

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MATTHEW'S HIGH BROOMS
CE VC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Tunbridge Wells

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 108790

Headteacher: Mr P Cornish

Reporting inspector: Dr M Bradshaw
6169

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 6th February 2003

Inspection number: 247945

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Powder Mill Lane High Brooms Tunbridge Wells Kent
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
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Name of chair of governors:	Rev C Wicks
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Date of previous inspection:	23 rd February 1998
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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
6169	Dr M J Bradshaw	Registered inspector	Science, physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9799	Ms S Smith	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
14319	Mr M Brown	Team inspector	Art and design, music, religious education	How well is the school led and managed?
21313	Mr H Galley	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, English as an additional language, design and technology, information and communication technology	
14851	Mr G Laws	Team inspector	Educational inclusion, including race equality, mathematics, geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
27826	Mr A Parsons	Team inspector	Special educational needs, English, history	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Matthew's CE Primary School, which has 396 pupils who attend full time from Reception to Year 6, is situated in the High Brooms area of Tunbridge Wells. The proportion of girls is 52 per cent. There are two classes in each age group, Reception to Year 6. Children usually enter Reception in the autumn term of the school year in which they are five. The changes to the school's roll are about average during the school year. The vast majority of pupils, 95 per cent, are from a white ethnic background. The remainder are from a wide mix of minority ethnic backgrounds, with no group predominating. There are 14 pupils whose mother tongue is not English. Five of these are at an early stage of language acquisition; those who are older and have been in the school for some time are competent in English. The background of most pupils is below average; 87 pupils (about 22 per cent) claim free school meals, which is about average, although this probably underestimates the level of need. Many pupils come from an area of social and economic deprivation. The number of pupils having special educational needs is above average. Over a quarter have been identified as having significant learning needs, including five pupils who have a statement of special educational needs. In many Year 3 to 6 classes, around half of pupils have some level of special educational need. Attainment on entry to Reception is well below average, especially in the area of communication, language and literacy. Over a third of the children who joined Reception this school year had been identified as having significant learning needs before they started. The pupils who left Year 6 at the end of last year included a large number who joined after Year 2. These additional pupils included many who had special educational needs. Over a tenth of the total of Year 6 pupils, mainly girls, did not take the National Curriculum tests, as their attainment was too low. The trend of pupils who have learning needs entering during Years 3 to 6 is well established and reflects the school's desire to accept all who wish to come.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Matthew's Primary School provides its pupils with a satisfactory quality of education. Children enjoy their time in the school and have good attitudes in lessons. They behave well. The personal care of pupils is good. Children make very good progress in Reception, and satisfactory progress by Year 2. However, in Years 3 to 6, pupils' progress is erratic. Attainment, by the end of Year 6, is therefore below average in English, mathematics and science. The curriculum is satisfactory, but not organised to ensure consistent progress. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and in over half the lessons it is better than this. However, it is not consistently good enough to enable pupils to make rapid progress. Teachers' expectations in particular are not high enough. Teaching is very good in Reception, and there are examples of good teaching in most year groups. The school currently provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching and learning in Reception is very good and is excellent in the area of children's personal, social and emotional development.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are good.
- The personal care and protection provided for pupils are organised effectively.
- The management and organisation of support for pupils with special educational needs are good.
- The provision made for pupils' personal, social and health education, including moral and cultural development is good.
- The links with other institutions in the area and with parents are very good.
- Standards in art and design, and in design and technology, are above those expected by Year 6.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science by Year 6, which are below those expected.
- The organisation of the curriculum to ensure better progression in developing pupils' knowledge and skills, and the use of assessment.
- The quality of teaching, so that expectations are raised and the pace of learning accelerated.
- The identification of clear targets for improvement, including those within the school development plan.
- Pupils' levels of attendance.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

St Matthew's CE Primary School was inspected in February 1998. Its progress since then has not been adequate. The areas of weakness identified have been tackled, but not always with the desired effect. Since 1998, by Year 6, pupils' attainment has been erratic and has varied from subject to subject. In English, mathematics and science, results have been well below average in the past three years since 2000. Attainment by Year 2 has improved steadily. Provision for children in Reception remains very well organised. Standards in religious education and design and technology are better, but the high attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) has not been maintained. The quality of teaching is similar to that reported previously. Curricular planning and assessment require further action. The leadership roles of all staff, and the governing body, have not been sufficiently extended so that enough attention is given to identifying measurable targets or the strategies to achieve them.

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	E	E	E	E
Mathematics	E	E	E	D
Science	E	E	E	E

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Pupils enter Reception with well below average attainment levels, particularly with respect to their English skills. They achieve very well, but most children will not reach the expected standard by the time they start in Year 1. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, standards were well below average in writing, and below average in reading. Standards in mathematics were average. Compared with similar schools, results in writing were below average, in reading they were average, while in mathematics they were above average.

Attainment in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests in 2002 was well below average in English, mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, results were well below average in English and science, and below average in mathematics. This pattern was similar to the two previous years. The pupils in Year 6 last year included a high proportion with special educational needs, including learning difficulties. Overall, standards at the end of Year 2 have improved in line with the national trend in recent years, but in Year 6 the trend has been much more erratic, but close to the national average overall. The school did not achieve its target for English or mathematics in 2002. Inspection evidence indicates that the current Year 2 pupils' attainment should continue to show signs of improvement, although remain below average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in reading are close to those expected. Standards in art and design are above average, and they are about average in other subjects. Standards in Year 6 currently remain below average in English, mathematics and science, although close to average in reading. In all other subjects, pupils attain the standards expected, except for art and design and design and technology, where they are above those expected. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall by Year 2, but it is erratic in Years 3 to 6, and inadequate in writing. Achievement overall is therefore satisfactory, but could be better.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are good, they enjoy their time in school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in the school is good, and often very good. There is no evidence of bullying, sexism or racism.

Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is satisfactory and relationships in the school are good.
Attendance	Attendance is well below the national average, and punctuality is unsatisfactory.

Pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment help the development of good behaviour and relationships, including those between adults and children. Attendance is not high enough, and too many pupils are late for school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching was described as satisfactory at the time of the last inspection, and this remains the case. There are few examples of unsatisfactory teaching. Just over half of the lessons seen were good or better, including about three in twenty that were very good. Teaching is very good in Reception, and there are examples of good teaching in most years. The quantity and quality of pupils' past work suggest that teaching is satisfactory, but not demanding enough. Teaching is not consistent from class to class. In too many cases, expectations are not high enough, pupils are not challenged sufficiently and teachers do not always plan to meet the needs of all pupils in their class. The pace of pupils' working tends to be too slow. In most subjects, teaching is satisfactory; it is good in art and design. Numeracy, literacy and ICT skills are not always used sufficiently in other subjects. In lessons, pupils' learning is mostly satisfactory and they show interest and concentration.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a satisfactory range and quality of learning opportunities. The curricular planning does not give enough detail to ensure pupils' knowledge and skills are developed systematically. The curriculum is very good in Reception.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The area is well managed and organised.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision is satisfactory overall. The visiting specialist gives good support; in lessons, support is satisfactory. Teachers' clear speech enables pupils to understand all aspects of lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good. It is satisfactory for spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides good personal care for its pupils in a friendly atmosphere where all children can feel happy and content. Satisfactory assessment procedures are in place, but the information is not used sufficiently to set precise targets overall or for individuals.

There are very well developed links with a wide range of local institutions and initiatives. Parents are very satisfied with the school, and links with parents are very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The overall leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The leadership of the school has not concentrated sufficiently on the challenging task of raising standards. All staff are keen to see an improvement in both provision and standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The effectiveness of the governing body is satisfactory. Governors are very supportive of the school. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are not sufficiently involved in shaping the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's performance is evaluated satisfactorily, but the scrutiny is not detailed enough to identify precisely the areas for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The strategic use of resources is satisfactory. Educational priorities are being supported effectively by good financial planning.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. The school is aware of the need to obtain good value for money in obtaining resources and services, but does not compare its performance with that of similar schools in sufficient detail.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children like school and behave well. Children's rate of progress. Teaching is good, and children are expected to work hard. The information about children's progress. The way the school works with parents. The school is approachable. The school is well led and managed. Children are helped to become mature and responsible. The range of activities outside of lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The amount and consistency of homework.

Inspectors agree with many of the parents' views, especially those related to pupils' personal development. They agree that the children like school, behave well and that they are helped to become mature. Parents' views of teaching were reflected in over half the lessons seen, however, children should be expected to achieve more. Children's rate of progress is not always fast enough. The amount and quality of homework set for children in Years 3 to 6 does not prepare them well for the next stage of education. The range of activities outside of lessons is good. Links with parents are very good, although there is often insufficient detail in written reports about children's progress. Management of the school is effective, but leadership has not focused enough on raising attainment. The school is approachable and welcoming.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Over the period 1998 to 2002, in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, pupils' overall results have tended to improve at a rate similar to those nationally. The pattern of improvements has been erratic. Attainment has, therefore, remained well below average in English, mathematics and science. In 2002, compared with similar schools, results are well below average in English and science, and below average in mathematics. The school's results reflect, to some extent, the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including those who join during Years 3 to 6. Inspection evidence confirms that attainment by Year 6 remains below average in English, mathematics and science. It is near the expected standard in Year 6 in reading. The school's targets set for at least the expected Level 4 attainment in English and mathematics are less than might be expected but are close to being met. Not enough attention is given consistently to achieving higher standards. Over the past few years, boys have tended to do better than girls in mathematics and science; this pattern is not evident currently in Years 5 and 6. Pupils' work in Year 5 suggests that some improvements are taking place because of consistently greater demands being made.
2. Over the period 1998 to 2002, in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, pupils' results have risen at a rate similar to those seen nationally. Results in reading and writing over the last three years have been below average; in mathematics, results have been average. Teacher assessments in science indicated that over the last two years, pupils' results have been above average. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in writing, mathematics and science are below average. In reading, they are close to the expected standard. Over the past three years, any differences in attainment between boys and girls are similar to the national picture. The exception has been in writing where girls' attainment is considerably better than that of boys.
3. The previous report in 1998 indicated that standards were close to the standard expected in most subjects by Year 6. There was, however, little high attainment. Weaknesses were noted in design and technology and religious education. There has been very good improvement in design and technology, with attainment now being above average. Religious education has improved, and attainment is now similar to that expected. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are about those expected, but not as high as previously reported. Although there has been some improvement, it has not been sufficient in English, mathematics and science.
4. Attainment on entry to Reception is well below average. This is especially true in communication, language and literacy and this inhibits children's understanding of other areas of learning. During Reception, children achieve very well. The majority of children are on course to exceed the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, and meet them in physical and creative development. They are not likely to meet expectations in their communication, language and literacy, mathematical development or knowledge of the world. Children are developing confidence in their speaking skills and they make an excellent start in developing their reading skills. Good progress is also evident in their early writing skills. Many children count objects and order numbers to ten. They use vocabulary associated with capacity correctly, and those who are above average name a range of flat shapes such as squares, triangles and circles, and a few solid shapes. Children become aware of features in their locality. They know that plants are living things that grow, change and die. They are introduced to different religious festivals, such as Divali and

Hannukah. Children control pencils carefully, and are confident when riding toys, balancing, climbing and jumping. They make satisfactory models using recycled materials and sing well.

