue and technical vocabulary pertinent to individual subjects is not always well developed. Weaknesses in the teachers' knowledge of the subjects that they teach and in the use of literacy and numeracy skills no longer exist to any significant degree although mathematical skills are not always fully applied in all subjects. The marking of pupils' work has also improved since 2001 as has the provision of homework which is now judged to be good rather than satisfactory.

18. Particular strengths in the pupils' learning are their interest and concentration and, in Year R, the children's independence. There are no significant weaknesses in the children's learning in Year R. In Years 1 and 2 the limited use of personal targets restricts their understanding of their own learning and, when lessons are slow paced, some pupils do not apply themselves as well as they usually do.

19. In Year R, teaching and learning are good in all areas of the children's development. The quality of teaching and learning is good with some very good features as it was in the last inspection. During this inspection, eight lessons were seen in Year R. Three were very good, four were good and one was satisfactory. There are many strengths in the teaching, most notably in the good quality activities planned to facilitate the development of children's communication skills. A major strength is the very good quality teaching that promotes the children's personal, social and emotional development. The two Reception teachers know the children very well as individuals and have developed warm relationships with them all. Consequently, the children settle into school happily and successfully develop very good attitudes to learning. The daily activities are well prepared and the good range of resources available indoors and outdoors is effectively used to stimulate interest and participation. The management of children is very good and, overall, there is a good balance between teacher directed and child initiated activities. The well-organised routines enable all children to become used to the pattern of the day and respond quickly to the high expectations for attentiveness and following instructions. The teachers and support assistants in the Reception classes work closely as a team. They listen with interest to what the children have to say and, through careful questioning, maximise their learning. The use of assessment to monitor the progress and development of the children is good and enables the teacher to plan effectively for the children's future learning.

20. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good. During the inspection, 19 lessons were seen in these year groups. Sixteen were good and two were satisfactory. One was not graded as it covered too short a period to make a valid judgement. Teaching and learning were judged to be good in English, including literacy, mathematics, including numeracy, science and religious education. They were satisfactory in all other subjects where a judgement was made. No judgement was made in music because of insufficient evidence. Compared with the judgements of the school's 2001 inspection, teaching and learning in religious education and design and technology were the same quality in both inspections. In 2001, teaching and learning in English, mathematics, science, music, history and physical education were judged to be unsatisfactory in Year 1 and satisfactory or good in other classes. Given that overall teaching in these subjects is now good or satisfactory this represents an improvement compared with 2001.

21. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well. A good Year 1/2 lesson in which pupils wrote about the significant events in a story exemplified the overall good quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 and the effective way in which the school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy. The teacher made good use of a game in which the pupils spelt words such as “shore”, “core” and “sore” at the start of the lesson to interest and excite them. Her good knowledge of the subject was clear in her confident and stylish approach to the lesson. The teacher then read to them in a lively and expressive manner and it was evident that the pupils understood that bold writing meant the use of lots of expression. The pupils listened very carefully. They enjoyed the closing refrains and the more able expressed their thoughts about what occurred in the story and their predictions about what might happen using a broad range of vocabulary. The teacher used well framed questions to extend their responses well. However, some pupils were hesitant about using their knowledge of phonics when reading and the teacher did not fully draw them into the lesson. The pupils worked well with partners to think of a sentence to conclude the story they had been discussing which was a good extension of their social development as well as their literacy skills. The lesson was well planned although no use of information and communication technology was indicated. During this lesson, the pupils made good gains in their ability to retell a story and to give the main points in the correct sequence. This was the result of enthusiastic and well structured teaching and good interaction with the pupils which stimulated their ideas. There was also a good emphasis on being independent and looking for information that they did not know. The pupils were well managed in a skilful and motivating manner. There was some flagging in the pace of the lesson towards the end of the session on the carpet.

22. Overall, teaching and learning for pupils who have special educational needs are good. Teachers know their pupils well, understand their needs and ensure in their planning that work is carefully matched to targets in pupils’ individual education plans. As a result, pupils make good progress both in their grasp of basic skills and in their confidence and positive attitudes to work. As in 2001, teaching assistants provide valuable support for these pupils. In class, teaching assistants encourage the less confident to respond to teachers’ questions, help others to sustain concentration and note pupils’ responses and behaviour. There is good liaison between class teachers, support staff and the special educational needs co-ordinator to discuss learning and concerns about individual pupils.

23. Overall, teaching and learning for pupils with English as an additional language are good. Teaching and learning are good when provided by class teachers but satisfactory when given by specialist support as pupils’ individual needs are not assessed with sufficient accuracy. Teachers have good rapport with pupils and develop their confidence, fluency and understanding well. They plan for the specific language and learning needs of pupils, make the most of opportunities to extend and reinforce vocabulary and ensure that pupils receive well focused support in group work.

24. Overall, the needs of all pupils, including the gifted and talented, are met well. This is because of the overall good quality of teaching and learning in the school. The pupils’ needs are particularly well met in English, mathematics and science because of well developed and well used assessment procedures. However, in other subjects apart from information and communication technology, assessment procedures are not developed well enough to provide information to allow more able pupils to be fully challenged at all times.

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

25. The school’s 2001 inspection judged that curricular provision to be satisfactory and to meet statutory requirements. The judgement of this inspection is essentially the same as curricular provision for Year R is judged to be good and that for Years 1 and 2 to be satisfactory. Overall provision is satisfactory and provides an adequate range of opportunities for the pupils. All statutory requirements for National Curriculum subjects, religious education, sex education and collective worship are fully

met. Curricular planning is very good and underpins good progression for pupils in mixed age group classes well.

26. Total teaching time is essentially that recommended. Good amounts of time are allocated to English, mathematics information and communication technology and physical education and a suitable allocation is given to religious education and science. The amount of time allocated to other subjects is lower than in most schools. This limits the depth and breadth in which they are taught and the contribution that they make to the pupils' social and cultural development. It also means that many of the creative aspects of curricular provision are underdeveloped. Additionally, there are some weaknesses in aspects of the pupils' reading development, their use of mathematical skills and the application of information and communication technology in other subjects of the curriculum.

27. As at the time of the school's last inspection, extra-curricular provision remains unsatisfactory. The school has a good range of visitors and a more limited programme of educational visits. It also has a number of varied curricular activities for pupils to select in its "Golden Time" sessions. However, there are no similar activities out of school time.

28. The statutory requirements for a code of practice on equal opportunities and racial equality are fully met. Most pupils have full access to all aspects of the school's life and thus good equality of opportunity. However, the building has features that restrict access for pupils with disabilities. This means that equality of opportunity is satisfactory overall. The school is addressing the needs of pupils with disabilities to give them full access to the school and its work. Limitations in the school's accommodation place some restrictions on the pupils' access to all aspects of physical education.

29. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well. Teachers have a good understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy. Mental activity sessions at the start of lessons are lively and challenging and the work is developed well into demanding group work. This promotes the pupils' progress well. The National Literacy Strategy has been adapted well to meet the needs of pupils in the school. It has been used effectively as a springboard for significant improvements in the subject since the previous inspection. Teachers are well aware of the importance of integrating speaking, listening, reading and writing into a coherent approach in order to develop the pupils' understanding of language.

30. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage is good. This is similar to the findings of the school's last inspection. The planning is sufficiently detailed and takes full account of the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals. Reading, writing and mathematics are well structured and lead well into the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Children are particularly well supported in their personal, social and emotional development where the teachers have skilfully adopted the 'Highscope' philosophy of independent and active learning to meet the needs of the children effectively.

31. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. In general, individual education plans are detailed and provide a good focus on the skills, knowledge or understanding that pupils need to make progress. Teaching strategies and what pupils should achieve within a specified time are clearly outlined. If pupils with specific needs are withdrawn from class, the work is well planned and sessions are provided in rotation so that pupils do not miss vital learning.

32. The school provides pupils with English as an additional language with an interesting curriculum and an environment that values their languages and cultures. All pupils have full access to the curriculum and their language skills are not a barrier to learning. Information and communication technology is not used enough to boost pupils' skills and confidence.

33. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good and a strength of the school. The school has a comprehensive policy that is undergoing review at present. The subject leader monitors progress and standards of personal, social and health education (PSHE) throughout the school. There is evidence of the school's commitment to this element of the curriculum in every

classroom. The schools 'Golden Rules' are prominently posted throughout the school and every opportunity is taken to ensure that pupils demonstrate their understanding of various values. Teachers and all members of staff throughout the school ensure that pupils are aware of the benefits of positive social behaviour and are excellent role models. This culture permeates the whole school and has resulted in all pupils understanding the importance and values of basic citizenship.

34. The school also takes care to reinforce pupils' self esteem through their personal and social education. Whole school assemblies discuss reasons for the 'Golden Rules' and dissect specific aspects such as the importance of 'listening to people' and the value of being part of a team. This team approach is constantly encouraged by simple strategies, one of which is the award for 'Class of the Week'. Pupils who show thought for others without being asked have their names highlighted on the 'Wall of Kindness'. 'Golden Time' is another initiative designed to encourage and reward consistently good behaviour. Golden time is earned during the week and results in the pupil being allowed to attend a club of his or her choice on Friday afternoons. This reward is much valued by pupils.

35. Participation in different charitable causes and the reasons for doing so all reinforce pupils' social education. The school encourages a healthy life style through physical education and, at present, is working towards the 'Healthy School' award. Other health education issues such as drugs education are discussed appropriately whenever the opportunity arises. The commitment of the whole school staff to the personal, social and health education of pupils is extremely effective.

36. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is good and the school makes every effort to involve the community in helping with pupils' learning. The very active 'Parent Teacher Association' raises considerable funds which are used to benefit pupils' learning. This has resulted in the provision of an outside canopy for the Foundation Stage classrooms and a very imaginative play tower. Local businesses contribute prizes for various school events. The school also has strong links with the 'Family Trust' a charitable organisation who visit school regularly and take assemblies which are much enjoyed by the pupils. Similarly the local church plays a great part in pupils' religious education. Parents and others view the school as an important asset to the community.

37. The school has good links with partner institutions. Opportunities for both teaching practice for students from Christchurch College and Southbank University are fully taken up. The school also provides work experience for pupils from a local secondary school. A good example of the relationships promoted by the school is the book project for Year 2 pupils. Year 11 pupils from a neighbouring grammar school visit and work with Year 2 pupils, read with them, discuss plots and characters, and then write a book featuring their Year 2 partner as the main character. Strong links with three pre-school organisations aid induction of new pupils and similar involvement with the junior school prepares pupils very well for the smooth transfer to the next step of their education.

38. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and has improved since the school's last inspection. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory and tends to be featured informally and continually through lessons rather than in 'set pieces' such as assemblies. Some opportunities to promote spirituality were missed in assemblies observed during the inspection although there was very evident joy in the singing and pupils were encouraged to reflect on what had been discussed. However, examples of awe and wonder were witnessed during lessons. One such example was in a Foundation Stage literacy lesson when the teacher produced a 'special box' containing 'special' shiny objects and a boy gasped 'wicked!' Pupils are constantly encouraged to explore the way they influence others and this is exemplified by both the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural and personal, health, and social education policies. Every pupil benefits from the school atmosphere that promotes an ambiance of mutual respect in which they can grow and flourish. Visiting Church leaders representing different faiths lead assemblies and engage pupils in the various aspects of spirituality. Creative aspects of the curriculum are underdeveloped which places some limitations on opportunities for the pupils' spiritual growth.

39. The very good provision for pupils' social and moral development is a strength of the school. At the last inspection, these aspects were judged to be satisfactory, having slipped from good. Assemblies have a very strong moral and social content. The whole school staff provide very good role models for pupils. The school's behaviour policy is based on constant positive re-inforcement rather than the use of sanctions. School rules are continually re-enforced and every opportunity is taken to enable pupils to 'build a better me'. The school is dedicated to encouraging children to care for each other and to be kind and courteous in their relationships with each other and adults. Moral issues are promoted not only by PHSE lessons but also informally when opportunities arise. It is noticeable that there is a whole school approach to moral and social issues with every member of the school staff leading by example.

40. The school encourages pupils to take responsibility for their actions, respect people and property and care for the environment. Pupils are proud of their school and are well behaved in and around the school. The school provides a supportive and caring 'family' community where everyone is included. Pupils and all school staff treat each other with mutual respect. Pupils support and understand various charities. The various school initiatives provide opportunities for social development. All pupils benefit from taking responsibility in turn for differing tasks. They work sensibly both independently, in pairs and in groups.

41. The provision for the pupils' cultural development continues to be satisfactory. The school arranges visits from members of different religions and cultures who talk to the pupils. They learn about different lifestyles through topic work and their lessons. The school enjoys the presence of a few pupils who have English as a second language. The involvement of these pupils assists pupils' cultural awareness and development. Subjects such as history and geography are not always developed in sufficient depth to support fully the pupils' cultural development. The school has plans to extend multi-cultural awareness by making more use of the resources available in the local community.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The school looks after its pupils very well. The caring culture promoted throughout the school by all staff ensures the pupils' well being. At the last inspection, this aspect was judged unsatisfactory due to failing procedures for promoting good behaviour. Overall, procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are now very good. The school has a comprehensive health and safety policy with regular risk assessments carried out.

43. Procedures for monitoring attendance are rigorous and every effort is made to ensure they are effective. Most parents ensure that their children arrive promptly for the start of school and lessons start on time. Attendance requirements are published in the school prospectus and staff ensure that parents understand them.

44. The school has adopted the Local Education Authority's child protection policy with the headteacher as the appropriately trained child protection officer. All school staff are aware of the necessary procedures and, despite some being relatively new to the school, know their pupils and their backgrounds well. Several members of the school staff have received training in first aid. If a pupil needs to be collected at the end of the school by a person unknown to the school, systems are in place to obviate any risk to the child. The security of pupils is paramount but is carried out sensitively.

45. The excellent procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are based on positive reinforcement and are now very much a strength of the school. The school has successfully addressed these issues raised in the last inspection report in a relatively short time. Parents acknowledge and appreciate these good standards of behaviour promoted and maintained by the school.

46. Procedures for monitoring personal development are informal but satisfactory. However, pupils' personal development is very good and exemplifies the whole culture of the school. The examples set by all staff encourage personal development throughout the school.

47. Children in the Foundation Stage are very well cared for and it is evident that they feel at ease in their surroundings. They share good relationships with their teachers and support assistants and will quite happily talk to visitors about their work.

48. The friendly ethos of the school and its respect for individuals are reflected in its good care and support of pupils with special educational needs. They have trust and confidence in those who support them and staff ensure that pupils' contributions are valued and their achievements fully recognised. There are efficient procedures for identifying these pupils through internal testing and the school's good systems for tracking pupils' progress particularly in English and mathematics. Individual education plans provide a clear picture of each pupil's needs and targets are generally specific, challenging but achievable and easily measured. These targets are reviewed termly. The school draws appropriately upon the specialist knowledge of outside agencies such as speech therapists, the educational psychologist and the learning and behaviour support services.

49. The caring atmosphere of the school gives pupils with English as an additional language the security and confidence to enable effective learning to take place. Good attention is paid to tracking the progress of these pupils and setting clear targets in literacy. Records of pupils' progress in their development of language are satisfactory.

50. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and their academic progress are satisfactory. Particularly effective systems are in place for assessing pupils' attainment and achievement in English and mathematics. Pupils' levels of attainment are recorded regularly and this is helping teachers to set challenging targets for the future. Procedures in science, information and communication technology and music are satisfactory, but in religious education and all other subjects they are unsatisfactory.

51. Assessment procedures for children in the Reception Year are good and include on-going observations for each area of learning carried out by the class teachers and support assistants. The Reception teachers have adapted the nationally recommended profile record system to support the tracking process of individual children during their time in the Reception Year. This means that by the end of the year the teacher will be sufficiently well informed to make an accurate assessment of each child's attainment.

52. The headteacher has worked hard to define and make all procedures manageable and to integrate assessment within the curriculum plans and teachers' weekly planning. The procedures are well used in English and mathematics and the monitoring and tracking systems have a positive effect on pupils' achievement. Results of national tests are carefully analysed to measure the school's performance which enables the school to identify areas for improvement in teaching and learning. As part of the ongoing process of monitoring, staff carry out termly work sampling. Pupils' work is levelled against agreed assessment information and then used to inform the tracking of pupils' progress.

53. The use of assessment to guide curriculum planning is good. The process has been improved and the evidence collected now provides a more precise insight into the development of each pupil. Consequently, teachers can plan activities that meet individual needs in literacy and numeracy. For example, to monitor the attainment and progress in writing the pupils complete two pieces of unaided work per term. The pupils' work is levelled using the evidence gathered and individual targets are set. In numeracy and reading, group targets are set. These are recorded in teachers' files and displayed in classrooms. In science and information and communication technology, each pupil has an assessment sheet that outlines the National Curriculum requirements for each unit taught. Once a pupil achieves the specified objective, it is highlighted with a coloured pen. To help track pupils' progress, a different colour is used for each year group. For all other subjects, however, there are no whole school formal procedures in place. The use of personal targets for pupils is limited.

54. A tracking system to support the process of target setting across the school for reading, writing and mathematics has been introduced by the headteacher. This enables teachers to track

pupils' all round achievement and to check whether they are on target. This system is comparatively new to the school, but is already proving to be very effective in raising teachers' expectations and, as a result, pupils' standards in English and mathematics have risen dramatically.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is very good and this has been improved since the last inspection. Consequently, the school enjoys very good relationships with parents. They appreciate the standards of behaviour and the strong encouragement of moral and social values the school promotes. Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems and appreciate the high expectations the school has of their children, whatever their ability. Parents are encouraged to become involved in the life of the school. Many parents help in school and around the school in many different ways.

56. The majority of parents consider that they are well informed about their children's progress. In addition to informative annual reports, there are regular newsletters, termly parents' evenings and curriculum information meetings. Notices and information for parents are posted in conspicuous places. They also receive details of the topics their children are working on. Parents can also use the 'contact books' to communicate with the school. The governors' Annual Report is comprehensive but has some minor omissions. The school prospectus is very informative, encourages parental participation and amplifies the schools' aims and objectives. Apart from the minor omissions in the governors' Annual Report, both these documents comply with statutory requirements.

57. Parents feel that the school is friendly, accessible and has a genuine open door policy that they take full advantage of. The school secretary maintains excellent relationships with parents and takes every opportunity to promote the school. The headteacher ensures that she is available for informal conversations at the start of the school day and the whole school staff are open and communicative with parents and carers. The home, school association raises large sums of money to purchase materials and resources for the school. They work closely with the school and have recently provided a large canopy for the outside classroom.

58. The number of parents helping in school with various tasks is increasing. They are recognised as a regular and valuable aid to their children's learning. The support for pupils' learning both at home and in school is good. The school is running a 'Family Literacy Project' for the second time and this very successful initiative has resulted in further parental involvement with school. Overall, parents make a good contribution to their children's learning at school and at home.

59. Induction procedures for children are good. From September 2002, parents of children in the Foundation Stage had the opportunity of a home visit as part of the induction process. During these visits, parents have the opportunity to discuss any concerns they may have and receive a useful induction pack. On entry to the school, children attend part time, which is increased to include a dinner time, until the fourth week when they are in for the whole day. This ensures that all children are very settled and well used to the daily routines. Once the children are in school, the parents are kept well informed of their child's work and their progress.

