

INSPECTION REPORT

MINSTER CHURCH OF ENGLAND

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minster-in-Thamet

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118696

Headteacher: Mrs Joan Hare

Reporting inspector: Mrs Sue Vale
22476

Dates of inspection: 17 – 20 February 2003

Inspection number: 247944

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Molineux Road Minster-in-Thamet Ramsgate Kent
Postcode:	CT12 4 DE
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Dick Stott
Date of previous inspection:	13 -16 October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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9519	Sue Pritchard	Lay inspector		Educational inclusion 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?
31822	Ann Newman	Team inspector	Science Design and technology	The curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
30705	Graham Stephens	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design	How well are pupils taught? Leadership and management
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Minster Church of England school is a larger than average sized primary school situated in the village of Minster in Kent. There are 356 boys and girls aged four to 11 years on roll, and numbers have increased by approximately 90 pupils since the last inspection. It is a voluntary controlled school and as such the inspection of collective worship is undertaken separately. The school serves the large and growing local village community and has a varied and wide social mix. There is approximately 15 per cent mobility amongst pupils at Minster. Whilst the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average, the percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs including statements is above the national average. Attainment on entry fluctuates; overall though for the current pupils in reception, it is in line with what is expected for pupils of this age. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is below average when compared to most schools nationally. This small number of pupils speak English to a good standard.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Minster Church of England school is a good school. Pupils make good progress in their learning particularly in Key Stage 2. This is supported by good teaching and good leadership and management from the headteacher and the very good support of the governing body. The school is also helped by the very good links with the community. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Good teaching across the school allows pupils including those with special educational needs to learn well.
- Good leadership and management by the headteacher and the governing body.
- The school provides a good start to children's learning in the reception classes.
- There are good standards reached in music throughout the school and design and technology in Key Stage 2.
- The school works very well with parents who have a high regard for the school.
- The very close links with the local community really support pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- More able pupils lack challenge throughout the school and are not achieving the standards of which they are capable.
- A more systematic approach to the monitoring of teaching in individual subjects by subject coordinators, in order to encourage the sharing of good practice seen in parts of the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in October 1997 most of the key issues have been addressed. Standards in design and technology and in information and communication technology (ICT) have been raised. The range and quality of library books, particularly in Key Stage 1 have been improved. There is now an outdoor play area for the under fives and this has been extended to other key stages as well. Whilst the role of the subject coordinators has been improved, a more systematic approach to the monitoring of teaching in individual subjects still needs to be more thoroughly developed. Pupils' cultural development has also improved.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

In the National Curriculum tests in 2002 for pupils aged 11, overall standards in English were well above national averages. In mathematics, standards were above national averages and in science they were in line with national averages. When compared to similar schools results remained in line with those expected nationally in English and mathematics, but well below average in science. In the test results in 2002 for pupils aged seven, standards in reading, and mathematics were well below national expectations. Standards in writing were below national averages. When these are compared to similar schools all of the results for pupils aged seven, were well below what is expected for pupils of this age.

By the age of five pupils' achievements are broadly in line with the Early Learning Goals. Current standards for pupils aged seven are in line with national averages for speaking and listening and reading but below what is expected for pupils to achieve in writing and mathematics. Few pupils reach higher standards than national expectations. However, the current Year 6 pupils are reaching standards in English which are above national expectations, which shows good progression. Standards currently in mathematics and science are in line with what is expected for pupils aged 11. Standards are satisfactory at the end of both key stages in all other subjects, except in design and technology at the end of Year 6 and music in both key stages, where standards are above what is expected for pupils of this age. Over time standards in Key Stage 2 at Minster Primary have risen almost identically in line with the rise in national standards. Standards in Key Stage 1 have fluctuated depending very much on the ability of different cohorts. Last year's Year 2 pupils (the current Year 3) and the current Year 2 pupils both started in the reception classes with standards well below those expected for pupils of this age. The current reception children have started the school with higher standards than previously and have standards which are expected for pupils of this age. Taking account of pupils' varied attainment when they start school in the reception classes, pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress throughout Key Stage 2.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils have good attitudes to their learning and they are pleased when they succeed. They concentrate well and are enthusiastic and responsive.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour in and out of classrooms is good. Pupils show a good level of self discipline and understand how to behave well.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils work and play together very well. They show respect for their peers and adults.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above that achieved nationally, although several pupils are regularly late for school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good with some excellent and very good teaching

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school, 67 per cent of the teaching seen was good or better, and of this 15 per cent was very good and five per cent excellent. Only two per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. The very good teaching was seen throughout the school and was not confined to a particular subject. The excellent teaching, apart from one lesson in reception, was specific to one teacher in Key Stage 2. Good quality teaching in English and mathematics, including literacy and numeracy enables pupils to make good progress. Teachers have good knowledge of these subjects. They use good question and answer sessions to make the pupils think and to ensure learning takes place. The majority of teachers have high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour. This motivates pupils to do their best. Teachers' planning is thorough and makes good use of their assessments. Pupils' learning is supported well by the learning support assistants. This ensures that the majority of pupils' needs are catered for; however there is a lack of challenge for the more able pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. This is an improvement since the last inspection as provision for design and technology and information and communication technology now meets statutory requirements. There is good provision for extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Procedures for identifying and supporting the large and growing numbers of pupils with special educational needs are good and they have good access to the school's curriculum. They are well supported and make good progress towards their targets.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language are well provided for.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Assessment is thorough and is used well to plan work to support pupils' individual learning. All staff know their pupils well and this ensures a secure environment where children make good progress.

The school works very well with parents, who have a high regard for the school. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum with a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher gives the school clear and purposeful leadership. This results in effective teamwork by the staff and a joint commitment to do well. Monitoring by subject coordinators, however, is underdeveloped.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities very well. It takes an active role in monitoring the school's finances, standards and the curriculum. This gives governors a good knowledge of the school and allows them to support it well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school analyses the results of annual tests carefully to ensure that standards are maintained. There is satisfactory monitoring of teaching, by the headteacher, but not all subject coordinators have had the opportunity to monitor teaching and standards in their subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school's resources are used well to promote pupils' learning. Improvements to the premises, since the last inspection for example, such as the newly built ICT suite is having a positive impact on standards pupils achieve.

The school applies the principles of best value well. The accommodation is used well and the addition of the swimming pool ensures that all pupils have good access to the full physical education curriculum.

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.• Their children make good progress.• Behaviour in the school is good.• Teaching is good.• They feel comfortable about approaching the school.• The school expects their children to work hard.• The school is well led and managed.• The school helps their children to become more mature.• It provides an interesting range of activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To be better informed about how their child is getting on.• To work more closely with the school.• Some parents feel that their children receive too much homework and others that they do not receive enough.

The inspection findings support the very positive views expressed by parents. Sufficient and appropriate homework is given to the children. The inspection team found evidence to show that the school does work closely with parents and that they are well informed about how their children are getting on.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. By the age of five current pupils' achievements are similar to those expected nationally. However, pupils' standards on entry to the school vary considerably from year to year, and this impacts on the standards they achieve by the age of seven. The previous inspection found that pupils aged seven achieved standards in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science, despite starting from a below average base line. Since then, standards in reading and writing and mathematics have fluctuated and in last year's standard assessment tests, results were well below national averages expected for children of this age in reading and mathematics and below in writing. When compared to similar schools, results show that standards are well below in reading, writing and mathematics. These results are disappointing although partly due to the large number of pupils in this particular cohort with special educational needs (31 per cent) in this particular year, and increasing pupil mobility. It is significant that the pupils in this particular year group also started school in the reception classes with standards which were well below what is expected for this age.
2. In Years 1 to 6, the proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above the national average. In some classes, as many as a third of pupils have special educational needs. However, many of these pupils have no difficulties in playing a full part in all activities. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is below average. The provision for children with special educational needs and for children with English as an additional language is good.
3. At the end of Year 6 in 2002, the school's results were well above national averages in English, above in mathematics and in line with national averages in science. When compared to similar schools, results were in line with national averages in English and mathematics, yet well below in science. In 2002 the test results show that a higher percentage of pupils attain the nationally expected Level 4 in English, mathematics and science than nationally. However, fewer pupils attain the higher Level 5, and this is why the school's overall results in science are generally below average.
4. Over time, since the last inspection, results in Key Stage 2 have risen in line with national standards. The school has recently started to maintain more detailed records of pupils' attainment and progress and these show that results in the national tests are generally linked to the proportion of pupils in Year 6 and Year 2 with learning difficulties and also to the standard which they achieved when they started school. These standards vary considerably from year to year. For example, the current reception children started school with standards expected for children of this age. However, when pupils in both the current Year 2 and the current Year 3 started, their standards were well below what is expected for pupils of this age. Pupils' mobility at Minster has also increased since the last inspection with 42 pupils entering the school at times other than when expected.
5. Overall pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 during their time at Minster Primary, particularly as they enter the school with below average attainment and leave with at least average and sometimes higher than average attainment.

6. Inspection judgements of current standards achieved in Years 3 - 6, however, are that they are above national expectations in English, and in line with national standards in mathematics and science. At the end of Year 2, standards achieved in English, mathematics and science are below those expected nationally; this is mainly due to the lower standards with which this particular cohort of pupils started school. In all other subjects, standards are in line with national expectations except at the end of Key Stage 2 in design and technology where standards are above. In music, standards achieved are above what is expected for pupils at the age of both seven and 11.
7. The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils are fully included in the full range of curriculum opportunities. The progress of all pupils is monitored closely and those with special educational needs or English as an additional language are identified early and good provision is made to support their learning. Gifted and talented pupils are clearly identified. However, not all teachers are aware of the extra challenge that is needed for the more able pupils and so these pupils on occasions do not achieve as well as they are capable of.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils have good attitudes to school and form good relationships with adults and their peers. Their behaviour is good. This represents a similar picture to that seen at the time of the last inspection. Although the rate of attendance of pupils is above that achieved nationally, the attitude some pupils have towards the importance of punctuality could be better. Pupils continue to make good progress in their personal development.
9. On joining the school, most children show an enthusiasm for learning and a willingness to adapt to school routines. They are eager to take part in new experiences and make new friends. The children are not afraid to seek help when they need it and ask questions when they are unsure. They develop an enquiring approach to their learning.
10. In most lessons, pupils listen quietly to the teachers and to one another, respecting other people's views and responding positively to the support and guidance they receive. They are interested in the activities set and co-operate well in pairs and groups. There are many instances in lessons where supportive and constructive relationships enable pupils to make good progress in their learning. In a Year 4/5 mathematics lesson, for example, the carefully targeted support from the teacher meant that the whole class quickly learned to recognise angles and turns in a way which was meaningful to them and therefore easy to remember.
11. As they grow older, the pupils' sense of loyalty and affection towards the school shows in their desire to improve it. By following the democratic process of elections and committee meetings, pupils realise a sense of pride and achievement in bringing forward opinions and suggestions to their Children's Health Committee. They have thought long and hard as to how the school might keep them healthily and happily occupied over the lunchtime period. Their suggestion on allowing drinking water in the classrooms is now set to become everyday practice in school.
12. Although pupils' skills of co-operation are good in most situations, a few struggle to maintain concentration when they have to listen to an explanation that is too involved or takes too long. In these circumstances, they become unsure of what is expected of them and show this by fidgeting and chatting instead of listening. However, when

teachers are enthusiastic about the subject being taught, pupils respond with enthusiasm and when questions are challenging and purposeful, pupils focus well and are eager and willing to contribute. Parents provided a more positive response to the statement *"the school expects my child to work hard and achieve his/her best"*, than to any other in the pre-inspection survey of their views.