5. Pupils in Year 2 attain below average standards in English, mathematics and science. Pupils read with satisfactory accuracy, and an understanding of what they have read. Writing skills are below average and pupils use punctuation inconsistently. Most pupils' speaking skills demonstrate a lack of confidence, although most listen well. Pupils' mathematical knowledge is below average. Understanding of number progresses satisfactorily, but the use of this information and the development of other areas of mathematics are less reliable. In science, pupils' attainment is below average by the end of Year 2. They have knowledge across most aspects of science, but this lacks depth. Pupils' scientific skills have not been developed sufficiently. In ICT, pupils' attainment is about average, for instance, when using a paint program, they select the brush size and colour of their choice and use spray effects confidently. In religious education, pupils' attainment is in line with that expected. They know some stories associated with Jesus, such as the feeding of the five thousand and walking on water. They also appreciate that there are other beliefs, such as Hinduism.
6. Pupils' attainment in Year 6 is below average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils read with satisfactory understanding and accuracy. Their writing is below average, particularly shown in their limited vocabulary and insufficient use of complex sentences. Speaking skills are not as high as expected, but most pupils listen well. Pupils' literacy skills are not used sufficiently to support learning in other subjects. Pupils' mathematical knowledge is below average, reflected mainly in the quantity of work that pupils' produce. Pupils' scientific knowledge lacks depth and skills are not developed sufficiently. In ICT, attainment is about average. In Year 6, pupils use wordprocessing satisfactorily, although they are slow in their use of the keyboard. In religious education, where attainment matches that expected in the locally agreed syllabus, pupils appreciate the importance of the 'Five Pillars of Wisdom' to Muslims and the 'five ks' to Sikhs.
7. Throughout the school, pupils attain mainly average standards in the foundation subjects. In art and design, in both Years 2 and 6, pupils' attainment is above that expected. They develop a good range of skills and apply these well using a range of media. Art and design also supports learning in other subjects effectively. The quality of work in design and technology is satisfactory in Year 2, and above the expected standard by Year 6. Pupils' designs are of a high standard and they often use carefully labelled drawings and explanations. Pupils' finished projects are also good. In music, standards are average in Years 2 and 6, and singing skills develop well. In geography and history, pupils attain standards similar to those expected by Years 2 and 6. In both subjects, pupils' knowledge and skills develop satisfactorily. In geography, map skills, in particular, develop strongly, and in history pupils' understanding of a range of famous people develops well. Acquisition of skills is adversely affected because history and geography are not taught in each term. In physical education, pupils attain average standards overall. Attainment is good in specific areas, such as dance, and in Year 4, in swimming.
8. Pupils' achievement is just satisfactory overall, although there are variations from class to class, and between subjects. Progress in Reception is very good, and particularly strong in the area of personal development. Expectations of pupils are not consistently high enough, and this means that not all pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
9. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory progress thereafter. In Years 1 and 2, they make satisfactory

progress across the whole curriculum, and in Years 3 to 6, it continues to be satisfactory. Across the school pupils meet the targets set for them in their annual reviews and individual education plans. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well in lessons provided by staff from the Kent Minority Community Achievement Service and achieve satisfactorily in other lessons. A key feature, underpinning the good levels of achievement, is the detailed assessment records that track pupils' progress as they move through the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. As at the time of the last inspection, the attitudes of pupils to learning are good and remain one of the strengths of the school. Inspection evidence confirms the views of most parents that their children like coming to school and usually enjoy their work. They know classroom routines well and happily take responsibility for getting things out and putting them away when asked. They settle down quickly and willingly at the beginning of lessons, show pride in their work and are pleased and confident to explain what they are doing. When given tasks to complete in pairs and small groups they work industriously, often with little need for teacher intervention, until they have finished. Learning is supported well by these positive attitudes to work. In Years 3, 4 and 5, there is a small number of boys who have less mature attitudes and who sometimes need intervention from their teachers to keep them working; when this happens it sometimes slows learning for all. Pupils develop independence and responsibility through the tasks that teachers set for them to do at home, particularly those in Reception, Years 1 and 2. Development of these skills slows as they move up through the school because teachers' expectations do not rise sufficiently to prepare pupils for the next stage of their education by the time they reach Year 6.
11. The good standards of behaviour seen at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. School rules are understood very well and there are very few occasions when the behaviour of pupils slows learning for others. Pupils are very aware of the code of conduct and what will happen if they do not behave themselves, as teachers are consistent in their response. Most pupils respond well to the usually high expectations of teachers and the school's strategies for managing behaviour, however the self-discipline of a few boys in Years 3, 4 and 5 is slow in developing. Out of lessons pupils interact confidently with one another, staff and visitors and are invariably well mannered, polite and courteous. In the playground behaviour is often high-spirited but there is a sense of goodwill and pleasing levels of give and take, for example as they use playground equipment. No aggression between pupils was seen during the week of inspection. The system of rewards is valued and motivates well. There was only one fixed-term exclusion during the last school year. School premises, equipment and materials are treated with high levels of respect.
12. Relationships and the response of pupils to opportunities provided for their personal development are good overall. The very positive relationships between pupils and their teachers result in growing pupils' confidence and an effective environment for learning to take place. Pupils almost always show courtesy and consideration for others. In 'circle time', when pupils sit in a circle and discuss relevant issues, making contributions in turn, they usually listen without interruption to what their peers have to say and have a growing understanding that views differing from their own are not necessarily wrong. The response to the values promoted during 'circle time' contributes effectively to the sense of good will that permeates the school community. There is very little bullying, or other instances of behaviour that result, for example, in individuals feeling isolated, and the school responds promptly and effectively to any such event. During personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons there is a growing awareness of self-worth and their right to say no. Where opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility they respond well, for example, in acting as

table monitors after school lunch. Pupils representing their classes on the school council grow in self-esteem and, throughout Years 3 to 6, pupils value this opportunity to make their views known. There is an increasing awareness about the lives and needs of others through work done for charity.