60. There are good links with parents of pupils with special educational needs and there is plenty of contact between home and school to give regular information and to discuss concerns. Many parents take the opportunity to discuss the targets on their children's individual education plans every term.

61. There are good links with parents of pupils with English as an additional language and they are very supportive of their children's learning. Interpreters and translations can be provided when required and the school has appropriate links with outside agencies.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

62. The leadership and management of this school provided by the headteacher are excellent. She is well supported by staff and governors so that, overall, the leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher's excellent leadership is exemplified by the way in which she has, in a relatively short period of time, created a strong team spirit and a very effective commitment to improvement. As a result, teachers are dedicated to raising standards, the governors support the school fully and the pupils are keen to learn. The governors support has been exemplified by the high levels of staffing they have maintained. These factors have created a situation in which the school's aims are very well reflected in its work.

63. The headteacher's excellent leadership is fully complemented by her excellent and effective management. This is underpinned by rigorous self evaluation of the school. Strengths are fully recognised but so are weaknesses. Responsibility for correcting the weaknesses and addressing the key issues for action identified by the school's last inspection is fully accepted. This results in very effective and co-ordinated action to address these issues. At the heart of the drive to improve is raising standards which is the central focus of the strong school development plan. This fully reflects the educational direction the headteacher has established for the school. Achieving this has proceeded in a compellingly logical manner. Initially, the unsatisfactory behaviour identified by the school's 2001 inspection was addressed. Behaviour is now good and relationships and the pupils' attitudes to their work are very good.

64. The very solid basis for the raising of standards established by improving the pupils' attitudes and behaviour has been built on very successfully. Teaching and learning have been rigorously monitored and improved so that they are now consistently good. In 2001, they were unsatisfactory. Assessment procedures in English and mathematics particularly are very accurate and are used very precisely to support the pupils' progress. In addition, relationships with parents have improved significantly so that they now support their children's learning very well. As a result, standards in English, mathematics and science are now above average when they were below average in 2001. It follows, therefore, that all pupils receive good equality of opportunity in most respects. However, there are some shortcomings in the school's accommodation relating to access for pupils with disabilities and the teaching of physical education. Equality of opportunity is, therefore, satisfactory overall.

65. The governors fulfil their duties well. They have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governors have ensured that all statutory responsibilities apart from some minor omissions in the Annual Report to parents are met. They make a good contribution to the devising and monitoring of the school development plan and ensure that its priorities are suitably supported through careful financial monitoring. Their procedures for setting the budget and monitoring spending are rigorous and prudent. Good care is taken to ensure that good value is obtained when money is spent. However, the governors have maintained financial reserves at a level significantly above those recommended at a time when standards in the school were low. This was partly because they were expecting to make a significant contribution towards building improvements. The governors have their own priorities in the school development plan but they have not evaluated their performance objectively.

66. The management of the provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. The teacher responsible is a Reception class teacher who has established a very effective unit. The quality of relationships within the unit is very good. The indoor accommodation is bright and well organised. The adjacent outdoor area is a good size and has a very attractive covered area, which enables the area to be used whatever the weather. Learning resources indoors and outdoors are good to support the children's learning.

67. The well organised and informed co-ordinator for special educational needs tracks pupils' progress carefully, keeps concise records and acts as a focal point for all staff to discuss appropriate strategies and air concerns. Teaching assistants are well prepared and appropriately trained and draw upon a wide range of skills to support pupils' learning. Resources are satisfactory. A policy is in place

but has not been officially submitted to governors. There is a designated governor who has a good involvement in this work and attends reviews. Funds for pupils with special educational needs are used well.

68. The management and provision of pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory as is the use of the funds designated for their support. However, the school does not have an adequate overview of the development of pupils' language skills as they move through the school. Resources such as books, posters and multicultural games are unsatisfactory. This means that they do not support teaching sufficiently or celebrate cultural diversity well enough.

69. Provision, training and induction of new staff are good. The various programmes are structured and planned in conjunction with the staff member involved. All new teachers, support and ancillary staff enjoy access to training and support appropriate to their needs and aspirations. There are comprehensive performance management procedures in place. All staff (teaching, support and administrative) are involved. Staff say that it is very positive, training needs are recognised and met and other requests met where possible. The provision of training is well related to the needs of the school and to those of individuals. The funds available for the training of staff are well used. The school has a good capacity to train new teachers.

70. The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum is good. The support staff are very well trained and provide a good support system which has a significant impact on pupils' learning. All staff fully understand each other's roles. The headteacher delegates responsibilities clearly and appropriately. Many of the teaching staff are new to management roles such as deputy headteacher, co-ordinators and members of the senior management team. They have made a good start in fulfilling their responsibilities and their continuing professional development is one of the headteacher's priorities. The monitoring of teaching and learning by co-ordinators is under developed in some subjects, for example, history and religious education.

71. Overall, the school's accommodation supports the implementation of the curriculum satisfactorily. Most classrooms are adequate but the small size of the hall, the limited hard surfaced area and the lack of a field place some restrictions on the teaching of physical education. The hall is also used for the storage of some resources. The school has a suitable action plan to improve access for the physically disabled. The outside environment of the school is very small. The small hard play area is further restricted by a raised area in one corner with steep steps. The school has plans to modify this to enable them to make more practical use of the outside learning environment. Parents have helped to create a small garden area on the margins of this playground. Learning resources are satisfactory overall. There are some shortages in software for information and communication technology for cross-curricular applications. Nevertheless, the school's use of new technology for both curricular and administrative purposes is satisfactory overall.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

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

1. Improve standards in aspects of reading, using and applying mathematics and using information and communication technology in other subjects of the curriculum in Years 1 and 2 by:

(Paragraphs 17, 32, 71, 93, 95, 102, 103, 106, 114, 117, 118, 123, 126, 129, 130, 145)

- helping pupils to read with appropriate expression;
- encouraging them to talk about the books that they read;
- developing their early research skills;
- extending the pupils' abilities to use and apply their mathematical skills;*
- improving the quality and amount of the use of information and communication technology in other subjects of the curriculum and providing appropriate software where this is necessary.

2. Extend provision for the pupils' spiritual and cultural development in Years 1 and 2 through:

(Paragraphs 17, 26, 27, 38, 41, 46, 50, 53, 63, 68, 111, 113, 114, 118, 119, 123, 126, 129, 130, 135, 138, 140, 141, 144)

- further development of the creative aspects of the curriculum;*
- improving assessment procedures, the depth and breadth of curricular provision and raising standards in subjects such as art, music, design and technology, geography and history;
- developing extra-curricular provision.*

3. Examine ways to improve attendance.

(Paragraphs 14, 43)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Reviewing the provision for pupils with English as an additional language.
(Paragraphs 23, 68)
- Ensuring that the governors' Annual Report to parents meets statutory requirements.
(Paragraphs 56, 65)
- Improving facilities for pupils with disabilities.*
(Paragraphs 28, 64, 71)
- Ensuring that financial reserves are maintained at appropriate levels.
(Paragraph 65, financial data page 23)
- Improving the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning by co-ordinators in those areas where this report highlights the need.
(Paragraphs 70, 113, 127, 145)

*Actions already identified by the school as being areas for development.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

27*

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

18

*One observation was too short to be graded and included in the table below.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	20	3	0	0	0
Percentage	0	12	76	12	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	103
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	12
Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	32
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	16	20	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	15
	Girls	16	17	18
	Total	26	27	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (86)	75 (82)	92 (93)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	12	14
	Girls	16	17	17
	Total	27	29	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (86)	81 (82)	86 (82)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	94	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.09
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Average class size	21

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	71

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002/3
	£
Total income	354872
Total expenditure	342751
Expenditure per pupil	3007
Balance brought forward from previous year	41989
Balance carried forward to next year	54110

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	103
Number of questionnaires returned	41

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	85	15	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	68	32	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	29	5	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	52	38	10	0	0
The teaching is good.	76	24	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	44	2	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	17	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	22	2	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	57	41	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	81	17	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	78	17	0	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	37	24	5	7

Other issues raised by parents

Nine parents made additional comments on their forms. The only themes repeated by more than one parent were expressions of support for the school and comments on how much it had improved in the past two years.

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

73. In the last inspection, the provision for children in the Reception Year was good. Since then the school has continued to improve it further and it is now very good. The Reception unit is very well organised and children have easy access to a wide range of resources to support their learning. Although there are significantly more boys than girls in Year R this was not observed to have any impact on the work of the class. Staff make very good use of the space both indoors and outdoors to create an attractive environment for children to work and play. Day-to-day routines are well established, enabling all children to feel secure, safe and grow in confidence.

74. Children are admitted to school full-time in the September or January of the year in which they become five. Overall, their attainment on entry is average. By the end of the Reception Year, most children's achievement is good and they are on course to reach above average standards in their communication, language and literacy, mathematical and physical development, creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. In their personal, social and emotional development, the children make rapid progress and achieve exceptionally well.

75. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good with some very good features. There are many strengths in the teaching, most notably in the good quality activities planned to facilitate the development of children's communication skills. A major strength is the very good quality teaching that promotes the children's personal, social and emotional development. Direct teaching is good and careful attention is paid to finding suitable activities for children in more formal lessons, as well as keeping within the limits of their attention spans. The teachers work effectively as a team and ensure that all children in the Reception classes make very good progress.