13. Pupils' behaviour is good. The school has not found it necessary to resort to the ultimate sanction of permanent exclusion in recent years. Most pupils behave well and contribute to making the school the orderly place it is. Most arguments are short-lived, soon forgotten and sorted out between the pupils themselves. No incidents of bullying were witnessed by inspectors, neither was there evidence of tension amongst individuals or groups. Pupils understand they have a right and a duty to seek help from an adult if they or their friends are injured, unwell or unhappy.
14. Pupils who have difficulty following the code of conduct know what is expected of them even if they do not do the right thing every time. They learn from the majority who abide by the rules and show respect for others. All respond exceptionally well to the high quality assemblies, singing harmoniously and enthusiastically and applauding the good work and attitudes of others. Sessions such as these leave no time for inappropriate behaviour. Pupils with special educational needs are equally co-operative and work well with the adults who support them.
15. Despite the fact that some lesson activities do not challenge the more able pupils as much as they could, particularly in terms of independent research and investigative skills, overall the pupils have made gains in their personal development, which is good. They seek responsibility by becoming Health Committee members, by setting out the hall, distributing resources in lessons, fruit at playtimes and by raising funds for their school and charitable organisations. These experiences result in their knowing the right thing to do, learning how to plan, to think ahead and find ways of resolving difficulties.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching throughout the school, including the Foundation Stage is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was satisfactory overall. Two thirds of the lessons seen were good or better with the majority of the very good lessons and four out of the five lessons judged to be excellent being observed in one junior class. Just two unsatisfactory lessons, one in an infant and one in a junior class, were observed. Teachers and support staff, who are all well supported by the headteacher and the senior management team, have established good relationships with pupils, care well for them as individuals and ensure that their contributions to lessons are valued. Consequently, pupils feel secure and all, including those with special educational needs, are developing positive attitudes that are reflected both in their responses in lessons and their enthusiasm for school.
17. The school has established very good systems to track pupils' progress in the core subjects of mathematics, English and science and this has enabled them to identify areas of strength and aspects of learning in these subjects that need to improve still further. This, combined with the teachers' understanding of individuals' needs, enables teachers to plan effectively and to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are well supported by learning support assistants. However, inspection evidence indicates that higher achieving pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in all lessons. Also it is important that clear and consistent systems of monitoring teaching in all classes are established to ensure that the pace, challenge and

teaching methods adopted in the very good and excellent lessons observed are shared with all teachers thereby raising standards throughout the school.

18. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well in the majority of classes. The most successful lessons motivate, excite and challenge the pupils. For example, in mathematics in Year 2 the teacher relates the rotation of shapes to work previously undertaken on the computer and the movement of the hands of a clock, before challenging the pupils to draw and rotate shapes accurately on their whiteboards. Appropriate extension activities were prepared for the more able pupils and all made good progress having a very good understanding of rotation by the end of the lesson. In a Year 6 English lesson, the teacher creates a secure and supportive classroom atmosphere where pupils are motivated and their understanding of active and passive verbs enriched by the very good questioning of the teacher. Less successful lessons are characterised by lack of pace, low expectations, questioning that does not encourage pupils to reflect, explain and justify and insufficient attention given to recapping and consolidating the skills taught, both during and at the end of the lesson.
19. Pupils are encouraged to apply skills in many lessons. For example, pupils in Year 1 visit the infant library and practise their research skills as they look in books that will inform them about 'home-life' 100 years ago. Pupils in Year 6 collaborate well and record the Sikh principle of equality in their own words and pupils in Year 2 record and evaluate the results of a science experiment in a matrix prepared by the teacher. In Year 4/5, the teacher praised pupils who were completing a woven pattern to encourage good technique. Teachers frequently encourage the development of speaking and listening skills by encouraging pupils to explain and justify their thinking and discussing problems together before proposing a solution. All pupils are developing better skills in information and communication technology and are beginning to apply them in other subjects across the curriculum, producing designs in art, graphs in mathematics and science and word processed pieces of writing in English.
20. Teachers' planning is based on either the national strategies for English and mathematics or the nationally recommended schemes for all other subjects other than religious education as this is based on the locally agreed syllabus. Medium-term planning is detailed and useful enabling teachers to produce appropriate short-term plans that reflect the needs of individuals and groups within the classes. All plans contain details of a concluding session that consolidates the learning that has taken place. Whilst this 'plenary' session is normally used effectively in junior classes it is often less effective in some infant classes and therefore an opportunity to either consolidate or assess learning that has taken place is lost. Resources are generally prepared very well in all lessons. For example, in a science lesson in Year 2 the pace of the lesson was maintained well because of the clarity of the teacher's explanations and the materials for the experiment on absorption that had been very well prepared and laid out beforehand. In an excellent music lesson in Year 5, pupils are very well trained collecting glockenspiels, readily available, as they enter the room. Lessons are less successful when either the pace of the lesson falters when valuable time is lost as materials are given out or they are not matched well to meet the needs of the higher attaining pupils.
21. Teachers manage pupils well in the majority of lessons. The school has adopted a system of rewards that earn 'house points' but these are awarded with discretion and therefore pupils know that high standards of either work or behaviour must be forthcoming in order to earn an award. Relationships between pupils and staff are good throughout the school and this enables most pupils to feel confident and able to

ask questions when necessary, for example when they do not understand either a question or a process. This has a positive impact on learning as observed in Year 6, when a pupil enquired whether 'super glue' might be used to help in the construction of a hat that was being made and this gave the teacher the opportunity to explain the dangers of using this adhesive.

22. Teachers also have a very good knowledge of individuals and they use this to promote pupils' personal development and self-esteem. The learning support assistants (LSA's), give good support to all pupils especially those with learning difficulties. Teachers work in close collaboration with LSA's briefing them thoroughly before lessons so they can play a full and active part in supporting pupils' learning. Several parents and other members of the community also offer very good support for the school and some bring expertise that they can share with the pupils, for example a local artist supported pupils in Year 2 very well in their learning.
23. Homework is set in all classes. All pupils take reading books home and other work is set that usually relates to work being undertaken in class. In a Year 6 English lesson the teacher began the lesson by referring to homework that had been set on the subject of 'fairy stories.' By doing this she not only stressed the relationship between the homework and lessons being taught but also valued the pupils' efforts.

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

24. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good for children in the Foundation Stage and for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. The school provides the appropriate statutory curriculum, including the provision of religious education. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is well planned in line with the Early Learning Goals.
25. The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced and planning is well differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils; teachers' planning is well focused upon ensuring that there is continuity and progression in the learning of pupils of differing abilities. Appropriate time is allocated for each area of the curriculum and there is good emphasis upon the delivery of literacy and numeracy. Curriculum provision for children under five in the Foundation Stage ensures that they develop positive attitudes to learning through play, talk and enquiry. Individual members of the governing body have developed good links to oversee the quality of the school's provision in different curricular areas.
26. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall and these pupils make good progress. Teachers' planning identifies appropriately adapted work to provide for pupils with special educational needs; the provision of extension work for higher ability pupils is a feature of medium and short-term planning, though there is still some inconsistency in the level of challenge offered to these pupils in different year groups and classes. The early identification of pupils' special educational needs is well developed in the reception classes.
27. Planning to deliver the basic skills in literacy and numeracy is good overall. Though standards in literacy and numeracy are below national expectations in Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in literacy and satisfactory progress in numeracy by the end of Key Stage 2. Good quality policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education; these are effective in ensuring progression and continuity in pupils' learning across the curriculum. Short-term plans identify clearly what pupils will know, understand and be able to do by the

end of lessons; however, in practice there is some inconsistency in the quality of plenary sessions across year groups and key stages. As a result, opportunities to consolidate and reinforce learning are missed. The provision of French at the end of Key Stage 2 is a valuable means of extending pupils' knowledge and understanding and helps them to further develop their language skills.

28. The focus upon the development of cross-curricular links and themes in planning is sound overall, for instance good links are made between geography and science and between religious education and history. These are effective in enabling pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in subjects across the curriculum.
29. A very good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum. The school offers a wide range of sporting and musical activities. After school and lunch time clubs include football, netball, badminton, gardening, drama, recorders, choir and guitars. The curriculum is further enhanced by annual exchange visits to France and by outings to the pantomime. Pupils compete regularly in rugby, swimming, football and netball events and they have good opportunities to take part in dramatic and musical productions.
30. The curriculum successfully promotes the school's Christian ethos and the intellectual, physical and personal development of the pupils. The caring ethos of the school lays appropriate stress on the provision of equality of access and opportunity for all pupils and this is evident in its work. Good provision is made for the delivery of the personal, social and health education programme; appropriate curriculum time is allocated to this area. The positive focus upon the provision of health education successfully promotes pupils' awareness of health and safety issues and sex education and drugs awareness are sensitively and thoughtfully approached in lessons. However, there is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning during PSHE lessons; opportunities to involve pupils in discussions of moral and social issues during circle time are missed and pupils do not participate as fully as they might on these occasions.
31. The school has established very good links with the local and wider community. These are well used within the curriculum and to enhance pupils' personal development. From Year 3 onwards, pupils are keen to participate in the school's health committee, which has a brief similar to a school council. Members are elected by their peers to serve on the committee which meets weekly to discuss matters affecting the quality of life within the school and pupils are confident in expressing their views and in reporting back to their peers. Good links with governing body members of the committee successfully promote pupils' social and negotiating skills. Parents play a very full and active role in the life of the school and make a very good contribution to the success of initiatives such as the walking bus project and the various school clubs. The school is a focal point for the local community; pupils are closely involved in local charity work, for instance for the Rotary Club, and these links effectively support their learning. The close links with the church successfully promote the school's Christian, caring ethos.
32. The school has also established successful and mutually beneficial links with other educational institutions, especially with the neighbouring nursery and with its cluster of primary schools, enabling helpful discussions to take place on curricular and assessment issues. Links with the receiving secondary schools are more disparate due to the authority's selection system at secondary level.

33. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Acts of collective worship are well planned and pupils have good opportunities for reflection and for prayer. Hymns are sung enthusiastically and music is well used to promote a sense of spiritual awareness. Pupils are involved in the preparation and presentation of acts of collective worship and are encouraged to reflect on the gifts of care and love which they receive from family and friends, showing a willingness to suggest ways in which they can show kindness and care to others. The structured programme for religious education gives pupils good opportunities to reflect on their own beliefs and upon those of other faiths. As they mature, pupils can compare and contrast the main similarities and differences between Christianity and the other major world faiths; good cross-curricular links in subjects such as art, history, science and geography provide pupils with greater awareness of the spiritual and aesthetic dimension of man and his environment.
34. Pupils' moral development is well promoted by the school's successful behaviour policy and by the strength of its links with parents. Pupils have a good awareness of the difference between right and wrong and are encouraged to make positive choices about their conduct and attitudes. They show respect for each other and for adults and are eager to share in each other's achievements. The value which teachers place on the work of every individual fosters these positive attitudes. Older pupils are caring and thoughtful in their relationships with younger children and they take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils annually raise considerable sums of money for a range of local and national charities, including children's charities.
35. Provision for pupils' social development is equally positive. Pupils are encouraged to form constructive relationships and to work together collaboratively. Pupils work together amicably and fruitfully in groups and pairs during lessons, encouraging each other to enquire, investigate and to arrive at joint decisions. They welcome the opportunities offered to take responsibilities for routine tasks around the school and older children make good contributions to the wellbeing of younger children. Annual residential visits successfully promote the social skills of older pupils. Visits to sites of historical and environmental interest help pupils to identify with the feelings and values of other people and to develop a strong sense of community.
36. The school is successful in promoting pupils' appreciation of their own cultural traditions through its close links with the local community and through its planned provision in curricular areas, such as history, art, music, geography and religious education. Displays of pupils' work contain good examples of painting in the style of a number of European artists, such as Monet. The music curriculum is well planned to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of European musical traditions and the traditions of other cultures. Appropriate care is taken to ensure that pupils are exposed to the richness and diversity of non-European cultures. Older pupils are offered good opportunities to compare and contrast their lives with those of people in France. Pupils have the opportunity to visit France and stay at a school overnight meeting with French families. The hospitality is then returned when the French pupils visit Minster. The religious education curriculum provides pupils with good opportunities to examine the similarities and differences in beliefs and moral values in the major world religions, such as Islam, Sikhism, Judaism and Hinduism.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The steps taken by the school to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils are very good and have improved since the last inspection. The school is a caring environment where the general welfare of pupils is catered for very well in its daily

routines. There are good procedures for child protection and staff are very clear about the responsibilities they have for children who may be at risk or in need of medical attention. Much thought has gone into developing and improving the provision of first aid and as a result, the procedures adopted and practised in school are exemplary. Good systems have been established for assessing pupils' attainment and for monitoring and supporting their academic progress and personal development.

38. The school implements a very good range of practices to eliminate potential risks to the safety and well-being of all. Pupils are trained to keep classrooms and corridors free of unnecessary clutter, teachers do all that they can to ensure lesson activities are without risk and governors carry out regular risk assessments of the site and buildings. There are excellent procedures for dealing with injuries and administering first aid. A good number of staff are fully trained first-aiders which means the provision in school and on school trips is commensurate with the risk of accidents and injuries occurring. All staff know what to do in an emergency and are very aware of the extent and type of aid and treatment they can give. There are very good and close links with medical practitioners and parents of pupils with specific medical conditions. Staff closely monitor sick and injured pupils and make every effort to contact the parents should there be any concerns. Accurate and detailed records are kept and archived on all accidents and injuries. The school is aware of its responsibilities to ensure those with physical or mobility difficulties have ease of access to all its facilities.
39. The school has good procedures for child protection. Staff are very mindful of the need to listen carefully to what pupils say and to be alert to any indication of neglect or abuse. Teachers and all staff working with pupils are properly aware of the reporting procedures. The good relationships established within school help keep open vital lines of communication between children and adults.
40. Procedures to support pupils' personal development are good. A continuing dialogue and friendly approach with parents helps the school have the right strategies in place to respond to their children's individual needs. A good, well-planned programme of health education has been firmly established over the years. Pupils are encouraged to take part in sporting activities and discover the benefit of regular exercise. Aspects of citizenship, healthy living, sex education and the dangers of drug abuse are taught in stages appropriate to the age and maturity of the child. These lessons are used effectively to support pupils' personal development and their understanding of relationships. Pupils' accomplishments and achievements in their work are recognised in assemblies and displays in classrooms, engaging pupils' emotions and a keenness to emulate others. Parents value the fact that the school recognises and reports to them the personal achievements their children make.
41. Good systems are in place to promote positive behaviour with good procedures to monitor and eliminate incidents of oppressive behaviour or bullying. The school follows up all reported incidents by counselling the victim and working with the perpetrator. The emphasis is upon forgiveness and helping pupils amend their ways. Pupils are given suitable opportunities to discuss their worries by talking to an adult in school. They are clear about the strategies to use if ever they feel threatened. This has a positive effect on most pupils' attitude towards school and what it is doing to promote their well-being. Pupils are encouraged through individual and group discussion to show kindness and tolerance to others. In this respect, most pupils develop a sense of equality and fairness in their dealings with each other, helping

them work and play collaboratively. These good procedures have had a positive impact on the good standard of behaviour in school.

42. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. The school keeps a record of the reasons why pupils arrive late for registration but the evidence shows that too often these incidents are explained and supported by trivial reasons. Arrival after the register is called without a valid or legitimate reason is an unauthorised absence. Registers show all lateness as authorised. Little is done to rectify the perception held by a few that any excuse will do as it will be accepted by the school. The school makes good use of the education welfare officer when their attendance monitoring procedures indicate a cause for concern within a particular family.
43. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, and information is used well to guide pupils' progress, especially in the 'core' subjects of English, mathematics and science. In other subjects, the practice of regular and systematic assessment and recording of pupils' progress is at the initial stages of development. There are good assessment procedures for charting and supporting the progress of pupils with special educational needs. The results of standard tests in Year 2 and in Year 6 are both analysed by the assessment co-ordinator, and are then used to identify groups of pupils who will benefit from greater support, particularly in English and mathematics. Also parts of the curriculum which need greater emphasis, such as spelling, have been identified. Good use is made of the group and Individual targets, set for all pupils in writing and mathematics, and these have had a positive impact upon standards. Their progress is measured against these targets. Formal assessment in science has been recently introduced. The school recognises the need to develop more systematic assessment procedures for foundation subjects. Some teachers make good use of assessment during the concluding – plenary – part of the lesson, when they check with pupils how well they think they have progressed against the learning objectives, but this practice is inconsistently used across the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. The school's partnership with parents promotes very effective links between home and school. The value of this partnership has improved since the previous inspection, particularly in terms of the information provided to parents about the curriculum.
45. Parents find the staff very approachable and easy to work with and as a result feel comfortable about contributing to their children's learning in and out of school. The quality of information available to parents is good. The school monitors the level of parental interest and satisfaction in its work by analysing responses to questionnaires by taking account of the views of those who have sat in on lessons, helped on school trips or made suggestions and raised funds for school improvements. Working with parents in this way has helped the school to understand the parents' points of view and deal with their concerns as they emerge.
46. The vast majority of parents responding to the pre-inspection OFSTED questionnaire and those spoken to during the course of the inspection were very positive about the school and its work. Parents have a very good view of the school and what it provides for their children. They had very few complaints and were particularly pleased by the ease at which they could approach the staff and the fact that their

children liked school. The inspection evidence supports the collective view of parents that Minster CE Primary is a good school.

47. The overall quality of the information available to parents is good. The end-of-year reports are well received by parents. The sections on the pupils' personal progress are good and help clarify any mismatch of perception between home and school. The reports contain helpful targets as to what the pupil needs to do to improve, particularly in English and mathematics. The whole document forms a sound basis for a constructive dialogue between teachers and parents.
48. The handbook for parents effectively promotes the need for parents to work in partnership with the school for the benefit of their children. Monthly newsletters and regularly updated information on the curriculum for each year group provides helpful guidance and a timely reminder on the work pupils will cover during the term. Many parents seize the opportunity this gives them to encourage their children to borrow books or visit websites to find information on the topics they are about to study.
49. The school has a number of ways to keep parents informed about its events and activities, primarily through newsletters but also through notice boards and reminders from staff. Parents have no qualms about approaching teachers and are happy to come in and discuss the progress of their children, whether or not there is a problem. Teachers make themselves available to parents before and after school and parents make good use of these opportunities and respond well to the helpful attitude of the staff. As a result, there is a productive relationship with parents.
50. Parents have a range of very good opportunities to enter into a two-way dialogue with the school about their children's academic and personal progress. Most parents take up the opportunities the regular parent/teacher consultation evenings provide to discuss any factors that may be limiting their children's good progress. Parents of children with special educational needs have additional opportunities to work in partnership with the school and to understand the individual steps their children need to take to help them progress.
51. Parents are keen to see their children succeed and want them to do their best. A significant number of parents come into the school as willing and active volunteers. They arrive in high numbers at occasions that directly involve their children such as school concerts and consultation evenings. Their success in raising many thousands of pounds to refurbish the school's swimming pool and their support for the walking bus project are two prime examples of the care and support they show for their local school and the environment in which their children live and learn. The events and activities of the parents' association not only raise the profile of the school within the local community but also provide another route for parents to make their views known to teachers.
52. Many parents involve themselves with their children's learning by encouraging numeracy, reading, singing, spelling, music practice and independent research at home. The dedication of parents towards their children's success is evident in the way parents show interest in what their children learn, consult and co-operate with the staff and respond positively to the good information and the friendly reception they receive from the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The overall leadership of the school is good. The headteacher is well supported by her senior management team and a hardworking and very well informed governing body. Together they all have formed a good overview of the school acknowledging its strengths but also aware of areas that need to improve further. There has been a satisfactory response to the key issues identified in the last report especially in raising standards in information and communication technology and design and technology. Although the role of subject coordinators has been reviewed, a more systematic approach to the of monitoring teaching still needs to be introduced and outdoor play facilities for reception children need to improve still further.
54. The headteacher has secured the confidence of both teaching and non-teaching staff, parents, governors and the local community. All share a very strong commitment to the school and the headteacher and senior management team, work hard to maintain the good relationships that exist both within the school and with the wider community that supports the school so well. The strength of relationships, promoted well by all staff, helps create the very positive ethos within the school and this is a major factor in the management of behaviour.
55. The headteacher manages aspects of the school very well. All staff responsibilities are defined well and effective systems for the planning and delivery of the curriculum have been established. The school analyses results, identifying what needs to improve in order to raise standards and taking effective action. Hence the computer suite was installed and this aspect of pupils' learning has improved considerably. The current focus on raising the standard of spelling and improving the solving of word problems in mathematics is also appropriate. The monitoring of teaching however, is still inconsistent and systems are not in place to ensure that the very good and sometimes excellent practice observed during the inspection is assimilated and shared with all staff in order to raise standards still further. Although the headteacher monitors the teaching of all newly appointed staff and supply teachers, subject coordinators in English, mathematics and science do not observe lessons regularly. The deputy headteacher, who is released from class responsibilities for one day in every two weeks, does not have a monitoring role that is clearly defined and therefore does not contribute to the process in a systematic way.
56. The headteacher supports staff well and, through performance management procedures, ensures that they have clear targets to promote not only their individual professional aspirations and needs but also aspects that impact on the school as a whole and that are reflected in the school development plan. This process contributes to overall school improvement and is partly overseen by the deputy headteacher who ensures that all staff take advantage of relevant courses and training pertinent to both their needs and the needs of the school.
57. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) is enthusiastic and provides good leadership. Appropriate systems are in place to assess and monitor the progress of individuals and the learning support assistants work well with class teachers to ensure that pupils are included well and their needs are met. Training for learning support assistants is organised as and when necessary and this impacts positively on pupils' learning, especially in English and mathematics. Detailed records are kept and very good relationships have been established with support agencies. This was observed during the inspection when the teacher from the hearing impaired unit explained how the very good support given to her by the school impacted very positively on the support she was able to offer.