13. Pupils with special educational needs are as positive about their lessons as their peers and they are fully included and accepted in everything that goes on. In lessons, the other pupils recognise the particular contribution of pupils with special educational needs. The promotion of involving all pupils fully in lessons has helped to develop a more positive approach to special educational needs throughout the school. This is achieved using 'sets', when pupils from the two classes in a year group are organised according to their attainment. There were, however, isolated examples, during the inspection, where the attitudes of a few pupils were quite negative towards others who find learning difficult.
14. Levels of attendance, at 93.2 per cent for the last school year, are well below the average. Although this figure shows a small rise over the previous year, it has fallen significantly since the time of the last inspection. Levels of recorded unauthorised absence are broadly the same as in other schools. The most significant reasons for absence include sickness; in particular there is a high proportion of pupils who have had several short-term illnesses during the last school year. Many parents take their children on family holidays during term time and in addition there are some pupils who persistently fail to attend. Their parents sometimes condone this. Pupils with special educational needs in Year 6 and those with English as an additional language across the school are over-represented amongst pupils whose attendance levels cause concern. In particular, the proportion of Bengali pupils who experience problems with attendance is very high. Too many pupils are late at the beginning of the day. This sometimes results in frequent interruptions during assemblies and an adverse impact on the quality of experience provided. In addition the lateness reduces opportunities for planning suitable activities during the registration period. The occasional late start to lessons reduces time available for teaching. Levels of attendance and punctuality make a poor contribution to learning overall.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. The overall quality of teaching in the school is satisfactory, but not consistently good enough to enable pupils to make rapid progress. Teaching was unsatisfactory in only a few lessons; this is an improvement over the last inspection. In about half of the lessons, teaching was good or better, which is similar to that reported previously. There are differences in the quality of teaching across the school and pupils' recorded work does not reflect consistently good teaching. Pupils' achievement and learning are, therefore, satisfactory overall.
16. The teaching for Reception children is very good, and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teachers work well together and they demonstrate very good knowledge of how young children learn. The management of children is excellent and this makes a significant contribution to their learning. Children's learning is also aided by the very effective use of resources, and also by the range of teaching methods used. As a result, children make rapid progress in acquiring skills and knowledge. They work at a brisk pace and with concentration.
17. The quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory, although work in pupils' books does not always reflect this. Teaching is often not demanding enough to enable pupils to make the rapid strides necessary to raise achievement and overcome their low attainment when starting school. In all subjects, in lessons seen, teaching was at least satisfactory overall, and good in art and design. Planning does not ensure that

the needs of all pupils in a class can be satisfactorily met, nor are expectations of pupils' capabilities consistently high enough. In most subjects, individual lessons are often satisfactory or better, but inadequate curricular guidance and lack of detail in schemes of work reduce the overall impact. Pupils' learning in the majority of lessons observed was satisfactory or better. Overall, the satisfactory teaching results in pupils making steady, but insufficient, progress overall. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory. In the best lessons, pupils are challenged effectively in their work, but pupils' books demonstrate that they do not work consistently at a high enough pace. Literacy is satisfactorily taught, but pupils' writing skills are not given sufficient attention. Literacy is not used enough in other subjects, partly because of the overuse of some worksheets, which limits opportunities for writing. Similarly, limited use is made of mathematics and ICT in other subjects.

18. The management of pupils is usually good and this results in behaviour that has a positive effect on attitudes in lessons. All teachers plan the activities in relevant detail, but too few plan to meet the needs of the wide range of pupils in a class. A range of methods is used satisfactorily. Resources are used satisfactorily to support learning. Assessment during lessons is satisfactory, but marking is inconsistent and not used well to aid detailed planning; this is especially evident in English. Homework is not used effectively in Years 3 to 6 to aid learning. The amount and quality set do not prepare them well for the next stage of education.
19. When working with pupils with special educational needs, if there is any suspicion of an emerging difficulty, teachers adopt a variety of strategies that includes diverting pupils' attention, injecting a touch of humour into the lesson or changing groups around and these strategies are usually successful. The special educational needs of different pupils are recognised through the setting of targets in individual education plans and the well-planned use of support staff. The deployment of dedicated teaching assistants to support speech and language therapy and physiotherapy is an integral part of this special provision and is a model of good practice. The co-ordinator has done some interesting work to evaluate the work of teaching assistants and matched this against the perceptions of teachers so that there is a clear understanding of how and where to introduce different activities and strategies to move teaching forward. The use of individual teaching support is variable in its quality and ranges from mainly good to occasionally unsatisfactory. Class teachers do not always make enough adaptations to the work for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are frequently required to complete the same work as other pupils. Teachers rely too much on presenting work in a way that requires pupils to use literacy skills that are generally weak.
20. Teaching and learning for pupils who speak English as an additional language are satisfactory overall, although the teaching provided for these pupils by the Kent Minority Community Achievement Service for one morning a week is good. The use of assessment data, kept on each pupil's progress, enables pupils to learn effectively in these lessons. In routine class lessons, teachers' speech is a good role model enabling pupils to take a full part in lessons.

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

21. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils in Years 1 to 6 are satisfactory overall. The curriculum is broad and relevant and meets the needs of pupils. Statutory requirements are met in all subjects, including religious education, which is taught in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. There are suitable policies for all subjects. Schemes of work are heavily based on national guidelines. These outlines are not always adapted with sufficient rigour to ensure that planning

meets the needs of all pupils. The structured development of skills was highlighted as an issue on the previous inspection and this remains a concern. There is, for example, no clear progression of skills in science. History and geography are taught in two of the three school terms. Consequently, some time elapses before pupils resume their studies, and teaching time may be wasted having to repeat previously taught material. This affects the continuity of learning. The most pressing weakness is that links between the development of the curriculum and the use of assessment information about pupils' knowledge and understanding have not been developed sufficiently.