Personal, social and emotional development

76. The children are happy and very confident in school. Their achievement overall is very good and they show great enthusiasm for learning and display high levels of involvement when working or playing together. The well-organised procedures help the children to develop self-confidence and assurance and to take care of their own needs. They are very eager to explore new learning and make effective relationships with adults and other children. Children choose their own activities and they play well together. During whole class sessions, the children sit quietly and learn to listen to, and consider, the viewpoints of others. They are polite and remember to use conventional phrases such as 'please' and 'excuse me' when making a request. Their behaviour both in and out of the classroom is very good and, although there are a few children who show boisterous behaviour when playing outdoors, it is good natured. Children attend to their personal hygiene appropriately and independently tackle jobs such as undressing and changing into their physical education kit for lessons. The children want to learn and talk happily about what they are doing.

77. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Personal and social development is strongly promoted in all areas of learning and the planning is thorough. Children are provided with a wide variety of opportunities to play and work together. All adults working with the children provide very good role models, always treating each other and the children with courtesy and respect. This leads to trusting relationships and encourages the children to develop an awareness of others and recognise that each of them is valued. In addition, there are many moments for fun provided by the staff, which strengthens the bond within the Reception. The 'Plan, Do and Review' approach to active learning is used effectively by teachers to promote children's personal independence. As a result, children are

actively involved in making their own choices and sharing their discoveries with others. The provision for role-play, which supports personal and social development of the children, is very good and the well-planned range of activities enables them to play co-operatively. The involvement of adults working with the children is good and helps to extend the children's ideas. A suitable sense of cultural differences is appropriately promoted through literacy and religious education lessons.

Communication, language and literacy

78. Children's language and communication skills develop extremely well and many talk freely and confidently about their experiences and the things that interest them. Many children are fluent and demonstrate that they have a broad vocabulary. For example, during a discussion time about the needs of living things, a child put forward the thought, 'When you grow up your voice is a bit different'. Individuals are very confident when framing questions for visitors and make sensible comments about their observations. They handle books well and willingly talk about their favourite parts of a story. Many children recognise familiar words in simple texts and are beginning to use their knowledge of sounds to help them read simple, regular words. Children confidently 'have a go' at writing independently and, in general, express themselves well. The higher attaining children are able to put their ideas into simple sentences and are beginning to understand how the sequences of sentences may be linked. For example, one child wrote, 'I'm eting yummy crisps. I lick (like) thes crisps'. However, there are a number of children who are at the earlier stage of ascribing meanings to the marks they make when writing independently. By the end of the Reception Year, most children 'write' for a variety of purposes, for example, letters, making lists and labelling parts of a plant.

79. A high priority is given to promoting language skills in the Reception Year and the very good teaching ensures that children make very good progress. Teachers foster children's enjoyment of spoken language effectively by responding positively and posing questions. Activities are carefully planned to encourage children to use their language skills in many situations. For example, during a very good literacy lesson, a carefully wrapped box with a set of shiny objects inside, stimulated a child to use her language to re-create the role of her teacher, which she did very effectively. The literacy work is well structured and closely linked to active tasks that are well suited to the needs of the children. The teachers have high expectations of the quality of work that can be achieved and, as a result, many children are at the stage when they write unaided and read independently. Handwriting lessons are well linked to the teaching of common spelling patterns. Within the role-play areas, children also have the opportunity to carry out 'pretend' writing activities and practise their writing skills. Through effective interaction with adults, all children extend their communication, language and literacy skills well.

Mathematical development

80. Children make good progress in their mathematical development and many children are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception Year. In numeracy, most children have gained sufficient knowledge to add and subtract two numbers when solving problems that involve ten objects and many are familiar with numbers beyond to 20. Their use and understanding of everyday words, such as 'one more' and 'one less' when talking about numbers are well developed. They use language such as 'shorter' and 'taller' to compare their height with others and identify objects that are heavy and light. The children recognise and name a triangle, circle, square and rectangle and make pictures using the different shapes. When talking about the passage of time, they use terms such as 'before/after' and 'later/earlier'. The classroom is used well to display numbers and to encourage children to develop their mathematical ideas through play situations.

81. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers seize every opportunity to enable children to apply their developing knowledge and understanding through practical activities that make learning fun. For example, when introducing children to the idea of reading o'clock time, the teachers used a clock bingo game where the children had to roll the dice and move the hands of a clock round to match the number on the dice. After reading the o'clock time, the children had to place

a counter on their bingo cards. This not only reinforced their number recognition, but also helped to develop their vocabulary and their social skills. The work is well planned with clear learning intentions and resources are carefully prepared and organised. Through the different activities provided, the children are constantly encouraged to discuss and develop their understanding of numbers. All adults working with the children encourage children to become mathematicians by using their growing understanding to solve problems. The work is well developed throughout the year and many children are able to record their numbers unaided with reasonable accuracy by the time they enter Year 1.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

82. Children have a good level of general knowledge on starting school. They show curiosity in their surroundings and are eager to explore, investigate and ask questions. Teachers build effectively on their knowledge, helping them to learn more about the world. As a result of the good quality teaching, the children achieve well and, in many aspects, they make rapid progress. Consequently, most children are well on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals. The activities are well planned and organised to provide children with a wide range of opportunities that develop their understanding of the world in which they live. For example, they have had visits from the fire brigade, a road safety officer and, as part of their seaside day in school, they invited an ice-cream man in. There is a good emphasis on the provision of first hand experiences and children are encouraged to be observant and describe what they see. For instance, a discovery table is provided, which has a variety of activities for the children to investigate. This has involved children in exploring batteries, wires and bulbs and in growing seeds.

83. In science activities, the children achieve particularly well. They identify the main external parts of plants, draw simple pictures to show the growth of a sunflower and know that plants need water and light to grow. They carry out an investigation with toy cars rolled down a ramp and talk about where they might stop. With support, they recorded their results by using a stamp to mark the distance the cars travelled. In work related to history, the children gain an increasing understanding of change over time by looking at photographs of themselves as babies and as school children. They find out about the past beyond their living memory by asking their parents about the toys they played with as children. Most children have gained sufficient knowledge of their own locality and beyond to use it in role-play. For example, when playing outdoors, a child stated, ' I'm just going to work in London. Gillingham first, then Chatham after Rochester.'

84. A wide range of construction toys and materials are provided for the children to explore and use their skills to make models. They use a range of simple tools and techniques well to cut, shape and join materials to make models such as boats and garages with recycled materials. When using constructional equipment, they frequently make items based on their own experiences. Many children confidently and independently use the computer mouse to click on icons when working at the computer and are able to change the colours and tools when using a paint program. Children's awareness of cultural differences is appropriately enhanced through stories and special events such as the celebration of the Hindu festival of Diwali. A strong sense of their own religious customs is well promoted through religious education lessons. Discussion and role-play are used extremely well for children to reflect on their feelings and to consider the needs of others.

Physical development.

85. Children's achievement is good. Teaching is good and there are particular strengths in the physical education lessons. This means that children participate fully in lessons and learn to respond quickly to instructions. In a very good lesson observed in the hall, the teacher demonstrated very good skills relating to the careful management of children and the teaching of techniques to help children develop greater control of a ball. In this lesson, the children learnt how to bounce and catch the ball and, with practice, by the end of the lesson, many children managed to pat the ball more than once and keep it under control as they moved round the hall.

86. The outdoor play area adjoining the classroom is well resourced and is used effectively to promote children's physical development. They successfully negotiate an obstacle course on the tricycles and scooters and clamber confidently over and under the equipment. Staff make good use of the time outdoors and the very attractive covered area enables the space to be used throughout the year.

87. Within the classroom, the children have frequent opportunities to develop their finer manipulative skills in most aspects of the indoor curriculum. They make good progress in this aspect of learning and develop increasing hand control in the use of a range of tools. Most children competently pick up small items of equipment when engaging in play activities and making models. They show increasing dexterity when cutting with scissors, using brushes for painting and pencils for writing. Consequently, by the time the children enter Year 1, they are able to handle tools and materials effectively and safely.

Creative development

88. A good range of activities with well focused support from adults and encouragement mean that children make good progress in developing their creative skills and are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception Year. Children use paint imaginatively with a good range of colours. There are good examples of their paintings on display where the children have painted brightly coloured sunflowers based on the work of Van Gogh. They weave skilfully with strips of paper and make interesting models from boxes. As a part of the 'Plan, Do and Review' time used by teachers, the children are encouraged to evaluate their own and others' work. A particular strength in the children's creative development is their imaginative role-play. This they thoroughly enjoy and readily talk about what they are doing, whether it is in the class 'Garden Centre' or outdoors in the house. Although no music lessons were observed, the children learn a suitable range of songs by heart and happily participate in the singing of songs during whole school assemblies.

89. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Role-play opportunities are carefully planned and enable children to act out situations that fire their imagination, as seen in a literacy lesson and as part of the stimulating group activities that are offered to the children. This is well structured and supported by the sensitive intervention of all adults.

ENGLISH

90. In all aspects of English, standards in Year 2 are above average. This is a significant improvement from the previous inspection in 2001 when standards were average in speaking and reading and below average in listening and writing. The judgements of the current inspection are also much very higher than the standards reached in the national tests and assessments for Year 2 pupils in 2002 when pupils' results were well below average in both reading and writing. In the previous inspection, progress in speaking and reading was satisfactory throughout the school. Pupils in Year 2 made satisfactory progress in lessons but progress was unsatisfactory over time in listening and writing. Attainment was well below average in Year 1 where pupils made unsatisfactory progress in listening and writing. All pupils in Years 1 and 2, including those with special educational needs, the few whose first language is not English and more able pupils, now achieve well in all aspects of the subject as they move through the school.