58. The governing body is informed, effective in fulfilling its responsibilities and supports the school very well. It is well led by the chair of governors who visits the school regularly and has established a close and effective working relationship with the headteacher. Consequently, he has a good overview of systems and procedures, especially relating to finance. All governors visit classrooms, many on a regular basis, to assess the impact of the school's policies, for example either on the management of behaviour or to witness the impact of improvements such as the installation of the computer suite. Governors ensure that the school meets statutory requirements, for example by ensuring that the school not only has a policy for the promotion of racial equality but that it is also applied appropriately. The committee structure of the governing body is well organised with schemes of delegation in place and detailed minutes kept. They are kept well informed by the headteacher who presents detailed reports regularly and also by reports from sub-committees and individual governors who visit the school. They have a clear understanding of their strategic role and therefore shape the future direction of the school very well. The close links that the school has with the local community are recognised and valued by the governors many of whom actively support their further development. One, that is particularly useful, is that established with the nursery school that shares the school site, as the headteacher chairs its governing body and the teacher in charge of the nursery serves on the school's governing body.
59. Financial planning is good overall and the principles of best value are applied very well. Very secure and efficient procedures are in place for the ordering and processing of goods and the administration officer is very clear of her role that she undertakes with great efficiency. She has access to modern technology that she uses well. This is also accessed by teachers to word process their lesson plans and teaching notes. Governors, along with the headteacher, are very aware of the need to obtain best value and go to great lengths, often drawing on their own expertise or consulting the local authority, to ensure that best value is obtained. Recently the purchase of computers and the installation of the computer suite demonstrated that procedures in this regard work well. The school development plan still does not contain detailed notes of planned expenditure and this makes it difficult for the governing body to monitor spending against agreed targets. The governors receive regular reports from the headteacher with regard to overall expenditure and this is monitored well. Specific grants are administered by the deputy headteacher and are used appropriately to employ additional learning support assistants to support pupils' learning and to enable staff to be released for further in-service training. The grant has not been used to release teachers to monitor teaching within the school. The large carry forward is for the refurbishment of the toilets (which took place the week after the inspection.) The school is also being cautious because of the regularly increasing numbers of pupils at the school, it is likely that another class will have to be created to accommodate the pupils and the carry forward is ready to fund this necessary provision.
60. The school is well staffed with suitably qualified and experienced teachers to meet the demands of the National Curriculum and as far as possible qualifications match their responsibilities. Induction procedures for newly qualified staff are very good. They are very well supported and are given one day a fortnight to attend either relevant in-service training or to visit and observe other teachers at work. Their teaching is well monitored and appropriate advice given.
61. The accommodation is good overall. It is well maintained by an industrious caretaker and cleaning staff and offers good facilities, including a recently refurbished swimming pool. The school has expanded in recent years and permanent

accommodation has increased to accommodate increasing numbers of pupils. Space is used effectively overall although some pairs of classes containing the same age group are situated a long way from each other and consideration might be given to resolving this situation in order to encourage more opportunities for joint working and planning. Outdoor provision for children in the reception class has improved marginally since the last inspection but the school has correctly identified this aspect of accommodation as in urgent need of improvement. There is no covered area, and older pupils have to share a playground with infant children and this means that a considerable amount of time is wasted as equipment is cleared and then put out again several times during the day. There is no playhouse and the opportunities to grow plants and play imaginatively is restricted both by the lack of a dedicated space and the lack of equipment.

62. Resource provision is good overall. Subject coordinators are given an annual budget and have a good overview. The ratio of both books and computers to the number of pupils is appropriate.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

I. Improve standards which higher attainers achieve by:

- giving more challenging work to higher attaining pupils;
- ensuring that all teachers are clear about how to challenge pupils of higher attainment.

(Paragraphs 7, 15, 17, 81, 84, 89)

II. Develop a more systematic approach to the monitoring of teaching by:

- providing opportunities for training so that coordinators can develop their skills in monitoring;
- giving them time to assess teachers so that they can provide formal and informal feedback;
- to share the good practice seen in parts of the school.

(Paragraphs 17, 53, 55, 92,102,107, 120, 126, 147)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	94
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	14	44	29	2	0	0
Percentage	5	15	47	31	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR –Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	356
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR - Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	93

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	32
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	41

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	27	31	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	19	23
	Girls	22	25	25
	Total	41	44	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (78)	76 (83)	83 (89)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	20	25
	Girls	25	22	26
	Total	45	42	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (85)	72 (87)	88 (96)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	24	23	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	21	20
	Girls	21	19	22
	Total	41	40	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (79)	85 (63)	89 (86)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	22	22
	Girls	20	17	20
	Total	38	39	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (72)	83 (72)	89 (72)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	237	1	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	9	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	1	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25:1
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	257

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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	3

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001 - 2002
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	£
Total income	738,071.75
Total expenditure	692,210.05
Expenditure per pupil	2148.60
Balance brought forward from previous year	41,873.03
Balance carried forward to next year	87,734.73

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	356
Number of questionnaires returned	105

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	30	8	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	37	6	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	50	4	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	40	16	5	6
The teaching is good.	54	37	5	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	32	20	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	37	8	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	43	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	38	31	22	4	5
The school is well led and managed.	35	54	6	2	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	44	6	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	43	11	3	6

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The majority of parents, certainly those who attended the parents' meeting, are very positive in their views of the school and are very supportive of all that the school does. They believe that the school provides the best education it can for its pupils, and that their children receive a wide ranging curriculum. The majority say that the school provides a really caring supportive environment in which their children can develop to the best of their ability. Approximately a quarter of parents, who returned the questionnaire indicated on the questionnaire that they are not as well informed as they would like to be and they felt that the

school does not work closely with parents. However, parents at the parents' meeting did not support this view.

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

63. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children in both reception classes are good overall and sometimes very good. Assessments made when the children first start school, at the beginning of the year in which they are five, show that cohorts vary considerably from below average to in line with national expectations. Inspection evidence indicates that children achieve well and that the majority in the current cohort will achieve the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Children achieve well because:
- teaching is good overall and sometimes very good or excellent;
 - teachers plan and work well together;
 - teachers are very well supported by skilled learning support assistants;
 - parents often offer very good support in lessons;
 - children are offered a wide range of activities that support all aspects of their learning and development.

Personal, social and emotional development

64. Staff make the development of these skills a very high priority giving children an opportunity every day to choose equipment and organise their own work and play groups. Consequently most achieve well and are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. A significant minority should exceed them. Children are polite, share equipment well and confidently seek assistance when necessary. They speak confidently to adults enquiring of a visitor 'Hello, who are you – what's your name?' On another occasion two children decided to play with glove puppets and one said 'I'll be the mother and you can be the daughter, OK?' All staff provide very good role models, speaking quietly and always treating each other with courtesy and respect and demonstrating trusting and friendly relationships. High staff expectations encourage children not only to show consideration to each other but also to develop a sense of responsibility within the group. During a mathematics lesson the teacher said, 'Well done you are sharing the shapes very well, you are good boys and girls.' Consequently children co-operate and share resources well, clear away equipment, know that aprons must be worn for certain activities and acknowledge that sometimes they cannot always be first and must learn to wait their turn. Opportunities for children to develop personal and social skills outside of the classroom are restricted by the limited range of resources available. There is no playhouse or equipment and materials to encourage and develop their imaginative role play. The school is aware of the need and intends making this a priority for future development.

Communication, language and literacy

65. Children's good speaking and listening skills are not always reflected in their reading and writing skills, although a significant minority read and write very well. Nevertheless most will achieve the Early Learning Goals in all aspects of language with the majority exceeding them in speaking and listening and a minority exceeding them in reading and writing.

66. Children frequently practise their handwriting skills often either copying the teacher's cursive script or tracing over it. Their hand control is improving and many can identify accurately the individual letters they have written. Although children are able to write freely on sheets of paper this mostly occurs during periods of 'child initiated' time and more opportunities to write freely in their books should be provided. This would enable more children to 'read' back their work and also represent a useful record of progress over time. Some children can write their own name clearly but most still rely on a model from an adult to write it accurately.
67. Teachers demonstrate their own enjoyment of reading books to the children and the children listen attentively clearly enjoying the experience. They have access to a wide range of appropriate fiction and non-fiction books and the school has adopted a scheme with characters that the children can describe and talk about with confidence. In an excellent lesson the teacher, learning support assistant and headteacher acted out the nursery rhyme 'The knave of hearts – he stole some tarts.' The children had baked the 'stolen' tarts earlier in the day and their look of astonishment and then realisation of what was happening indicated the impact of the lesson. It culminated with the children eating the tarts and then settling quickly and suggesting some very good words such as 'sticky, crunchy and sweet,' to describe them. These were written on the whiteboard to consolidate the children's learning. Pupils use the computer well to learn the names and sounds of individual letters and to listen to familiar stories.

Mathematical development

68. Scrutiny of the children's books indicates that the majority can group and count numbers to ten and also add sets of single digits together. Some are beginning to record this work formally, forming the numbers well and only reversing them occasionally. This indicates that the majority of the children will achieve the Early Learning Goals in number before they enter Year 1. Lesson observations and discussion with pupils also indicate a growing confidence with number and the ability to identify squares, rectangles, triangles and circles.
69. In one lesson the teacher used a 100 number square and the children enjoyed the challenge of 'counting back' from high numbers in the 20s and 30s to single digit numbers. The teacher then used a puppet that revealed part of a shape from behind the board and pupils squealed with delight as they confidently predicted what it would be. A variety of differentiated tasks are set and pupils complete patterns of shapes thereby practising their sequencing skills at the same time.
70. Displays encourage children to count and sort at every opportunity. There are number friezes, mobiles of shapes, 'shape' snakes, ladybirds with spots to count, and sets containing various numbers. This creates an environment where shape and number are prominent giving children ample opportunities to investigate and ask questions.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71. Children enter the school with a variety of experiences and general knowledge but they are all provided with a good range of activities to enable them to gain an understanding of where they live, people's roles and responsibilities and the changes that take place when animals grow. One child explained with great precision how a bee grew from an egg into a larva and then into a bee 'that makes honey.' A display in

one room displayed paintings under the heading 'our homes are special places.' On the playground some children assumed the role of 'policeman' or 'road repair man' and others using the computer controlled the mouse well and appeared confident. Teachers' medium-term planning also showed that a range of opportunities was planned to make the children more aware of the world around them.

72. In both classrooms, children had access to a 'castle' equipped with appropriate costumes and adorned with flags that they had designed and made, first having looked at real flags for ideas. The teachers cleverly linked language work on the knave of hearts with labelled drawings of castles, art work with models and paintings of castles, and cooking the Queen of Hearts tarts that all helped develop not only the children's knowledge and understanding of the world but all aspects of the curriculum. Discussions with pupils after the tarts were baked demonstrated that they had learned not only about the ingredients and how they changed when cooked but also the importance of hygiene.

Physical development

73. The majority of the children has physical skills in line with those expected for their age and will achieve and in some cases exceed the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. In a formal session in the school hall, the teacher organised the children into groups in preparation for work on apparatus set out previously. The children's behaviour was very good and they listened very well as instructions were given and aspects of safety appropriately stressed. During the lesson they ran, jumped, crawled and climbed with increasing confidence and the teacher used every opportunity to encourage individuals to demonstrate what they were doing to their friends. On the playground children use the very good selection of wheeled vehicles well and co-operate in races and other 'chase' activities. They have access to other climbing equipment but this is not always used and therefore opportunities to extend and practise their skills are lost. Children use scissors, pencils, brushes, glue sticks, modelling tools and the computer mouse with increasing dexterity.