22. In all lessons, teachers are aware of the need to develop the skills of literacy and numeracy. Pupils are offered many opportunities to discuss particular topics to promote their speaking and listening skills. Writing is well supported in geography when pupils in Year 2 imagine themselves to be in another country and write a letter to Barnaby Bear about life there. Mathematical skills are developed in subjects such as science and ICT. However, generally, not enough use is made of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum.
23. In English and mathematics, the school places considerable importance on 'setting', the grouping of pupils from different classes according to their ability. This is a strategy well established in Years 5 and 6, and was introduced into Years 2 to 4 at the start of the current school year. As yet, there is no evidence to demonstrate that this arrangement is improving standards. Teachers are aware of the need to ensure complementary provision in different sets so that movement between them can be effected without disruption to pupils' progress. Sometimes, teachers do not pay sufficient attention to the differing needs within these sets when planning their lessons. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good in Reception and satisfactory overall thereafter. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average and often especially high in Years 5 and 6. This has a major impact on the Year 6 test results but is not in itself sufficient to explain why the school's results are so far below those in similar schools. Teachers make an effective effort in lessons and activities that support the curriculum to ensure that the contributions of pupils who speak English as an additional language are valued and celebrated. The visiting specialist gives good support and teachers' clear speech enables pupils to understand all aspects of lessons. The school is justly proud of its commitment to equal opportunity, although opportunities to reach the highest levels are not always rigorously pursued.
24. Planning for pupils' PSHE is good. A detailed policy covers sex education and drugs awareness. The strong relationships that exist in the school ensure that the weekly timetabled lesson helps to generate informed and honest discussion of issues.
25. Extra-curricular provision is good. Major sporting activities, such as football and netball, are covered. A small number of musical activities such as choir and a recorder group are available. Most of the activities are primarily intended for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Clubs devoted to activities such as needlework, cycling proficiency and dance, including line dancing, enhance provision.
26. Links with other educational institutions are particularly productive. Reception teachers talk regularly to their counterparts in local nurseries and playgroups. The school also has strong links with local primary schools. These are helping to improve ICT provision and staff development. Pupils from St Matthew's go on to attend numerous secondary schools. The school ensures that they are given every opportunity to be involved in transition arrangements such as induction days.

27. There is a clear commitment to ensuring that pupils appreciate the varying contributions that the local and wider community can offer. Representatives from a range of organisations, such as the police, fire brigade and church, are invited into school. The school engages in a number of visits related to pupils' work, which successfully enhance pupils' learning. Visits to places like Hastings, Bore Place, Drusillas and Canterbury Cathedral broaden pupils' horizons. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are offered the chance to take part in an outdoor education expedition to the Isle of Wight and to participate in a 'Wilderness Wood' activity week. The contribution by the community to pupils' learning is satisfactory. The quality of the curriculum is similar to that previously reported, but there are occasional examples of the detailed curricular planning being used incorrectly.
28. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, in particular in the provision for developing their social, moral and cultural awareness. Although there is a policy to guide the work of the school in this aspect of pupils' education, provision is not specifically covered in individual subject policies and expectations, particularly for spiritual development, are implicit rather than explicit in planning.
29. The school promotes satisfactory levels of spiritual awareness. A key feature of this provision is pupils' enjoyment of being in school and the role of assemblies in celebrating achievement, valuing individuals and the creation of a family community as pupils join together in singing hymns. Christian principles are promoted well in topics chosen for assemblies and enhanced through prayer and the opportunity for reflection. Effective links with the local church community and involvement in religious festivals and celebrations enhance pupils' understanding and spirituality. Individual teachers take opportunities as they present themselves to provide moving experiences; for example, when, while creating movements in physical education, pupils are asked to imagine how the people felt when trapped in burning houses during the Great Fire of London and, when being read to, anticipation is raised to such an extent that there are gasps of amazement as the story unfolds.
30. There is good provision for pupils' moral development and this is reflected in the high standards of behaviour seen and pupils' understanding of the differences between right and wrong. The school is a friendly and harmonious community where pupils understand and follow the code of conduct. This code results in good levels of self-discipline. In 'circle time' they are taught to be considerate, to trust each other and respect the rights of others both to be different and to have a different point of view that is just as valid as their own. This individuality is further reinforced during assemblies, for example, when they learn, 'everyone is different, everyone the same, everyone is special'. The PSHE programme provides good opportunities for pupils to discuss and understand personal choices and their right to say no to peer pressure, for example in relation to drugs. A disagreement between pupils led to a useful and impromptu discussion about the difference between this and putting forward an argument as prose. Understanding of rights and responsibilities is planned well in PSHE and, in Years 3 to 6, this is enhanced through serving on the school council.
31. The provision made for pupils' social development, including introducing aspects of citizenship, is good. Many start in school with poorly developed social skills. Arrangements for children to become familiar with the school and its teachers before they start in Reception, together with the positive relationships, play a significant role in their rapid development of confidence within the school environment. This self-assurance results in a growing ability to interact effectively with both their peers and adults at the school. In 'circle time' and PSHE lessons they learn the importance of taking other people's opinions into consideration; how their own views, when suitably expressed, can make a difference and how to discuss rather than be confrontational.

This tolerance results in an improved ability to interact effectively with others and an increasing sense of self-worth. The range of extra-curricular activities, including sporting, dancing, choir, sewing and music, is popular and provides good opportunities for social development. The visits made out of school, for example to Canterbury Cathedral, Hastings, museums and the Isle of Wight, increase understanding about different areas and social change over time. Throughout the school there are high expectations for good manners and consideration for the needs of others. For pupils in Years 3 to 6 there are further opportunities to develop social skills and improve their self-esteem through membership of the school council.