91. This marked improvement is due to the school's determination and commitment in addressing the key issue for action from the last inspection which was to raise attainment in English. The development of language now has a high profile in the school. There has been an intensive focus on aspects such as listening skills, raising teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement, increasing purposeful opportunities for writing and extending pupils' use of interesting vocabulary. Staff work together as a team and are constantly examining their own practices, reviewing initiatives and assessing the impact of their work on how pupils learn. More rigorous analysis of assessment data, scrutiny of pupils' writing and careful tracking procedures mean that areas of concern are identified

and are addressed through planned programmes of action. These systems mean that the school has an accurate profile of each pupil's past, present and predicted performance and teachers draw on this in planning to meet individual learning needs. The co-ordinator plays a pivotal role in bringing about improvement through monitoring and evaluating all aspects of English and has the vision and expertise to develop the subject. The successful adaptation of the National Literacy Strategy to the particular needs of the school and the introduction of individual and group target setting in literacy have also had a significant influence on driving standards upwards.

92. In Year 2, pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average. They are given many opportunities through discussion, assemblies and activities such as role play, freeze framing and hot seating to develop their confidence as speakers and communicators. Teachers also stress the importance of active listening and reinforce this consistently. As a result, most pupils speak confidently and audibly, answer questions appropriately and offer opinions freely yet thoughtfully. However, a few draw on a limited range of language structures and vocabulary and are unable to develop their ideas in any detail. Pupils especially enjoy the rhythm and sound of expressive language. In one lesson, they laughed with delight as they chorused the refrain from their book *Suddenly*. Most pupils are attentive and responsive listeners and this helps them to grasp new ideas and information quickly and apply it to their work. They listen closely to teachers' explanations and instructions so that they know what is expected of them and settle to work without delay. In the last inspection, it was reported that pupils had weak listening skills in both year groups. Pupils also love hearing stories, rhymes and poems. In a literacy lesson, they were spellbound as they listened to the teacher's clear and expressive reading of *The Huge Bag of Worries*. Afterwards, when playing 'Decision Alley', they offered their ideas readily in well formed sentences and their comments were thoughtful and constructive. As a result, pupils made good progress in considering and understanding someone's feelings from looking at the text. They also realised the importance of taking turns in speaking and valuing the contributions of others.

93. Reading skills are also above average in Year 2. Many pupils read with confidence, fluency and accuracy and cheerfully talk about how they practise their skills at home. Most of them carefully use their knowledge of letters, sounds and the context to help them tackle unknown words. More able pupils attempt relatively difficult words and read with few hesitations. Less able pupils make good attempts to read repetitive texts but often require prompting to sound out words. Teachers are aware of the importance of intonation and inflection in their reading to engage pupils' interest and provide a good model for them. However, they do not always ensure that all pupils take a full part in class reading or emphasise that they must use their voices expressively to bring the text alive. As a result, a large number of fluent readers lack expression and an awareness of how the quality of the voice can affect the enjoyment of the listener. Teachers also make good use of the shared text in the literacy hour to encourage pupils to share their ideas about the reading and to extend vocabulary. In spite of this, pupils are reluctant to talk about simple aspects of stories they have enjoyed or to identify favourite books and authors. Few are aware of how they can locate simple information in non-fiction books. This was not the case at the previous inspection. The school has placed a strong emphasis on the development of guided reading and groups are generally organised satisfactorily. Those pupils in the focus groups led by the teacher or teaching assistant, and those engaged in activities such as structured writing, make good progress in developing skills. However, other pupils lack direction and become distracted so that they do not make the best possible progress.

94. Standards in writing are above average in Year 2. Most pupils have a good awareness of the structure of a story and are given plenty of opportunities to write in a variety of styles including instructions, descriptions, retelling of traditional tales, book reviews, speech bubbles and letters. They know how to improve simple sentences with descriptive words and connectives to develop a more exciting story line. More able pupils use lively language and fill their stories with vivid images. They project their imaginations into such work as 'In the deep, blue sea...'. Less able pupils can write simple phrases and sentences but they use a narrow range of words and cannot sustain their ideas.

Pupils' enjoyment of adventurous language is clear from the fantasy worlds they have created based on *The Rainbow Fish*, Beach Counting poems and outlines of Jenny's feelings from *The Huge Bag of Worries*. Pupils also like experimenting with language in 'Word of the Week' and their contributions are bold and imaginative. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of capital letters and full stops and make effective use of their knowledge of phonics, and increasing awareness of spelling patterns, to help them spell simple familiar words accurately. The handwriting of some pupils is clearly formed and joined but others have limited control over the size and shape of letters. In general, pupils do not take enough pride in the presentation of their work.

95. In all classes, standards in literacy are the same as those found in English and the development of literacy skills across the curriculum is satisfactory. For example, in geography, pupils write about how the weather can affect the environment and write up their investigations of the wind as a force in science. They use musical language effectively to show how a composer can create mood and atmosphere and write a letter to the Good Samaritan in religious education. In the lessons seen, information and communication technology was used satisfactorily in the subject to develop word processing and editing skills. However, the analysis of pupils' work in English using information and communication technology indicated limited output and weaknesses in skills, presentation and spelling.

96. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in English is good. The teaching of basic skills is also good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when it was good in Year 2 and the Reception/Year 1 class but unsatisfactory in the Year 1 class. All teachers are aware of the importance of integrating speaking, listening, reading and writing into a coherent approach to extend pupils' understanding and appreciation of language. They draw effectively upon a range of rich stories to encourage discussion and broaden pupils' vocabulary. In a literacy lesson, the teacher's vividly expressive reading of *Suddenly* by Colin McNaughton stimulated an imaginative response in pupils so that they were able to talk about their ideas of events in the story and predict possible outcomes before they started writing. Teachers' good subject knowledge means that explanations are accurate and in depth, presentations are lively and stylish and constructive links are made between subjects. In one lesson, the teacher's good command of the subject enabled pupils to identify the internal rhyme scheme in the poem and the impact it created. Linked to this expertise are teachers' skills in asking questions which make pupils think more precisely about what they want to say or write and how to frame their ideas. In the same lesson when pupils were exploring the poem 'Jetsam', the teacher's perceptive questioning made pupils think deeply before describing a wintry beach.

97. Teachers' relaxed and natural control of pupils creates a happy, safe yet stimulating environment where pupils feel valued, fairly treated and keen to do their best. A Year 1 and 2 teacher drew skilfully upon her close rapport with pupils as they examined the character's emotions in *A Huge Bag of Worries* and elicited some very thoughtful responses. Fundamental to this good teaching are the joint planning sessions so that teachers share their skills and experience to meet the very wide-ranging needs of pupils of different ages and abilities in the mixed age classes. More able pupils are now encouraged to be adventurous in their learning which was not the case at the last inspection.

98. Teachers generally move lessons along well but, occasionally, the pace flags because of some repetition and overlong discussion and questioning. As a result, pupils relax into a comfortable rate of working and the momentum of the lesson is lost. Teachers communicate learning objectives at the beginning of lessons which helps pupils to work with a sense of purpose but they do not always give clear and consistent expectations for the quality, organisation and presentation of pupils' work. Such lack of rigour undermines pupils' learning.

99. The subject is very well led. Priorities for development are appropriate. Resources are satisfactory. Good assessment procedures ensure that teachers base their planning on a thorough knowledge of pupils' needs and capabilities. Individual writing and group reading targets help teachers and pupils to focus on specific skills needed to move on to the next stage. Teachers' marking is clear

and constructive and encourages pupils to think carefully about how they can improve their work. The profile of the subject is raised effectively by Book Week, Arts Week, authors, storytellers and the Family Literacy Project. English makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development when they write about their fantasy worlds, share ideas with talk partners, discuss moral questions in stories and examine environmental issues in their writing about the seaside.

MATHEMATICS

100. Standards in Year 2 are above average. This is a significant improvement on the findings of the school's 2001 inspection when standards were judged to be below average and on the standards reached by the pupils in the 2002 national tests. The improvement is due to the fact that the quality of teaching and learning is now consistently good. In 2001, it was judged to be good in two classes but unsatisfactory in the Year 1 class. The improvement is also the result of specific actions taken by the school to raise standards in mathematics. These include revising curricular planning in the subject so that the needs of Year 1 and Year 2 are fully met in the mixed aged group classes. In addition, teaching and learning have been rigorously monitored and developed by both the headteacher and the co-ordinator. Furthermore, assessment procedures and the use of assessment information have been refined to ensure that all pupils are given work that is both challenging and attainable. More able pupils have also been given additional support to make sure that they reach the highest standards they are capable of attaining. The result of these actions is that all pupils achieve well in mathematics. No differences in the attainment of boys and girls were seen.

101. The school's good implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has also assisted the pupils' progress well. Mental activities interest the pupils and challenge them. They are keen to take part in these sessions and are able to explain how they arrive at their answers. Teachers explain the objectives of lessons well and make sure that the pupils understand. A particular strength is the way in which group work provides accurately for the needs of pupils of differing ages and abilities. This also allows them to work together well when appropriate and thus promotes their social development. Teachers and teaching assistants have received suitable additional training in making effective use of the discussions at the end of numeracy lessons.

102. Pupils show particular strength in their understanding of number work. For example, most understand simple fractions, can work out whole number problems involving multiplication and division, mentally add or subtract two digit numbers and, in writing, carry out these process with three digit numbers. In their work on shape, space and measures, pupils successfully use metric units in the context of length, capacity, weight and time. The pupils' use and application of mathematics are the weaker aspects of the subject and the school has plans to raise standards in this aspect of the subject. This was also recognised as a less well developed aspect of the mathematics curriculum by the school's last inspection. There was clear evidence that pupils could solve simple problems involving, for example, number and money. However, there was little evidence that pupils tried different approaches to solve a problem or showed understanding of a problem by producing their own examples. In addition, pupils' mathematical vocabulary is not always fully developed.