Creative development

74. Children have many opportunities to develop their creative development through role play, art and music although opportunities to play imaginatively outside are restricted. Often paintings and collage work reinforce other aspects of the curriculum such as the '7 shape snakes' or the initial sounds represented in paintings. They paint castles and build them out of Lego. They use the 'paint' program on the computer and make imaginative patterns. They sing with confidence and enjoyment, clapping out the rhythm to familiar and traditional songs that also support chasing games in the school hall. The majority takes great care when producing paintings, models, drawings or collaged pictures. They treat equipment with care and this is testament to the training they have received from both the teachers and learning support assistants.
75. The quality of the teaching in the reception classes is good overall and sometimes very good, and on one occasion it was excellent. This ensures that children achieve well in all aspects of their learning. Planning is detailed, useful and supports learning very well. The emphasis given to developing the pupils' independence is appropriate and effective. The very close co-operation in all aspects of their work between both teachers and learning support assistants is a strength and ensures that the needs of all the pupils are not only recognised but well met in the activities planned. The on-going evaluations of children's work, focusing as it does on those whose progress is giving cause for concern, gives a detailed insight into how some of the children learn

and the progress that they make, enabling staff to gear support to their specific needs.

76. The reception classes are very well managed by the Key Stage 1 coordinator. Good links have been established with parents who are encouraged to share books with children at home. Local nursery schools (one is situated on the school site) are visited regularly and the good induction procedures ensure that children start school happily. A good range of resources supports children's learning in all aspects of their development and these will be enhanced still further when equipment to further enhance imaginative play outside is made available.

ENGLISH

77. Standards of attainment in English for seven year olds are below the national average, but for 11 year olds, standards are above average. The standards achieved are closely linked to the different and fluctuating standards with which pupils start school. Skills in speaking and listening are generally in line with, or above average standards, across the school. Current writing standards are below average for seven year olds compared with those nationally, but for 11 year olds they are above average. Reading skills are in line with national averages for seven and 11 years old. Having come into school with language skills below average, pupils in Year 2 have achieved satisfactorily in English. Eleven year olds have achieved well and made good progress. Good teaching, particularly in upper junior classes and the adoption of initiatives to support the teaching of phonics, have contributed to the advances made.
78. Results in the national tests in 2002, showed that, in comparison to all schools, standards in reading and writing for pupils aged seven were well below the national average. Standards had been above the national average the previous year. The trend in performance levels over the past five years has been variable, and reading 'scores' dipped below national averages in 2000. Performance in writing has also been inconsistent, but in previous years was at or above the national average. In the 2002 national tests for 11 year olds, standards were above national average when compared to all schools, but in line when compared to similar schools.
79. The standards attained by 11 year olds represent an improvement since the last inspection when standards were in line with national expectations. This is because the quality of teaching, which is now good overall, has also improved since then.
80. Many pupils in Year 1 have good speaking and listening skills. This is illustrated by the way they quickly settle in groups for their work, and they know what to do. Year 2 pupils, recalling special memories of their synagogue visit, express themselves clearly and confidently. Pupils continue to develop these skills through the school as they respond to open questions with increasing fluency and detail. Some teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to express their opinions, and to listen carefully to each other. They avoid asking too many closed questions, and invite other pupils to comment upon responses already made. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 worked in pairs, and then in groups of four, to discuss their writing drafts about Robin Hood. Without being closely monitored, they were able to listen attentively to the person speaking. School assembly gives pupils valuable experiences of speaking confidently in front of the whole school. The school Book Week (March) has an emphasis on speaking and listening, and it also generates enthusiasm for reading.
81. The level of standards in reading improves as pupils' progress through the school. Pupils read an increasing range of fiction and non-fiction texts, and they talk about

these with the teacher in whole class and guided reading sessions. This develops reading skills, improves understanding, and stimulates interest in an increasing range of genre. A strong emphasis is placed upon the practice of systematically teaching phonics and other strategies to help pupils read unfamiliar words. The effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, and adopting other approaches such as Phonographix, has supported the development of reading. Pupils' progress in infant classes is helped by the practice of taking books home regularly, and the use of a school reading scheme. The practice of choosing and taking books home, and the frequency with which the class teacher hears pupils read, are more variable in junior classes. This is reflected in the differences in progress made by pupils in class, and sometimes in their enthusiasm for books. Higher and middle ability readers generally enjoy books. J.K Rowling, Jacqueline Wilson, and Roald Dahl are consistently among favourite authors cited. Some higher ability readers whilst choosing their own book also stay on the higher levels of the reading scheme. They are capable of reading more advanced books and would benefit from making their own choices. Year 5 pupils can choose their own book but must change it if there are five words on the first page which they cannot read. The quality and range of school library books have improved since the last inspection when they were unsatisfactory. The infant library has a good range of attractive books, and junior pupils have increasing opportunities to use their library and to develop research skills. However, many Year 5 and Year 6 pupils are still unclear about the reference system to help them find non-fiction books on particular subjects.

82. The National Literacy Strategy is used well to systematically develop vocabulary, basic grammar and punctuation, as well as encouraging the use of more adventurous ideas and becoming familiar with a range of genres. Samples of pupils' writing, and observations in lessons, showed how well many pupils develop their ability write accurately and in ways which catch the attention of the reader by the time they reach Year 6. Pupils have made good progress so that standards which were below at age seven are above average by the age of 11. Good teaching, with the effective motivation and involvement of pupils, aids the development of the good quality of writing. Pupils in some infant classes apply their writing skills in subjects such as history and religious education. In Year 1 they show their increasing ability to use clearly formed letters and consistent orientation, and in Year 2 the accurate use of sentences. Pupils' appreciation of genres is widened by a range of writing: non-fiction accounts of volcanoes (Year 3), poems inspired by Spike Milligan (Years 4 and 5), and myths and legends (Year 5). Pupils use descriptive language to describe a mythical character, such as 'smiling like a snake, slithering slowly' to bring the character to life. Work in Year 6 encourages pupils to use words and a more complex sentence structure to capture the attention of the readers. They use imagination and creative writing skills well in poems inspired by musical songs, and in history when compiling a letter from a World War 2 evacuee.
83. Spelling is often weak, and the school has identified this as an area to focus upon. The regular testing of single word spellings, the use of the National Literacy Strategy approaches, and the adoption of recent initiatives such as Phonographix, are all aimed to help with improving spelling through the school.
84. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning. They are well supported both by classroom assistants, and the inclusive methods of many teachers which get all pupils involved. However, higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in order to achieve their fullest potential.

85. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and often very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, and frequently they maintain a lively pace, and have good classroom management. Better teachers are also more successful in challenging higher attaining pupils, for example in pursuing questions to prompt further thinking. Classroom assistants work closely with the teacher, and provide feedback upon pupils' progress. Learning in some lessons would be improved by consistently sharing learning objectives with pupils at the start of lessons, or stages within it; by being precise in the knowledge, understanding or skills to be gained; and by using the plenary to help pupils consider how well they have achieved those objectives.
86. The subject coordinator, recently in post, is maintaining the good quality of subject leadership already established. There are very good procedures for assessing, and tracking pupils' progress, and using the analysis of results of tests to inform planning. There has been some monitoring of teaching in English lessons, but this has not been systematically maintained. The school has introduced several English curriculum initiatives and it recognises the need to evaluate the impact of these upon pupils' progress.

MATHEMATICS

87. Standards in Year 2 are currently below average. Based on the school's predictions, results in national tests are likely to be better this year than in 2002, when they were well below the national average, because there are fewer pupils with special educational needs. In Year 6, standards are currently average. The school's target for results in national tests this year is lower than in 2002 when the results were above the national average. If two or three pupils achieve better results than forecast, results this year will be similar. There has been conspicuous improvement in results for the seven and 11 year olds since the test results in 1998 that followed the last inspection. The National Numeracy Strategy has been effectively implemented since then and has been influential in helping to raise standards.
88. Much of the work in the infants is completed on worksheets. This restricts the opportunities for pupils to practise setting out work in the conventional manner and prevents them from exercising their own initiative in deciding how to explore problems. Nevertheless, there is a satisfactory amount of work in books and folders. The higher attaining pupils understand the value of each digit in numbers up to 99 and can add two two-digit numbers accurately. They measure objects that are shorter than one metre and produce a block graph to show the most common colour of Christmas tree baubles. The average pupils add coins up to 50p and identify a line of symmetry in a butterfly. They tell the time using o'clock, half past and quarter past but have some difficulty with quarter to the hour. There are also some inaccuracies when putting objects in the correct order according to their weight. The lower attaining pupils add and subtract numbers to 20 competently but they do not draw all numbers correctly, reversing some. They know the names of common two-dimensional shapes (square, rectangle, circle and triangle) and understand 'half' and 'quarter'.
89. The work in the books shows that pupils of different abilities are often tackling similar work. This is particularly true of the middle and higher ability groups with the result that the more able pupils are not being sufficiently challenged. In the lessons seen, this was not a particular issue in Year 2. In a very good lesson, the task of rotating shapes through a quarter turn was made progressively harder for the more able so that, by the end of the lesson, a few could rotate them through three-quarter turns. In a Year 1 lesson however, the quick subtraction problems that pupils had to solve in

their head were too easy for the more able. They could all hold up answers to eight minus two and did not receive any particular questions to extend their learning. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from teaching assistants. In another Year 1 lesson, they made good strides when learning how to add two small numbers together because the assistant encouraged them to use counters and to try increasingly difficult sums. These pupils, along with the majority, make satisfactory progress over time from when they enter Year 1 until they leave Year 2.

90. Progress in the juniors is more rapid and is good overall. By the time they are 11; higher attaining pupils work confidently with large numbers and understand the relationship between decimal numbers, fractions and percentages. They calculate the areas of triangles understand ratios and collect data to produce pie charts. Average pupils work with four-digit numbers accurately and solve addition, subtraction, multiplication and division problems. They list the properties of shapes such as a parallelogram. The lower attaining pupils round numbers to the nearest thousand and measure accurately in metres and centimetres. Fractions cause difficulties particularly when they have to be cancelled to their lowest denominator. The area of work in which standards are weakest is in mental calculations and this is true throughout the school. In Year 4, for example, pupils thwarted the best efforts of the teacher to conduct a brisk introduction to the lesson because they did not know the three and four times tables and could not answer her questions quickly. In most lessons, these sessions to encourage mental agility were brisk but a few teachers spent a disproportionate amount of time on this part of the lesson.
91. The best feature of mathematics in Minster School is the attention given to practical work and to problem-solving activities. In Year 1, pupils are encouraged to recognise the patterns of dots emerging on a collection of T-shirts. In Year 5, they have to find how many matchsticks are needed to continue a succession of triangles joined together. In activity sessions, pupils are properly encouraged to use apparatus when they need it and teachers use visual aids and practical demonstrations to teach mathematical concepts. In a very good lesson in Year 5, pupils used their arms to create a straight line and, by moving one, they created an acute angle and an obtuse angle. This promoted their understanding of this new work and led on to the proper use of a protractor to measure angles. As in the infants, pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants enabling them to make good progress. However, there is still a lack of sufficient challenge for some higher attaining pupils. In a good Year 6 lesson, this was not the case. The higher attainers were challenged to find the area of a rectangular prism while the rest of the class were exploring the nets that would fold to make this three-dimensional shape. However, the work in books reveals similar tasks for pupils of different abilities, particularly the average and more able pupils.
92. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall and in Years 3 to 6 it is generally good. There is some very good teaching throughout the school but, because the co-ordinator has not been able to observe lessons recently, this good practice has not been identified so that it can be shared with all staff to make the quality of teaching and learning even better. The features of the very good teaching are that lessons are delivered at a brisk pace and teachers review them each day to decide whether the next day's plan has to be amended in the light of the learning that has been acquired. They are helped in this by their ability to explain, in child-friendly language, what it is that pupils are going to learn in the lesson and to review the level of understanding at the end. In one very good Year 5 lesson, for example, the aim was 'to learn to calculate the sum of two angles on a straight line'. At the end of the lesson, the teacher gave the pupils an angle - 120° - and they wrote the complementary angle -

60° - on a whiteboard and held it up for the teacher to see. More difficult problems were posed for the higher attaining pupils and she was able to gauge the level of understanding and note any pupils who needed more practice.