32. The school promotes pupils' cultural development well. The school provides frequent and effective opportunities to extend their knowledge of Christian festivals and traditions. In religious education they learn about a range of major world faiths. In other subjects they study African music and art, the art of Ancient Egypt and pupils do project work about Kenya. In history they learn about cultures from the past; this learning is enhanced effectively when they dress up in costume. In religious education pupils from non-Christian faiths are valued for the contribution they can make and parents from minority ethnic backgrounds have supported the school in developing pupils' understanding of other cultures. The lack of consistent planning for cultural development results in some lost opportunities, for example in music when pupils do not know the cultural origins of the instruments they play.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The school makes good provision for pupils' health, safety and welfare. Close liaison with the local playgroup, together with home visits made by staff, help children and their parents to become familiar with the school and teachers before they start in Reception. Class teachers know pupils very well and this, together with the very positive relationships between them, ensures pupils are confident about sharing any problems. Child protection procedures are fully in place and provide effective guidance for staff in the event of any concern being identified. The person with designated responsibility for these procedures is suitably trained and experienced. The school works closely with the education welfare officer and support agencies where this liaison is needed to meet the needs of individual pupils. During their PSHE lessons pupils learn about personal safety and this is reinforced in a visit from the local police liaison officer. There are satisfactory arrangements to meet health and safety requirements. The person with overall responsibility has been trained and has a good understanding of what is required. Much consideration is given in lessons, for example in ensuring pupils 'warm up' before starting strenuous work in physical education. There are suitable arrangements to manage first aid emergencies, although, at present, these are usually dealt with in the disabled toilet and this is not appropriate. Fire drills are practised with sufficient frequency and pupils know these routines well. Outside contractors visit the school on a regular basis to carry out the required checks on equipment and appliances used. The school has adequate arrangements for risk assessment in relation to the premises and is aware of the need to develop these for trips and visits made by pupils out of school. Suitable procedures are in place to control pupils' access to the Internet.
34. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are satisfactory overall. Arrangements to register pupils at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions meet legal requirements and pupils are usually asked to account for their late arrival. Although there are adequate procedures for recording pupils who are late after registration there are occasional inconsistencies in their application when the incorrect reason is recorded. Registers are kept centrally and are readily available in the event of an emergency. Reasons for absence are always required and the school monitors these to ensure they are reasonable. Where there is an unexplained

absence parents are contacted promptly. Individual pupils with attendance problems are identified and reasons for absence sought in readiness for the meeting each month with the education welfare officer. This arrangement ensures that the time available is used to best effect. The education welfare officer provides good support in relation to pupils with very low attendance levels. Although the school monitors the attendance of individual pupils well, that of the various groups who make up the school community is not similarly monitored. This lack of information inhibits the opportunities to develop strategies for raising standards. The annual reports that parents receive on their children's progress are not sufficiently clear about the adverse impact of unsatisfactory attendance on learning. Parents are not told enough about expected levels of attendance, for example, in the governors' annual report where it is described as good, although it does not match national levels; and information given about holidays leads some parents to conclude that two weeks taken during term time is a right rather than a privilege.

35. The very high expectations for good behaviour are clearly communicated and understood by pupils. These expectations lead to the high standards seen throughout the school during the week of inspection. Classroom management routines are almost always consistently applied and effective. Pupils value the system of awards that acknowledges achievements in all aspects of their lives at school. On the very few occasions that behaviour causes concern the school seeks to involve parents at an early stage to discuss ways forward. Procedures to deal with the few occasions when exclusion is necessary ensure that all that is possible is done to support improved behaviour patterns. There are effective procedures to deal with the rare incidents of bullying.
36. There are good arrangements for the personal support and guidance of pupils. Annual progress reports to parents show a realistic evaluation of the personal development of individual pupils, their attitudes to school and behaviour. Sex education is planned well to emphasise the role of the family. In addition, awareness about issues relating to drugs is dealt with effectively with the support of the local police liaison officer. The PSHE and citizenship programmes cover a wide range of topics that provide sensible guidance on health, social, community and environmental issues. At present there is no formal system of assessment of pupils' personal development to guide teachers' planning for individual pupils. Well-conceived activities, especially visits outside the classroom, together with effective use of the community as a learning resource, extend horizons and perceptions, and enhance personal effectiveness and increase self-esteem. The programme of assemblies is planned well to support the guidance and personal development of pupils. The newly instituted school council has made a good start in raising awareness about the electoral system and raising self-esteem. At present opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for aspects of their learning and to use their initiative in this are not fully developed.
37. The procedures used to assess pupils on entry to school and to identify those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well developed. Assessment in Reception is good and used well to guide lesson planning. Before the start of this school year, there was very little formal assessment within the school but teachers now use information from the national guidance to help assess learning in many subjects. In mathematics the school has adopted procedures in a commercial scheme to monitor pupils' progress every half term and to identify those areas where pupils need extra support. This is a good development that should enable the school to set more challenging targets for pupils and lead to higher standards in due course. The use of assessment in English, science and ICT is not nearly so well developed because although teachers know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses well they have only just begun to think about ways of using the information systematically so as to identify what works or does not in order to

raise standards. Assessment in all subjects currently identifies key objectives, but the link between these objectives and subject targets that specify the expected National Curriculum levels that pupils need to achieve to attain national standards at particular times within their school life is not made explicit enough.