103. There was some evidence of the use of information and communication technology in the subject. Pupils said that they had produced a pictogram using information and communication technology. However, this is not widespread and is recognised by the school as another area for further development. This was also a comparative weakness when the school was inspected in 2001. Again, some use of mathematics was seen in subjects such as science but the application of these skills was less evident in areas like physical education.

104. The quality of teaching and learning is good. A good Year 1/2 lesson involving problem solving exemplified the overall good quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 and the effective way in which the school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy. The lesson started well with a brisk mental activity in which the pupils counted in tens and fives. These skills were developed by a number game in which the pupils devised ways of matching numbers to those on a cardboard

man's body so that, eventually, he was removed from the board. A good teaching point was the pupils had to explain their thought processes in deciding how to match the numbers. The teaching assistant provided good assistance to help a pupil with special educational needs to focus during this period. The main task of the lesson was carefully explained to the pupils who listened well and fully understood what they had to do. Good use was made of resources to help the pupils add money. The teacher quickly spotted when pupils had difficulty doubling 15 and explained the process carefully. There was also a good discussion of the four basic rules of number and a limited extension of the pupils' mathematical vocabulary. Group work was well matched to the needs of pupils of varied abilities and to the needs of those in Year 1 and Year 2. Both the teacher and the teaching assistant supported the pupils well in the group work. However, this work proceeded at a leisurely pace especially for those pupils working independently.

105. The subject has made a very good improvement since the school's last inspection. Standards have risen significantly because of the well planned steps taken by the school. These include monitoring teaching and learning very effectively, improving assessment procedures and catering more effectively for more able pupils. There has also been a deliberate attempt to match teaching styles to the needs of the pupils whom the school has recognised as responding more favourably to active and visual teaching. This is the result of very good management of the subject and the very good support provided by the headteacher. The co-ordinator has a suitable action plan for the further development of mathematics. Learning resources in mathematics are satisfactory.

SCIENCE

106. Overall, pupils in Year 2 attain above average standards in science. This shows a good improvement on the findings of the school's previous inspection when standards were judged to be in line with the national averages. In the 2002 end of key stage assessments made by teachers, standards were below the national average. Pupils' standards at Level 3 were judged to be average. The main reason for the improvement is the school's effective concentration on raising standards and, in particular, pupils are now given the opportunity to extend their investigative skills by finding the answers to questions for themselves. At the time of the last inspection, this was identified as an important weakness throughout the school. The achievements of virtually all pupils are good. Pupils with special educational needs and the few pupils who do not have English as their first language achieve well because they receive the appropriate support from their class teachers. Pupils who are more able achieve well because teachers have increased the amount of challenging work they are given. No significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls were observed. The strengths of pupils' achievement include their knowledge and understanding of forces and living things. Comparative weaknesses include the use of measurements in their science work and using information and communication technology to record their observations.

107. The quality of teaching and learning is good and promotes good achievement. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the school was last inspected. Lessons are now planned well, with teachers making good use of practical activities. Teachers have good subject knowledge and provide clear introductions to their lessons. The objectives of the lessons are discussed with the pupils so they knew what they are supposed to learn and questions are used to make the pupils apply intellectual effort and to think for themselves. Teachers are careful to emphasise the correct scientific terminology and this helps pupils to a greater understanding. The management of pupils in all lessons observed was good and promoted a good working atmosphere. Pupils show considerable interest in science, having consistently good attitudes and this helps them to learn more quickly. In the last inspection, it was said that pupils in Year 1 and 2 lacked independence and found it difficult to carry out investigations without a high level of adult support. There has been a significant improvement in this aspect of science and all pupils are now able to carry out a practical investigation with confidence and use their scientific knowledge appropriately to draw conclusions.

108. The lessons observed in all three Year 1 / 2 classes illustrated several of these features and led to the effective learning of the majority of pupils. Through the opportunity to carry out a range of experiments using their sense of hearing, pupils successfully learnt how sounds are heard when they enter the ear. For example, pupils in Year 2 made ear trumpets and carried out simple tests to see whether it helped to make sounds louder. Through the well directed help and support given by the teachers, the pupils made relevant observations and recorded their findings by labelling a diagram of the ear and drawing the route of sound as it travels through the ear. A good number of pupils learnt to use the correct scientific vocabulary related to the structure of the ear such as anvil, hammer and cochlea when explaining the process. Pupils in Year 1 confidently carried out tests to find out how their sense of hearing could be used for a range of purposes. For instance, they listened to sounds recorded on a tape recorder and identified what they heard and played a game that involved shaking tubs with different objects in and guessing what was inside. In these lessons, good use was made of information and communication technology to support pupils' understanding through the use of a hearing test program downloaded from the Internet. Good discussions at the end of the lessons reviewed the work that had been covered and by asking 'What have we learnt?' teachers were able to check that the pupils understood what they had been doing and what they had learnt.

109. The analysis of work in Year 2 shows that teachers have developed the pupils' knowledge and understanding of forces and movement well and extended their investigative skills. For instance, pupils have carried out investigations to find out how the force of wind makes things move and the effects of pushes and pulls on objects. They describe their observations using appropriate terms and make predictions about what might happen, such as how far a toy car might travel down a ramp on different surfaces. The more able pupils show an understanding of how the test might be made fair. However, there was little evidence of pupils using standard measurements of distance in this activity to compare their results. In Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of the needs of growing plants and investigate how water is transported through a plant. They know why exercise and rest are important to keep healthy and explore their sense of taste by tasting different foods and identifying where on the tongue the different taste buds help them to distinguish between bitter, salty and sweet foods. They use their sense of touch to identify the similarities and differences in the properties of materials and can describe the textures as rigid, bendy or soft and smooth. In their investigations they find out which waterproof material would be best to help keep 'Pickles' dry or which would be more suitable for him to wear in Africa. The pupils' written work in science helps them to raise their standards in literacy.

110. Teachers are well supported by the detailed medium term plans that provide clear guidance for the mixed aged classes and ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum requirements. A strong emphasis is placed on the teaching of investigative science. The subject is capably managed by the co-ordinator who, although relatively new to the position, has had the opportunity to monitor and evaluate teachers' classroom practice. Useful assessment procedures have been introduced and this is helping to raise teachers' expectations and support the progressive development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Learning resources for science are good and the school makes appropriate use of a visitors into school such as the 'Quantum Science Theatre Group' to enhance the pupils' experiences. There are, however, few visits out for pupils to explore and find out about different environments. Science makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example, through the opportunity to work on investigations in groups and to explore and experience the excitement of finding out what may or may not happen when undertaking an investigation.

ART AND DESIGN

111. The attainment of pupils in art and design is average in Year 2. This judgement is based on the two lessons observed during the inspection and also on the analysis of pupils' work, evidence drawn from the displays and on the examination of teachers' planning. This is in line with the findings of the previous inspection when attainment and progress were judged to be satisfactory. Although

pupils undertake a suitable variety of activities, they are given too few opportunities to develop their artwork in depth over a sustained period of time. Most pupils in Year 2, however, made good progress in the lessons observed when they were working with pencils and pencil crayons to sketch the other half of a photograph of their own face. Although a number of pupils managed to introduce light and dark shading in their drawings, in general, most pupils found this technique difficult to achieve. Their work on display, however, shows that pupils have developed an awareness of line, shape and shading to produce some good observational drawings of objects such as seashells, sea horses and fruit and vegetables.

112. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and promotes satisfactory achievement for all pupils. Lessons are well planned and organised with clear teaching points communicated at the start and appropriate support and guidance given on an individual basis once pupils are working independently. Pupils know what is expected of them because teachers share the objectives of lessons and the criteria that will be used to evaluate their work. Although pupils are beginning to use the criteria to evaluate what others have done, they do not have enough time to make suggestions on ways in which it can be improved.

113. There is sound teaching of basic skills, such as colour mixing. For example, in the lessons observed teachers' discussions and demonstrations resulted in the Y1 pupils learning how to mix a colour with white to create different shades of one colour. However, the analysis of their work indicates that too few opportunities are provided for pupils to apply the techniques they are learning to create free imaginative paintings. By Year 2, pupils demonstrate increasing skills in printing by designing and making printing blocks with materials such as string and corrugated paper to create simple textured patterns. Teachers plan a suitable range of tasks for pupils that involve the use of a variety of media such as pastels, clay, papier-mâché and fabrics but the work done in the style of artists is limited. There is little evidence on display to indicate that pupils are learning about forms of art around the world. During an 'Arts Week', pupils had the opportunity to work with a potter and designed and made their own clay tiles. As part of this week, they were also involved in making large scale sculptures based around a circus theme and resulted in pupils assembling card and paper to make a circus tent, a clown and animals such as an elephant and a penguin. Sketchbooks have been introduced and, in general, are used appropriately by teachers to help pupils develop their ideas and practise particular skills mainly in drawing.

114. The school's medium term planning for art and design is detailed and has been carefully developed to allow for the mixed aged classes to ensure there is no repetition of coverage. The co-ordinator has been in post for two years and, during this time, has provided good support for the subject and her colleagues. However, the subject has not been the focus for development and she has not had the opportunity to undertake classroom monitoring. Although teachers make evaluative notes on their lesson plans, the co-ordinator is aware that there is no consistent format for the systematic assessment and recording of individual skills. Resources are good to support teaching and learning, although the use of information and communication technology to support pupils' work in art is limited. In the lessons seen, however, teachers made good use of the digital camera as a means to help pupils study features of their own faces and sketch in the matching half.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

115. No lessons in design and technology were observed during the inspection, because of the subject being taught in blocks for half the term. Judgements are made on the basis of analysis of pupils' work, photographic evidence and teachers' planning. Standards of work are broadly average by the end of Year 2 and the achievement of all pupils is satisfactory. This is the same as the findings of the last inspection when pupils' attainment and progress were judged to be satisfactory.