93. Teachers throughout the school manage their classes well and have a warm rapport with pupils. Computers are supporting work in mathematics satisfactorily. In Year 6, for example, pupils work on a program that requires them to calculate the number of degrees in angles that appear on the screen. Databases are also used well to produce graphs, for example, of Year 3's favourite foods. Resources are good overall and, when not kept in classrooms, are systematically stored and accessible in a central area. The coordinator has control of a budget and spends wisely. She leads the subject well and is aware of the strengths and the areas that still need attention. Test data is used effectively to identify areas of work that pupils find difficult, for example 'division' and staff meetings have been held to develop strategies to overcome this area of weakness. The school has very good systems for assessing the standards that pupils are achieving through a programme of formalised tests beginning with those taken nationally at seven. Teachers then predict the level of attainment that each pupil is expected to achieve at the end of the year and progress is checked against this prediction. Test data is also used to identify pupils who would benefit from special attention in a 'booster group'. Each pupil has a target sheet, usually kept in the mathematics book, so that he or she can focus on an area for improvement. Many teachers in their marking also indicate to pupils how they can improve their work but the quality varies from teacher to teacher. Homework is used satisfactorily to support work in school, as in the case of Year 3 pupils who kept a record of the films they watched over Christmas so that a graph could be produced on their return to school.

SCIENCE

94. Teacher assessments of pupils' attainment at the age of seven in 2002 show that they attain standards which are below national expectations when compared with all schools and well below national expectations when compared with similar schools. In the 2002 national tests of pupils at the age of 11, standards in science are in line with national expectations when compared with all schools but well below average when compared with similar schools. Although standards in science have varied from year to year following the last inspection, in lessons observed and work scrutinised, pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve standards that are below national expectations. Sound progress is made in Key Stage 2 where pupils achieve standards that are in line with national expectations.
95. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils achieve sound standards in their scientific enquiry and investigative work and there is a good focus on the development of this approach.
96. In Key Stage 1, pupils make inconsistent progress, particularly in the presentation and recording of their learning. In Year 1, pupils know the main parts of the body and can sequence the life-cycle of animals and humans. They understand that their bodies require food to produce energy and promote growth; they recognise which foods are healthy and which are not. In their work on materials, some Year 1 pupils make good progress in testing materials for their waterproofing properties. They successfully set up a simple investigation, understand the need for a fair test and record their measurements appropriately. However, standards vary widely in Year 1; pupils' recordings of their findings are often unsatisfactory, handwriting is not legible, letters are inconsistent in size and shape and there is a number of examples of unfinished

work in books. Moreover, many Year 1 pupils do not provide sufficiently full reasons for their conclusions. In Year 2, pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of the operation of push and pull forces and are developing a good understanding of electrical circuits, using subject vocabulary accurately. Most pupils work purposefully to construct an electrical circuit in order to light up a bulb and are aware that the circuit must be complete in order to achieve a successful conclusion to their investigation. Year 2 pupils have a sound understanding of the effects of exercise on the heart rate and can explain their findings sensibly; they show good levels of knowledge of how to effect permanent and temporary changes in materials and predict what is likely to happen when they apply heat or cold. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils consolidate their understanding of what constitutes a fair test and they can successfully categorise and sort different materials. Investigative approaches to problem-solving are developing well by the end of the key stage and pupils are beginning to think scientifically. Above average attaining pupils are beginning to write accurate descriptions of changes observed, using good subject vocabulary. Recording of learning by average and below average attaining pupils is less secure and less well presented; standards of spelling and handwriting remain as areas for improvement.

97. Pupils make satisfactory and often good progress in scientific knowledge and understanding throughout Key Stage 2. In Year 3, pupils investigate magnetic and non-magnetic metals; they successfully develop their investigative and prediction skills and most of them record their findings methodically. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows evidence of a wide range of investigative activities at the lower end of Key Stage 2. Year 3 pupils learn how to use sieves to separate soils and they achieve some good observational work on the permeability of rocks, making sensible predictions and recording their findings sequentially. Average and above average attaining pupils produce neatly presented and accurate work, often recording their data in graphical form. However, below average attaining pupils have insecure presentation skills; their work is not fully recorded and they do not provide adequate reasons for the conclusions they reach. In Year 4, pupils continue to build upon their knowledge and understanding of forces. They investigate air resistance with an experiment using parachutes and have a good understanding of the operation of gravity and friction. Pupils use subject vocabulary accurately and in the correct context, and collaborate well in groups, for instance to use equipment such as stop-watches carefully. Above average and most average attaining pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a fair test and they record the results of their experiments in a variety of ways, including diagrams, tables and graphs. Year 4 pupils have a sound understanding of sound and pitch and their work on the water cycle shows a secure understanding of the changing states of solids, liquids and gases.
98. In upper Key Stage 2, pupils retain and develop their understanding of what constitutes a fair test and their predictions are based on a greater degree of scientific knowledge. They have a sound knowledge of the organs and skeleton of the human body and can plot increases in heart beat on a line graph. Their work on sound and pitch is extended with experiments designed to test the best way of muffling sound. Year 5 pupils show much interest in the solar system and the movement and features of the planets; they look at the discoveries of Galileo and collect data and information from the NASA Galileo space probe. Above average attaining pupils achieve good standards, their work is clearly and sequentially presented and the conclusions they reach are fully explained. Problem-solving skills are well developed. However, average and below average pupils do not set out their descriptions of their experiments clearly and there are examples of work where conclusions are

incomplete. During the inspection there were interesting lessons in the Year 6 classes which gave pupils the opportunity to investigate and measure the action of gravity and up thrust on a submerged object. Good emphasis was placed upon prediction of outcomes and the need for reliability in measuring in order to reach an accurate conclusion. Pupils worked on their investigations with enthusiasm and used the force meter very carefully, checking their measurements. Above average attaining pupils asked good questions about how the different results might be interpreted. All pupils recorded their findings appropriately in different scales, using bar graphs. As a result of this work, pupils could explain the purpose of the Plimsoll line on a vessel. Year 6 pupils also have secure knowledge and understanding of the life cycle of plants and can explain the optimum conditions needed for germination of seeds. They continue their work on human organs with a detailed study of the eye and the ear. Most pupils work together steadily and effectively, but a minority of pupils does not concentrate fully upon completing the task in hand and is insecure when asked to apply their learning to new situations.

99. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally positive in both key stages and they make good responses in lessons in most classes. Most pupils enjoy their work in science and display curiosity and interest, asking relevant questions and focusing enthusiastically on practical activities. The vast majority of pupils works collaboratively together and produce worthwhile results from their investigations and practical work. Relationships between teachers and pupils are friendly and mutually respectful and pupils with special educational needs are well provided with work designed to match their abilities. They are well supported by teaching assistants who ensure that they play a full part in lessons.
100. Teaching in science is good overall. Lessons are thoughtfully planned and most are delivered at a brisk pace. In the best examples, teachers challenge pupils rigorously, ensuring that they reason out their responses to problems themselves and listening carefully to every pupil's contribution and suggestion. Pupils are made aware of learning objectives in every class and the use of a range of teaching strategies and varied activities help to sustain pupils' concentration and their involvement in the lesson. Teachers question pupils to good purpose and their good subject knowledge is effectively used to reinforce and extend learning. In the minority of lessons where pupils are not well challenged, they lose concentration, move off task and some fail to complete their written work. Most teachers mark written work thoroughly and make helpful and informative comments to show pupils what they need to do next in order to raise their standards of achievement. However, there is some inconsistency in the quality of marking and in teacher expectations of pupils at the lower end of Key Stage 1.
101. Resources are of good quality and quantity. Suitable materials have been purchased to deliver the theoretical and practical aspects of the science curriculum. Though there is more use currently made of information and communication technology tools, this remains an area for further development to ensure that standards of presentation and spelling are improved and to encourage pupils' research and information-seeking skills. The limited focus on data-handling skills and techniques would also benefit from more emphasis in planning for and developing the use of ICT in lessons.
102. The science coordinator has reviewed the science policy and the scheme of work. While pupils' progress is tracked regularly, further work is required to ensure that progress is monitored and recorded across year groups and key stages. There are satisfactory data analysis procedures to provide accurate information on the precise areas which cause pupils difficulty. Some monitoring of the quality of pupils' work, of

teachers' planning and of the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom has been initiated, but current monitoring activities are too irregular and inconsistent to ensure that the co-ordinator has a clear overview of science provision and is able to identify those areas which require further reinforcement or new teaching approaches. Assessments are well focused upon the progressive development of basic scientific skills and good efforts have been made to ensure that teachers provide pupils with challenging investigative tasks and practical activities in science lessons. Some targets are set to encourage pupils to raise their standards of achievement, but this system requires further development in order to ensure that individual needs and difficulties are targeted on a regular and a systematic basis and that pupils themselves are involved in the target-setting process.