38. The assessment co-ordinators know that the school needs to improve upon the current situation where limited use is made of assessment information to plan the teaching of the curriculum. They have a clear understanding of what needs to be done and have written a sound policy that provides useful support for teachers. Once all pupils' records are systematically recorded on the new software the school has purchased, the school should be able to analyse its performance more easily. Answers to questions that are currently unanswered, such as why there have been such large differences between girls' and boys' achievements in national tests, are overdue. The school has not done enough since the last inspection to answer such searching questions and to test out different hypotheses. Nor has enough been done to ensure that pupils' learning is both in line with the positive ethos of the school and makes up the deficit relative to national standards. Although a start has been made to involve pupils in their own self-evaluation, more needs to be introduced so that they too know what they have to do to improve their work.
39. The school uses good procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good and the school monitors pupils' progress carefully. Pupils with special educational needs and those with different ethnic backgrounds are fully included in all school activities and their contributions are valued, raising their self-esteem. The provision of discrete tuition for pupils with special educational needs has given way, since the last inspection, to an approach that involves all pupils in particular groups according to their ability. This means that the overcrowding noted in some special educational needs sessions in the last inspection no longer occurs. Individual support is still used occasionally to complement the work going on in lessons but its quality is variable. In one instance the pupil was challenged quite sensitively and was learning to overcome a reluctance to write but in another instance there was a lack of challenge because of concerns that the pupil would not respond and the teacher did not react positively enough to the pupil's interest. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are cared for equally as well as other pupils. Assessment data for these pupils indicate that their performance matches the pattern of most pupils.
40. The revised Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs is implemented fully and used well to structure the support given to pupils. Good links exist with the full range of external services for pupils with special educational needs and the school uses the advice that these services provide well. The arrangements made to support those pupils with speech and language difficulties and those who need physiotherapy, or 'Fizzy' to use the language of the school, are particularly good. All pupils with statements of special educational needs receive the full provision outlined in their statements and there are regular reviews of all individual education plans. These reviews are used well, alongside other assessment information, to track progress and to help detailed planning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. There are very high levels of satisfaction amongst parents with what the school provides and achieves. Most are pleased with the quality of leadership and management. They say their children like school, achieve high standards of behaviour and grow in maturity. Almost all feel comfortable to approach staff with problems and concerns, they say that their children are taught well, expected to work hard and make good progress. Most value the range of activities provided outside of lessons.

Inspection evidence supports many of these views. Inspectors agree that children like school, behave well and that they are helped to become mature and responsible. They also agree that there are good opportunities provided for them outside of lessons. Parents' positive views of teaching were reflected in over half the lessons seen. However, the expectations for their children's achievement are not always high enough to ensure sufficiently fast progress. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views about the management of the school, but consider leadership has not focused sufficiently on raising attainment. Some parents are concerned about their children's homework. Inspectors agree that, although homework during Reception and Years 1 and 2 is suitable, the amount of work children are expected to do at home does not grow sufficiently as they become older. This results in pupils in Year 6 not being sufficiently prepared for what is expected of them when they transfer to the next stage of their education. A few parents do not feel there are sufficient activities outside of lessons and inspectors can reassure them that the school provides a good range of clubs, additional activities and visits to support the needs of their children well.

42. The effectiveness of the school's partnership with parents is good overall. There are well-planned opportunities for prospective parents to familiarise themselves with the school and to meet teachers before their children start in Reception. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents generally provide comprehensive information about routines, expectations and performance. They do not, however, make parents suitably aware of the poor standards of attendance achieved overall. There are good opportunities for parents to find out about what their children are learning through regular newsletters and information events about, for example, literacy, numeracy, expectations for pupils at various stages during primary education and also about testing at the end of Years 2 and 6. For those who would like to learn more about effective behaviour management there are sessions at the school each week. Homework timetables are provided at the beginning of the school year and information about topics is sent home at the start of each term. These ensure parents are alert to what is expected of their children. Reading records for children in Years 1 and 2 are sent home regularly and often provide good two-way information between home and school. The school seeks the early involvement of parents when there is any concern about their children's life or work and ensures their views are sought to find a way forward through difficulties.
43. There are good opportunities for parents to meet with teachers to discuss their children's progress and to see their work. Formal interviews are arranged for the autumn and spring terms in addition to an opportunity to discuss progress following the publication of annual reports in the summer. Parents are aware of teachers' availability after school and the very large majority feels that they are welcome in the school. Annual progress reports provide good information about attitudes to work and personal development. Despite some good examples, the reports do not consistently evaluate for parents what their children know, understand and can do, identifying areas of relative strength and those for development. Progress made and how well children are doing in relation to expectations for their age are not always clear. Although there are some examples of effective target setting, for example, in mathematics, these are more often behavioural and attitudinal than subject related and not sufficiently specific and achievable to be of real help to parents in understanding what must be done so that their children improve. This defect is particularly so for more able children where there is a tendency to list only what they can do or have studied and targets are less often set. Although levels of attendance are reported, parents are not made sufficiently aware of the adverse impact on progress and learning when their children's attendance falls below a satisfactory level.
44. The involvement of parents, including the interest that most take in their children's learning, has a significant impact on the work of the school. There is an active parent