116. The evidence indicates that teaching and learning are satisfactory. The previous inspection found the quality of teaching to be satisfactory. Planning for the teaching of this subject is in place and being used sufficiently well to help develop and refine pupils' design and making skills as they move

through the school. Consequently, in Year 2, pupils make satisfactory gains in designing and can make structures by combining components in different ways. Pupils have designed and made toys that involved a simple winding, spinning and turning mechanism, such as a clown with a hat that turned. Their labelled designs show appropriate attention to detail, with a list of materials to be used and ideas of how the models will be made. Teachers encourage pupils to strive for a good finished product and to assess the result. For example, one pupil wrote of the musical instrument he had made, 'I put black paper to make it look nice and 'drawed' fire on it to make it look cool'. However, there is less evidence of teachers providing opportunities for pupils to consider how they could improve their work in the future. In their work related to the unit on buildings, teachers provide a suitable range of experiences to help pupils develop their ideas, such as using construction kits to aid modelling and experimenting with joining techniques for a three-dimensional model.

117. Photographs of the different models made by pupils in Year 2 show them to be suitably constructed and finished with many of them based on their original designs. There are, however, few examples of pupils using and applying their numeracy skills to their work in design and technology. The teaching of food technology is well planned and pupils are provided with the opportunity to investigate a variety of fruit and vegetables to make a simple food product. Their work showed that when they made vegetable soup, they made a list of the ingredients and sequenced the order of activities. Good attention was given to developing pupils' awareness of basic hygiene rules when cooking.

118. The medium term planning for design and technology covers all elements required by the National Curriculum and the two-year topic based cycle ensures that there is no repetition of coverage for the mixed aged classes. Subject leadership is satisfactory. In general, design and technology has not been the main focus for development for the past two years and, as such, it is a subject being maintained. Assessment procedures are not in place. Although there is an adequate range of tools and materials to teach the subject, information and communication technology is not used to enhance pupils' work in design and technology. However, plans for the future include the support of an engineer from the 'Medway Education Business Partnership'.

GEOGRAPHY

119. During the inspection, it was not possible to observe the teaching of geography because of the organisation of the curriculum. Judgements are based on an analysis of pupils' work, discussions with teachers and pupils and examination of the school's planning. The evidence indicates that standards are broadly average in Year 2 and that the achievement of all pupils is satisfactory. This is similar to the judgement of the school's last inspection when pupils' attainment and progress were judged to be satisfactory. Pupils develop a sound knowledge and understanding of places. They begin to relate specific human and physical features to a given place and understand that other places may be different from their own locality. However, there are some weaknesses in the development of pupils' geographical mapping skills.

120. The evidence indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. By the time pupils are in Year 2, they have a sound understanding of their own locality. Pupils' work indicates that teachers have successfully used the road in which the school is located to extend pupils' geographical understanding of their immediate environment. By identifying some of the features that have been there for some time, pupils show an increasing awareness of what they would like to see improved. One pupil wrote, 'I would appreciate it if some of the plants and grass would grow and not go'. Through their study of buildings, pupils develop a greater knowledge of different types of buildings in the local environment and their purposes. This knowledge is extended to develop the pupils' awareness of different places around the world by introducing them to well-known buildings, such as the Eiffel Tower in France and the Empire State Building in America. Good links are made with science as they learn about the materials that used in the construction of the buildings. However, in this

work, there was little evidence of pupils using a variety of maps as a basis for undertaking a range of tasks to support the development of their geographical mapping skills.

121. In their study of the weather, however, pupils have the opportunity to collect and record information about the weather in different countries and to use weather symbols to show what the weather is like. Their work shows that teachers have a sound grasp of this aspect of geography and help pupils to achieve a suitable knowledge and understanding of different types of weather and their effects. Pupils in Year 2 make good use of their literacy skills as they write about how the weather can affect the environment. For example, they use vocabulary such as, 'calm', 'light' 'breeze' and 'sunny' to describe the weather before a storm and 'broken' and 'bent' to describe the conditions left after the storm. This is an improvement since the last inspection as it was reported that pupils were given insufficient opportunities to use their literacy skills in geography.

122. The examples of pupils' work in Year 1 indicate that teachers use the pupils' own local knowledge appropriately and that they have looked at the physical and human features of the immediate locality and identified different types of houses. Most pupils in Year 1 are developing a suitable awareness of maps as they draw a simple route of a local walk and show the features they pass on the way. They know where they live and write their own personal address and that of the school.

123. The school's medium term planning for geography is good and has been carefully developed to provide a two-year topic based cycle to allow for the mixed aged classes. The subject is co-ordinated by a teacher who is only in her second year of teaching. However, she has an appropriate overview of the subject and provides satisfactory leadership and management. Assessment procedures are however unsatisfactory as there is no consistent format for the systematic assessment and recording of individual skills. Resources are good to support the teaching and learning of geography. The use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning is an area identified for development. The analysis of pupils' work shows that, in general, pupils are given too few opportunities to use their numeracy skills to support their recorded work in geography. The school makes good use of visits in and around the local environment to extend the pupils' geographical knowledge and understanding. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as they have the opportunity to learn about their own and other countries around the world.

HISTORY

124. Standards in history are average in both Year 1 and Year 2. In the previous inspection, standards were reported to be average in Year 2 and below average in Year 1. Achievement in history is now satisfactory for pupils in both year groups as the quality of teaching and learning has improved. Pupils with special educational needs and the few pupils whose first language is not English are achieving well because they are developing good skills in analysing evidence from the past as a result of well targeted and sensitive support in class. Judgements are based on an analysis of pupils' work during the year, observations of three lessons, scrutiny of teachers' planning and displays and discussions with teachers and pupils.

125. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in history is satisfactory although both lessons seen during the inspection were good. In the previous inspection, teaching was judged to be satisfactory in one year group and unsatisfactory in another. Teachers' lively approach to the subject and infectious enthusiasm complement pupils' natural curiosity about the past and make for a happy partnership in learning. There is a strong emphasis on historical vocabulary and pupils show their understanding of the passing of time when they place toys and different forms of transport on timelines. Pupils are developing a sound awareness of how features of life change over time by asking simple questions about objects from the past and identifying similarities and differences between old and new toys. Through being 'time detectives', they have developed a satisfactory insight into what it was like to be a Victorian child and how toys and games have changed. History was brought alive for

pupils when a visitor showed them his own toys such as tin soldiers and cars and answered pupils' carefully prepared questions about the way people lived at that time.

126. Pupils enjoy history and teachers make lessons fun to be in. This was evident in a lesson in which pupils learned about how clothes worn at the seaside have changed over the past 100 years. There was an air of excitement right from the outset as the teacher was wearing a Victorian bathing costume so that pupils were quickly able to identify why modern outfits were more practical and comfortable. Pupils were enthralled by a video showing Victorian seaside traditions, such as bathing huts and entertainments, and made relevant and thoughtful observations about how they compared with later seaside holidays. The teacher successfully built on a topic which had already captured pupils' interest and insisted that they should justify their points of view from the available evidence. They also used historical evidence such as photographs, prints and postcards to help them form conclusions about seaside holidays past and present. By the end of the lesson, Year 1 pupils could select appropriate clothes for a Victorian child at the seaside and Year 2 pupils were able to use a range of resources to design and cut out a Victorian swimming costume. However, in general, Year 2 pupils are not working independently enough to find answers to key questions and develop skills as young researchers, for example, by using information and communication technology more extensively. The range and depth of their written work are too limited for this age group so that not all historical skills are sufficiently developed and more able pupils are not challenged enough.

127. The subject is satisfactorily led and resourced and has made a satisfactory improvement since the school was last inspected. The co-ordinator has a satisfactory overview of the subject although her role in classroom monitoring is insufficiently developed. Targets for development are appropriate. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory as they rely on the recording methods of individual teachers. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as they write poetry linked with their work on the seaside past and present, examine artefacts together and discuss life in Victorian times. Visits to places of interest like the Guildhall Museum and historic Rochester help pupils to experience history at first hand.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

128. No direct teaching of information and communication technology skills was seen during the inspection. However, information and communication technology was seen to be used to support some lessons. In addition, displays were scrutinised, pupils' work was examined as was the school's planning and assessment records for the subject and discussions were held with staff and pupils. Judgements are based on this evidence and show that, in Year 2, standards are average and the achievement of all pupils is satisfactory. This represents a significant improvement since the school's 2001 inspection when standards were below average. This improvement is due to the success of the school's drive to improve standards. Additionally, the lack of confidence by some teachers in the subject is no longer evident. There are no differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

129. No judgement of the quality of teaching and learning was made by the school's last inspection. The evidence available during this inspection indicates that teaching and learning are satisfactory. As a result, pupils in Year 2 show confidence when using a computer. They understand many of the basic operations such as loading a computer program. The pupils use the functions of some keys successfully, for example, using lower case letters and deleting when word processing. They know about saving and printing their work although some need the help of the teacher to complete these tasks. The pupils give instructions to control the movements of a robotic device. They use the mouse controller successfully to draw pictures using an art program. The pupils enjoy exploring adventure games. They know that information and communication technology involves devices other than the computer. For example, they have experienced digital cameras and tape and video recorders in their work. The pupils understand the importance of information and communication technology in everyday life.

130. Information and communication technology is used to support the pupils' work in other subjects such as English and science where word processed work was seen. In history and science pupils were seen to use the Internet to find information about their work and, in physical education, dancing was supported by the use of an audio player. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection when little use was made of the subject to support other areas of the curriculum. However, examination of the work that they produce in other subjects shows that it is often limited in quality and quantity. This is partly because of some shortages of suitable software. Much of the word processing seen consisted of a few words which were often incorrectly spelt and poorly presented. In art, the amount, range and quality of work seen were limited. Use of the Internet is still a developing aspect of the curriculum and the pupils have little experience of E mail. The school does not have its own website although this is due to be established by September. No evidence of pupils reviewing and modifying their work in information and communication technology or particular use of the subject to assist pupils with special educational needs were observed during the inspection.