ART AND DESIGN

103. Standards in art and design throughout the school meet national expectations, an outcome similar to the last inspection. During this inspection only one lesson was seen in the infants and two in the junior classes. However, judgements are supported by an analysis of teachers' planning, a scrutiny of work on display and a portfolio of work.
104. Displays reflect a range of work, in which a range of techniques including drawing, painting, collage, printing and sketching is used. In Year 1 pupils paint self-portraits and compare new and old houses through the medium of drawing and photography. In Year 2, wax and pencil drawings of the North Foreland lighthouse at Broadstairs indicate good use of the local environment and the computer is also used well to download pictures. Pupils experiment with string prints in Year 3 and in Year 4 good cross-curricular links with history are made as pupils make copies of ancient Egyptian jewellery out of plasticine that are then sprayed gold and displayed well in a glass case. In Year 5 some work of good quality involved pupils making sketches of Anne Boleyn in an attempt to 'capture' her character. Pupils' sketch books in Year 6 showed some good attempts to draw moving figures.
105. There was little evidence to show that pupils had sufficient opportunities to model either with clay or other modelling materials although parents, several of whom are artists, have worked with pupils in three-dimensional work in the past. Also pupils do not use sketchbooks regularly to support them in their work and this aspect could also be developed.
106. It was not possible to judge teaching in the infant classes, however teaching in the junior classes observed was good overall. The very good lesson observed was successful because of the teacher's knowledge and understanding, the clarity of exposition, the clear links made to the quality of African weaving, developing a multi-cultural awareness and the high standard of work expected. Consequently, the pupils had developed very good attitudes toward the subject and were anxious to do well.
107. The newly appointed coordinator is developing her expertise and has a clear vision of how the subject might develop. She is keen to develop further the existing links with parents and others in the local community who have an expertise in aspects of art. To date she has not had the opportunity to either work alongside colleagues or monitor teaching and this aspect of her role needs to develop further. She is able to keep a 'watching brief' by monitoring planning, displays and sketchbooks.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

108. In the last inspection, design and technology was judged to be below national expectations. Lesson observation and scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning during this inspection have shown that the school has made significant progress in raising pupils' standards. Standards in Key Stage 1 are in line with national expectations and in Key Stage 2 they are above national expectations. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2.
109. In Key Stage 1, pupils are introduced to the full range of skills to be developed. They are aware of the need to investigate, design, make and evaluate their work. In Year 1, they design and make houses from cardboard cartons into which they can fit a chosen toy. They work collaboratively to discuss the materials and tools required for the making process. They make sound progress in assembling and joining an interesting range of materials and can make hinges for doors and windows. Many pupils have secure cutting and sticking skills and they make good use of their planning sheets when translating their plans into three-dimensional objects. When decorating their houses or castles, pupils choose imaginative representations of bricks to embellish the walls and use colourful and textured materials to add interest to their models. Pupils are becoming more self-critical of their finished product and their evaluation activities are developing well; they can identify ways in which they could improve their design and give appropriate attention to its fitness for purpose. In Year 2, pupils show care in constructing axles and axle-holders when making chassis designs for wheeled vehicles. They are acquiring a good grasp of subject-specific vocabulary and become more adept in the use of tools. Pupils' manual dexterity and sense of scale are encouraged by their use of *Lego* to design and build houses and castles to house teddy bears.
110. In Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in the necessary skills and techniques. In Year 3, useful links are made with science when they are required to apply their knowledge of springs to the designing and making of a Jack-in-the-Box. Pupils have good quality discussions in their groups to tackle the problems they face and they are prepared to share ideas. They refer to the need to make "nets" of the boxes and suggest various methods of housing the spring so that it does not fall over. Pupils investigate ways of making the boxes and paper springs and their planning contains references to the materials they will need. They make good use of the evaluation process and discuss changes which they might make. In Year 4, pupils design and make a purse out of felt. They produce detailed instructions for the task and give consideration to the relative merits of different kinds of stitches. Pupils try out a range of stitching techniques, giving consideration to the purpose to which the purse will be put but they are not yet able to achieve stitching that is uniform in size.
111. Year 5 pupils have completed a wide range of projects, such as compiling a survey of biscuits. They record the findings of the tasting session and produce a good evaluation of the process of biscuit making and design. In their project for designing and making a musical instrument, they investigate the different sounds which they might be able to achieve and practical considerations govern their evaluation of their designs so that they decide to make a pitched stringed instrument and amend their plans accordingly. Good emphasis is placed upon the need for careful measuring when making the nets and pupils share tools well, ensuring that they follow the set safety procedures when using hacksaws. Pupils show a good degree of attention to detail and ensure their work is accurate when fitting together the corner angles. Pupils work safely, neatly and carefully to produce their frames. In Year 6, pupils are working on a project involving bedroom slippers. Wall displays are well used to demonstrate the disassembly of a slipper into its component parts. Pupils make

paper models of slippers for evaluation and record their learning in a detailed, logical sequence. There is good recognition of the need to produce an accurate pattern of each part of the slipper. Stitching skills are developing well and there is good focus on the correct techniques for using tools, such as scissors. Year 6 has also produced some well crafted work on collapsible structures and on methods of reinforcing structures.

112. Pupils show much pleasure and enjoyment during their design and technology lessons. They have a real commitment to succeed and take pride in their work. Pupils work together very well; they help each other when they meet difficulties and are ready to share ideas and tools. A busy and purposeful atmosphere prevails in lessons; pupils' ideas are valued and there is a good degree of challenge.
113. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and plan interesting tasks and projects which develop pupils' skills progressively and which capture their imagination. Relationships between teachers and pupils are warm and respectful; teachers share their time with groups and individuals to encourage and advise. Assessments of pupils' work are based upon the completion of each project; work is appropriately assessed and levelled according to National Curriculum criteria. Teachers celebrate pupils' work and efforts and plan for good cross-curricular links to be made during lessons, for instance with science, music and art. Lessons are generally well paced and there is a rigorous amount of challenge to approach problems positively and independently.
114. Design and technology resources are of good quality and quantity. They are easily accessible to teachers and there are good safety procedures when pupils handle tools. Although more use is currently being made of ICT programs to aid the design and evaluation processes, the coordinator recognises that this is an area for further development.
115. The design and technology coordinator has successfully reviewed and updated the policy and scheme of work. Useful INSET provision has given staff greater confidence in providing practical tasks and in adopting investigative approaches to the subject. The coordinator and staff place good emphasis upon the encouragement of independent learning and information-seeking by pupils themselves. Standards in design and technology and the quality of provision offered by the school have recently been monitored by the co-ordinator and a portfolio of photographs is kept to ensure that teachers are aware of expectations.

GEOGRAPHY

116. Standards for the seven and 11 year olds are average, as they were at the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school, including those with special educational needs. There is a new, enthusiastic and well-qualified coordinator who has addressed the issue identified by the school of under-resourcing. She has upgraded the atlases and purchased materials to support the study of physical geography, especially for the older pupils.
117. In the infants, as in the rest of the school, the local area is used well to inspire work. Pupils in Year 1 make simple maps of their journey from home to school drawing pictures of the features that they pass. This develops in Year 2 into a plan of the route from school to St. Mary's Church using symbols for the features. Pupils are aware of the unique characteristics of their village and the seven year olds compare them with those on the imaginary Scottish island of Struay. They recognise, for example, the

particular modes of transport that are necessary for an island to receive supplies and visitors. In their lesson, they draw a helicopter, explaining clearly why it is so important to the islanders, realising that such a mode of transport is rarely seen in Minster.

118. In Year 3, the village is again the inspiration for map work but a key is now added to identify particular features. Pupils in Year 4 consider environmental issues and, in particular, the traffic. Surveys are carried out and the arguments for and against banning traffic are aired. In Year 5, pupils study how the land is used: for housing, farming, industry, leisure and commerce. Year 6 pupils learn about the features of a river, identifying the main rivers in the British Isles and, in particular those in the Isle of Thanet. Some good work on the Mississippi was evident in one pupil's book.
119. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers generally prepare resources well. In Year 5, pupils had conducted a survey of how they used water at home and this information was used to consider the plight of people who do not have enough water even for the basic necessities. Pupils were given time to reflect on this and the lesson contributed well to their spiritual and moral development. In Year 2, the teacher planned an activity that held the interest of pupils but she did not provide enough challenge for the higher attainers and they completed the same pictures as everyone else of transport on the Isle of Struay.
120. Computers are beginning to be used to support work in geography. In Year 1, pupils create pictures of houses using a 'Paint' program. In Year 6, pupils use the Internet at home to find information about glaciers. The subject also reinforces mathematical skills. In Year 3, for example, line graphs to show the temperatures in two contrasting places are produced. Teachers are delivering a broad curriculum and are helped in their planning by having a 'map' showing the particular aspects to be covered at various times during a year. There is satisfactory emphasis on developing geographical skills and teachers' plans and pupils' work are monitored by the co-ordinator to check coverage, though she has not yet had an opportunity to observe any lessons. She is developing some strategies for assessing the standards and progress of individual pupils but there is no systematic approach to this yet.

HISTORY

121. Standards for seven year olds and 11 year olds are satisfactory compared to those nationally. Boys and girls both make satisfactory progress in infant and junior years. These standards reflect those found at the time of the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in class, and they make good progress.
122. Pupils enjoy history. Very good behaviour, enthusiasm and a readiness to be fully involved in classroom activities were common features in lessons observed. Pupils also respond well to visits and visitors who come into school. In conversation, Year 6 pupils demonstrated how much their learning had been enriched by these activities.
123. Year 2 pupils are developing a sound sense of chronology. They, like pupils in many other classes, benefit from the prominent display of timelines in the classroom. Year 2 pupils have an understanding of why some people in the past acted as they did. Their enjoyment of history topics is evident in their work on Florence Nightingale and Guy Fawkes. In their work on Remembrance Day many show they are developing a sense of empathy. Year 1 pupils are able to use artefacts when learning about differences and similarities in home life 100 years ago compared to today.

124. There are good links made with literacy in history. Speaking and listening skills were promoted very well in two lessons about Tudor times with pupils in Years 4 and 5. The focus was upon history as investigating the past, and pupils engaged fully in discussions when considering evidence from 'clues' produced from a bin. Year 6 pupils have opportunities for extended writing when they record their thoughts on topics such as rationing, or being an evacuee. Following a recent revision in parts of the history curriculum, the learning for Year 3 pupils is enriched by a visit to the Roman Painted House at Dover, and by a 'Roman Day', which some parents help with. Year 6 pupils continue to develop their knowledge of differences between rich and poor in the past in their study of Victorian times. Some pupils make good use from researching internet sources. Videos are used well to support learning, but opportunities to use information and communication technology are not fully exploited.
125. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. There is some very good teaching in the middle junior classes. Features of the good teaching include the very good use of artefacts, role play, and other methods, which help to excite and involve pupils of all abilities. Thinking skills and enquiry skills are also strongly promoted. Areas for development in some lessons include making greater use of open questions, and providing a greater array of activities or types of involvement especially for infant pupils. History makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.
126. The policy for the subject has recently been updated. The scheme of work is evolving and draws upon units from optional national guidelines. There has been some monitoring of teaching, but the school recognises the need to develop monitoring and assessment procedures that can be used to help plan work, and to track pupils' progress. The shortfall in history teaching time in Year 6, which was identified by the subject coordinator, has now been rectified.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

127. As a result of the last inspection the school was required to improve the resources for ICT and provide training for teachers to improve their expertise and confidence. The standards that pupils were achieving at that time were judged to be below average across the school. Since then, there has been impressive progress in addressing these issues. The school now has a suite of computers in a spacious room that is light and airy. There are enough machines to accommodate a class of pupils working in pairs and each classroom has at least one computer for daily use. Teachers are covering all aspects of the subject in their lessons and are very ably supported by a technician who sympathetically deals with any problems that arise and expertly assists pupils in lessons. Standards are rising. Currently, pupils are making good progress across the school and are quickly acquiring the skills and understanding that they had not developed systematically in previous years. Most seven and 11 year old pupils now display the standards that are seen in other schools.
128. The role of the coordinator in driving forward these improvements has been significant. She is very knowledgeable and, through careful consideration of the types of equipment available, she has ensured value for money and the best possible resources to meet the school's needs. She supports colleagues, enabling them to plan and deliver lessons and providing them with useful hints about the activities that will best help pupils to acquire the necessary skills. There is a proper emphasis on acquiring skills but teachers are also using computers to support work in the various subjects of the curriculum. Year 3 pupils, for example, enter text on to the computer and add pictures to create their own version of 'The Hare and the Tortoise'. Using

'Power Point' they assemble a presentation of the story that enhances their work in literacy. In Year 5, the 'Logo' program is used to give commands so that geometric shapes appear on the screen. This reinforces pupils' understanding of the angles in a square or hexagon as well as promoting their skill in controlling the process by entering the correct commands. The Internet is used to research information, for example in Year 4, to find out about rainforests. The school has a sound Internet Safety Policy and the rules for safe use of the computers are displayed in child-friendly language on the walls in the suite.

129. In Years 1 and 2, pupils confidently use the mouse and know how to log on. Younger pupils import graphics and move pictures to the required position on the screen. They use the keyboard competently to add text. In Year 2, when they are provided with a drawing of half a house on the screen, most complete the other half successfully using a drawing program, thus reinforcing the concept of symmetry that they are learning in mathematics. In this lesson, pupils are paired with someone of similar ability. Those with special educational needs are helped by the teaching assistant and they make just as much progress as everyone else, taking great delight in their finished work. Teachers sometimes organise their class in mixed ability pairs and this also works, enabling pupils to help each other. Pupils throughout the school have very positive attitudes in their ICT lessons. They concentrate well and show pride in their efforts.
130. In the juniors, a greater variety of work is apparent, as would be expected. Data is entered to produce graphs, for example, to show the favourite foods of pupils in Year 3. In Year 4, pupils evaluate the 'tree diagrams' of their classmates that have been designed to find information about them. One boy observes that there are three people with the same first name but, because their surnames are not included, it is difficult to find which one is identified on the database as having a particular feature. The word-processor is widely used to present work attractively. Newspaper reports in Year 6 are set out in columns with a variety of fonts and sizes of print to make them attractive. These pupils also produce a program that will operate traffic lights in the correct sequence. In a computer club held at lunchtime, Year 6 pupils, in turn, produce their own newsletter called 'Chatterbox'.
131. Teaching is good overall but in one-third of the lessons seen, it was very good. All teachers are conscious of the need to give as much time during a lesson to hands-on experience. They keep their explanations to a minimum but give clear instructions so that pupils know what to do. There is the facility to project the monitor screen on to the wall of the suite enabling everyone to see how to operate the commands. Teachers ensure that everyone takes a turn at the tasks. In the best lessons, the enthusiasm of the teachers is infectious and they are skilled at assessing when they need to intervene while maintaining the momentum of the activity. In Year 5, the teacher constantly challenges the pupils to be adventurous in their use of the 'Logo' program with the result that some boys find that the computer will draw hexagons in different orientations and produce a very attractive 'flower' pattern. This amazes them.
132. Pupils are encouraged to complete their own assessment sheets to judge the skills that they have acquired. The coordinator is now concentrating on encouraging the increased use of computers to support work in the subjects of the curriculum and aims to adapt the programme of work to reflect the particular needs of the school more closely. At present, the programme closely follows the national guidelines. The school is well placed to make further advances in the delivery of ICT and the future looks secure.

MUSIC

133. Standards in music are above what is expected for pupils at the age of seven and 11. This is a marked improvement to the previous inspection findings. Pupils really enjoy all aspects of their music lessons and musical experiences.
134. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn to sing tunefully and memorise a range of songs. In Year 2 pupils tap out simple rhythms, using untuned percussion and tuned instruments, and listen carefully to their partners patterns in order to copy. They sing tunefully and enthusiastically. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 further develop their skills in rhythmic patterns. Pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 copy and join in rhythms started by the teacher. As the lesson progresses they get better and better so that they are able to repeat quite complex rhythmic patterns. They add to the complexity of this by singing in rounds, with other pupils accompanying the singing on the recorder. They achieve a good standard, above what is expected for children of this age. In another lesson in Year 5 very good standards are achieved as the pupils play glockenspiels, recorders, guitars and a cornet in eight parts, following musical notation, with amazing concentration really responding to the teachers high expectations. By Year 6, pupils analyse songs to see whether the words of 'working in a coalmine' actually in their opinions 'fit' the music. They give a good standard of opinions with well thought out reasons for their answers. They continue by starting to compose their own rap music to pre-set rhythms, using picture annotation to represent their compositions, and again they achieve to a good standard.
135. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 sing tunefully and show real enthusiasm and enjoyment when singing in music lessons and in assemblies. They are confident and happy to sing in front of others. For example, in one Key Stage 2 assembly the whole school join in singing songs of worship with real enthusiasm and good knowledge of the words. There is a real feeling of spirituality as the pupils sing, and a truly awe inspiring moment as the music coordinator leading the singing invites children up to perform. The coordinator's enthusiasm and exceptionally high expectations of how children can perform and the standards they can produce, inspire the pupils to achieve and reach these very high expectations. Teachers are good role models and encourage pupils to develop their musical knowledge. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, are fully involved in lessons and join in.
136. The quality of teaching during the inspection ranged from good to outstanding. Many teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident in the teaching of music. The majority of staff has had the opportunity to watch demonstration lessons by an advanced skills teacher in music who has been supporting the staff in developing their musical skills. In the two excellent lessons seen, led by the music coordinator, teaching shows very good subject knowledge, very clear and exceptionally high expectations (which the pupils respond to) and this really supports the development of pupils' musical skills very well. The pace is quick and challenges pupils' thinking and learning, systematically building on skills. Most teachers manage pupils well, help them to concentrate, and strive to improve their performance.
137. The subject is led by an enthusiastic and very talented coordinator, who has positive ideas of how she wants to see the subject develop within the school. There is a school choir and a band. Several recorder groups are taught in the school and pupils thoroughly enjoy these experiences. They achieve to a high standard and one group of older pupils were able to play in rounds and to hold the rhythm and the tune to a

good standard. Peripatetic teachers, from the Kent music service, and Music for Schools Foundation offer brass, clarinet and keyboard instruments. These enrich the curriculum by making tuition available for those pupils who are interested. There are yearly concerts at Christmas and in the summer which include a strong musical element, and over time all pupils are involved in these.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

138. The standards being achieved by pupils in Year 2 and in Year 6 are average, as they were at the last inspection. Full coverage of all the elements of physical education is ensured over a year, though only dance, gymnastics and games were seen during the inspection. The older pupils experience outdoor and adventurous activities during a residential visit and athletics is part of the curriculum in the summer term. All classes have swimming lessons in the school pool. This ensures that, by Year 6, the expected number can swim the required 25 metres. Pupils in the juniors have opportunities to take part in a very good range of sports clubs after school, including football, netball and rugby and competitive matches are played. The school currently has a trophy to indicate success at rugby.
139. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. The youngest begin to develop gymnastic skills by practising stretched and tucked positions, combining them in their first attempts to create a sequence. In Year 2 this is developed. Pupils incorporate rolls and balances into their sequences but holding a steady balance is difficult for some. By Year 4, however, pupils have much more measured control of their movements, practising their take-off from small pieces of apparatus, varying their flight with twists and turns and controlling their landing. Standards of dance also improve satisfactorily across the school from Year 1, when pupils try hard to be graceful when representing a floating, gliding 'bubble' helped by a perfect choice of music that makes them feel 'gentle' and 'sleepy' so that they want to 'float'. Year 3 pupils choose appropriate movements to represent an Indian dance and those in Year 6 create a sequence of movements to represent particular animals that they have observed on a video. Three boys in particular create an energetic sequence to represent a kangaroo jumping, each one complementing the others. In a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils practise bowling skills. The teacher gives an expert demonstration using his left-hand and his right so that everyone is included and pupils then practise in a variety of activities ending up with a type of cricket game, where the aim is to bowl accurately to hit the stumps.
140. The quality of teaching varies but is satisfactory overall. One good and one very good lesson were observed. By the time pupils have changed and are in the hall, time is limited, especially for the juniors. Teachers generally conduct brisk and energetic warm-up activities and make sure that pupils understand the health and safety issues associated with physical education but this sometimes takes too long. Nevertheless, pupils know why they have to warm up. A very mature six-year-old says, "Because you're exercising, your heart is pumping blood around your body to your muscles." In the better lessons, teachers make sure that pupils are active for most of the available time and they use pupil demonstrations to encourage others to evaluate the work of their classmates and then improve their own efforts. Occasionally, teachers do not insist on high enough standards of behaviour and time is lost correcting transgressions. Similarly, a high quality of work is not always demanded. In one lesson, the teacher's praise for a group's hard work was unfounded. This was not the case in the very good lesson where correct technique was demanded and praised and the skills of bowling were emphasised throughout.

141. The school's accommodation for physical education is good with a spacious and airy hall, extensive grassed and hard surface areas outdoors and a swimming pool on site. Equipment to support lessons is good overall though some mats are in poor condition and, in one lesson there were not enough for the activities being undertaken. This was being addressed as the inspection took place. The coordinator is very enthusiastic and knowledgeable. He scrutinises the planning throughout the school and has, in the past, watched lessons in all year-groups. An assessment system for judging the standards and progress that pupils make, incorporating some self-assessment by them, is fairly new and its effect on raising standards cannot yet be judged.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

142. The standards of seven year olds and 11 year olds are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. This maintains the standards noted at the time of the last inspection (1997). Boys and girls both make satisfactory progress, and pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
143. The learning for pupils has been enriched since the last inspection by the acquisition of more religious artefacts in school, and by extending school visits to include the synagogue (Ramsgate) and Gudwara (Rochester). Visits, and the examination of artefacts, are successfully used by teachers to grab pupils' interest in topics, and often enable pupils to contribute to discussions and to express their innermost feelings. Further, lower ability pupils get drawn into these activities, and respond well to practical elements in lessons. Thus all pupils are included effectively in the activities.
144. Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils know that they can give their views, which will be respected and valued in lessons. Year 6 pupils were asked what they had gained from having religious education. They spoke about 'being understanding', and 'more tolerant', to those of a different faith. On the one hand it helps us 'to know from our own religion what God has done'. Other viewpoints pointed to how increased knowledge helped interpersonal relationships by reducing ignorance and prejudice: 'If you meet a Sikh, you know how to react to it'.
145. Pupils study world faiths and are always encouraged to consider their own responses to the rituals, ceremonies and beliefs they learn about. Year 1 pupils, studying Hinduism, know the story of Rama and Sita, and record in drawings some of the artefacts which have a special meaning for believers. Year 2 pupils share their special memories of their visit to the synagogue, and many know the names for features such as 'the Torah', 'Star of David', and 'yad'. In junior classes, pupils continue to build their knowledge of beliefs and practices of Islam, Christianity and Sikhism. They increase their understanding of the similarities and differences between major faith traditions. Year 6 pupils understand how books, considered holy, provide guidance for believers, and know how the Bible has been developed and is organised.
146. The quality of teaching and learning is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when it was sound. Much of the work is oral, often using artefacts, and this provides good opportunities for pupils to practise speaking and listening skills. These approaches also support pupils experiencing learning difficulties. However, opportunities to get pupils to reflect upon the progress in their own learning during the lesson are often overlooked in the plenary.
147. The subject coordinator is conscientious, and there is yearly monitoring of pupils' work samples. The school follows the Kent Religious Education agreed syllabus. The school recognises that there is no system for the regular ongoing assessment and recording of pupils' progress, nor is there systematic monitoring of teaching in lessons.