131. The judgement of the school's 2001 inspection was that computers were only used infrequently and, on occasions, as time fillers at the end of lessons so that learning was not purposeful. This is no longer the case as the use of computers was both purposeful and common during this inspection. However, in spite of this, and the school's above average ratio of computers to pupils, the pupils do not get sufficient "hands on" time. This is because they use computers essentially on a rota basis in classes and frequently only use one once a week. This limits the development of their skills, for example, although they know the functions of some keys they often take too long to locate them. However, when working with partners on a computer, they show good levels of co-operation and develop their social skills well.

132. Standards and provision in the subject have got better since the school was last inspected. This indicates a good improvement and good management. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and has good plans for the further improvement of the subject. These include continuing to work with a nearby school which has Beacon status for its work in information and communication technology. The teaching and learning of information and communication technology have been carefully monitored. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and assessment information is used appropriately to support the pupils' work. Curricular planning in the subject fully assists the pupils' progress. The school has a suitable Internet access policy.

MUSIC

133. Due to timetabling arrangements, only one music lesson was observed during the inspection. There was, therefore, insufficient evidence for a judgement to be made on standards, achievement and the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. In the previous inspection, pupils reached satisfactory standards in music and teaching and learning were also satisfactory except in the Year 1 class where they were unsatisfactory. The scrutiny of planning and discussions with the co-ordinator and teachers show that the school provides pupils with a sound range of musical experiences that covers all elements of the National Curriculum. All classes are taught by a music specialist.

134. In the good Year 2 lesson about the effect of tempo and dynamics on the mood of the music, the teacher's confident, knowledgeable approach led to happy, relaxed music making. Pupils could recognise that, by altering the tempo of *Rock a bye Baby*, it was no longer a lullaby. There was a sense of fun and energy in the lesson prompted by the teacher's lively enthusiasm as pupils, having selected appropriate instruments to represent the weather, changed tempo and dynamics effectively to create its different moods. There was a good emphasis on pupils listening to a recording of their work in order to appraise and refine it so that when they replayed their weather composition, there was a marked improvement in tone and in their level of confidence. At the end, pupils were able to identify the weather being represented, the main instrument used and how changes in tempo affected the mood of the piece from *Sinfonia Antarctica* by Vaughan Williams. This was the result of imaginative

teaching which developed pupils' musical ideas effectively and extended their abilities as well as making learning enjoyable for them.

135. In discussion, pupils can talk about their musical experiences satisfactorily and use appropriate vocabulary. There is not enough individual recording of simple notation and there are not enough opportunities through, for example, writing and drawing, to explore how music can create mood and atmosphere.

136. The subject is satisfactorily led as the co-ordinator's teaching commitment means that she does not have an overview of music during the week. Targets for development are appropriate. Resources are satisfactory although there are not enough multicultural instruments. Assessment is satisfactory with simple, accessible procedures. Information and communication technology is used soundly to support teaching and learning. The subject is enriched by recorder groups, Arts Week, Medway Music Festival and performing to the elderly. Music makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development when they sing *God loves you* joyfully in assemblies, arrange simple compositions together and learn songs from other times about the seaside.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

137. In Year 2, standards of attainment in physical education are average. This is the same judgement as the school's 2001 inspection. However, that inspection judged progress in Year 1 to be unsatisfactory. This inspection finds that achievement in both Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory for all pupils. The difference is explained as teaching was unsatisfactory in Year 1 in 2001 and it is now satisfactory. No differences in the attainment of boys and girls were observed. Aspects of dance and games were observed although the school's planning clearly shows that all elements of the subject are taught. In games, aspects of the pupils' skills are above average.

138. In Year 2, the pupils develop sequences of movement related to a sea story involving movements depicting a variety of sea creatures such as crabs, starfish and dolphins. They show average levels of co-ordination, control and imagination when carrying out these movements but their performances lack quality and poise. Their ability to keep in time with music is variable. Many seem embarrassed when demonstrating their sequences. In games, the pupils show a good understanding of competitive small games which enhances their social development as they learn to work together in complete racial harmony. They show good levels of skill when passing and receiving a ball and dodging and marking and good initiative when asked to devise their own game. Pupils generally evaluate the strengths in each other's performance well but they are weaker at identifying ways in which performance could be improved.

139. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory although some good teaching and learning were seen. This is an improvement on the findings of the school's last inspection when teaching in Year 1 was unsatisfactory. Strengths in the teaching found by this inspection include control of the pupils which generates a good response from them. This contrast sharply with the findings of the school's 2001 inspection which found that pupils were very excitable in all classes and were often too noisy and did not listen to the teacher. Additionally, good use is made of teaching assistants, for example, to support pupils with special educational needs so that they take a full part in lessons. Other strengths include clear instructions, making good use of time and the basic structure of lessons. All lessons seen began with a suitable warm up, development of the main theme of the lesson and ended with a suitable cool down activity. Resources are well used to support learning including audio equipment to support dancing. Lessons build well on the pupils' earlier learning. There is a good emphasis on safety with rules for physical education lessons prominently displayed in the hall.

140. The main weakness in teaching is the failure to emphasis the need for good quality performances and poise and confidence when the pupils demonstrate their work. The evaluation of how performance can be improved is very directed by the teacher and is not sufficiently reinforced by practice. Additionally, technical vocabulary for the subject is not well developed and pupils are

frequently allowed to bunch together during their work as the need to use space well is not stressed. The effects of exercise on the body and the purpose of warming up and cooling down were not discussed in any of the lessons seen. Assessment procedures are informal and, as in the school's 2001 inspection, there is insufficient use of assessment information to ensure that all pupils are fully extended. Again, as in 2001, there is little enrichment of the curriculum.

141. The co-ordinator is a subject specialist who took up post last September. She is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and has made a good start in the role but has had insufficient time to make a significant impact on the development of the subject. Standards have been maintained since the school's last inspection although progress in Year 1 has improved. However, the use of assessment information is still insufficient and extra-curricular provision remains unsatisfactory. For these reasons, improvement since the last inspection and the management of the subject are satisfactory. Resources in the subject are satisfactory and the co-ordinator has plans to improve them. Her action plan for the development of physical education also includes providing a resource bank of lessons for teachers. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching and learning although the issues identified above remain to be addressed. She has also arranged in service training on the use of gymnastic apparatus for staff. The school's small hall (which is also used for storage), its limited outside hard surfaced area and its lack of a field restrict the pupils' opportunities for development in this subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

142. In Year 2, standards in religious education are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection when standards were in line with those expectations. It is the result of much wider use of pupils' literacy skills in the subject and because teachers in Years 1 and 2 share their expertise in joint planning sessions. Judgements in this inspection are based on one observation in class, an analysis of pupils' work, scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils. The warm and caring ethos of the school, where pupils are expected to help one another and learn together, supports teaching and learning well in religious education. All pupils achieve well as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs and the few whose first language is not English take a full part in all activities and discussions and, with careful guidance, make good progress.

143. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good in religious education. This is the same judgement as the previous inspection. Teachers involve pupils in their work sensitively and use challenging questions to develop their responses and their thinking. This means that pupils explore the values and beliefs of some of the major world religions, such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Sikhism, and reflect on how those teachings might be relevant to their own lives. Pupils have examined the reasons why a church is a special place for Christians, the symbolism of baptism and the significance of major festivals like Christmas and Easter. They have looked at stories like St Christopher and how parables have universal messages such as love, family, kindness and forgiveness. Pupils have studied characters in the Old Testament such as David and Goliath, Daniel and Moses and have related the Ten Commandments as rules for a safe and happy life to their own Golden Rules. Teachers also effectively develop pupils' ability to see similarities and differences between Islam and Sikhism and the significance of the Five Ks to Sikhs. This is because teaching is well-planned and structured and there is a good balance between imparting knowledge and providing opportunities for pupils to consider important questions and to make personal responses.

144. Teachers' calm and efficient management of pupils promotes learning well because pupils feel secure and able to ask questions and develop their thoughts and ideas. A quiet, focused atmosphere was evident in a lesson where pupils were finding out about the Jewish festival of Shavuot. Pupils gasped in amazement when the teacher told them about some of the rituals associated with the festival such as the all night readings of the Torah and were fascinated by her explanation of how the patterns on the special bread helped Jewish people to remember Moses' difficult ascent of Mount Sinai. Teaching was confident, knowledgeable and well paced and linked with their previous learning about

Pesach and Sukkot. As Year 2 pupils devised their own rules based on the Torah, the teacher questioned them perceptively about the reasons behind their rules for living. This encouraged them to give thoughtful views and effectively developed their appreciation of spiritual values. Oral skills are used well in the subject; pupils share their ideas willingly and have respect for the contributions of others. Recorded work appropriately broadens pupils' experiences of writing. However, there is not enough emphasis on developing pupils' responses to the world around them and reflecting on the beauty, order and mystery of nature.

145. The subject is satisfactorily resourced. Targets for development are appropriate but leadership of the subject is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator, who took on the role in September 2002, does not have a good overview of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 through classroom observations and analysis of pupils' work. Leadership of the subject was good at the last inspection. Assessment is unsatisfactory as it relies on the recording methods of individual teachers. Information and communication technology is not used enough to support teaching and learning. Visits and visitors enrich pupils' learning soundly. Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development when they write about why love is precious, make collages of Joseph's colourful coat, share bread to commemorate Shavuot and sing *Shalom* at the end of the school day.