and teacher association that holds a range of successful social and fundraising events. Through monies raised, they contribute effectively to the work of the school. There is good support from parents in the classrooms; 21 parents help regularly in school. In addition, there is good support for sporting events, trips and visits. Parent governors have a high presence in the school and are available to parents when needed. Occasions that involve their children are always well attended, although other opportunities provided by the school, for example, to find out about what their children are learning and the governors' annual meeting, are less well supported. Some parents do not support the work of the school well by ensuring that their children attend with sufficient regularity. Parents learn about their children's progress towards achieving their individual targets on a regular basis. The annual reviews of statements of special educational needs are scheduled well in advance and are appropriately organised so as to involve parents and the contributions of the pupils. The governors' annual report for parents includes a section about the provision for pupils with special educational needs but it lacks any evaluation of that provision. Most parents are positive about the provision for special educational needs in the school although some have concerns that the school has such a good reputation that it attracts too many pupils whose significant needs have a detrimental effect on the overall achievement within the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and senior staff are satisfactory overall. The headteacher shows great commitment to developing a shared ethos in which all members of the school community are encouraged and supported in their work, as set out in the school's vision statement. He has been effective in creating an environment in which pupils have positive attitudes to school. He has also been actively involved in establishing a local inter-school learning improvement group (Network) that is designed to bring benefits to the school. A significant strength of the school is the good quality of relationships between pupils, and their good relationships with the staff. Pupils demonstrate good attitudes and behaviour, and equality of opportunity is reflected in the school's work. However, although the action plans following the last inspection, and school improvement plans, gave priority to the raising of standards, the leadership of the school has not focused sufficiently on these. The school is very aware of the need to raise standards in English, mathematics and science, and has been conscious of the adverse effect on overall attainment of the influx of a number of pupils with special educational needs within Years 3 to 6. However, there is little evidence that leadership strategies of the school are raising the standards of pupils' attainment in national tests.
46. There is good delegation of responsibilities to the deputy headteacher, who has skills which complement those of the headteacher, and both are well supported by the other members of the senior management team. Exchange of information between the headteacher and the staff is good. Co-ordinators are aware of their responsibilities and are keen to develop their subjects. They have a shared commitment to improvement, but their role in the monitoring of standards of performance, observing teaching and taking appropriate action has yet to show positive results in terms of pupils' attainment. Expectations of pupils' achievement are not always high enough. The special educational needs co-ordinator has made a significant contribution to revising the systems in the school since the last inspection. Timetables for reviews, the deployment of support staff and the involvement of outside agencies are now clearly organised. The use of ICT to support the writing of individual education plans is well established and the plans help the teaching assistants to keep track of their work with pupils who need speech and language therapy and physiotherapy programmes. The special educational needs co-ordinator has a key role in pulling together issues that run through the school and this adds to the importance of that role within the

senior management team. Provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language is managed satisfactorily. The effective links that have been established with the Kent Minority Achievement Service are a positive feature. Recent professional development focusing on the importance of providing a good speech model has been effective in promoting good teaching.

47. The governing body effectively fulfils its statutory duties but is not sufficiently involved in shaping the direction of the school in its bid to raise standards. It is very well led and is supportive of the school; to a large extent, the committee structure works well. The governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and, following the last inspection, set up systems to establish close links with the day-to-day running of the school. Governors who have links with specific subjects regularly visit to observe lessons, and to review curricular documents and schemes of work to report to the appropriate committees and the whole governing body. Teachers who are co-ordinators also give presentations to the governors' curriculum committee, which in turn examines schemes of work and reports back to the main governing body. The governors rely on the headteacher and senior management to plan developments and their role in initiating change is too limited. The school development plan itself does not include sufficiently clear targets or set clear criteria to help raise pupils' achievement in a measurable way.
48. Governors have considered the role of target setting, planning and monitoring in raising standards, but this has not yet resulted in significantly more demanding targets. The governors are closely involved in financial planning, and monitor and cost developments, using comparison, competition and consultation when securing resources and services. The finance committee is guided by the curriculum committee, which in turn works with the whole governing body. The present scheme of financial monitoring is now much tighter than in the past, and the finance governor is in regular contact with the headteacher and the school finance officer and secretary. Day-to-day administration of the school office is thorough and efficient, and there is good financial control of expenditure. The school has accrued a significant under-spend; financial information for the school year 2001-2002 shows a budget surplus of approximately £60,000, which is over seven per cent. However, of this, some £32,000 will be accounted for to fund expected falling rolls in 2002/3 and beyond, and to support a small building project, ICT development and staff training, including through the Network project. This should leave an estimated balance of £32,000 to be carried over to the next year. Specific grants are used effectively for their designated purposes. The governors, assisted by a representative of the local education authority, appraise the work of the headteacher and set targets for improvement.
49. Whilst the procedures for monitoring and evaluation of teaching are satisfactory, they have not been implemented with sufficient rigour to have a positive impact on the development of teaching and the educational standards achieved by the pupils. The leadership of the school is aware of the need for further work in this area. A system for appraisal and performance management is in place, but this is not focused sharply enough to identify standards being achieved nor how they might be raised. The school's priorities for development have not resulted in the school taking sufficient action to meet its targets. Insufficient pupils are identified, and the use of new technology to facilitate tracking of pupils' progress is still very limited.
50. There are adequate numbers of suitably qualified and experienced teachers to carry out the work of the school. Although there is currently a vacancy that has been difficult to fill, the school has recruited a suitable temporary replacement to provide stability for pupils until such time as a permanent replacement can be appointed. A recent survey identified the expertise of current staff against the perceived needs of pupils within the

school. The information will be used to determine the selection of new recruits. There are sufficient numbers of support staff to help pupils with learning and other difficulties. They have been suitably trained and are effectively employed. The school has relevant arrangements for the induction of staff new to the school and a newly qualified teacher received effective support during her probationary year.

51. The accommodation is satisfactory to allow the curriculum to be taught effectively. For children in Reception, classroom accommodation is small for the number involved. There is a suitable outside play area that meets needs well. The school is fortunate in having two halls and, although only one is large enough to accommodate the whole-school community, this does give some flexibility, for example, with physical education and separate infant and junior assemblies. As at the time of the last inspection the school is very short of office accommodation. There are now, however, approved plans for an extension to overcome this defect. The school dining room is in a separate building across an entrance to a commercial site. Although this poses difficulties for the safety of pupils, suitable arrangements have been made for support with crossing at lunchtime and pupils are escorted with care. There are, however, no toilet facilities for pupils in this building and they are unable to return to the main school until an escort can be provided. Two of the classrooms are on the first floor and adaptation is needed to make these accessible to pupils with mobility problems. There are separate infant and junior playgrounds that provide a safe, fenced environment. Recent improvements to the junior playground have resulted in well-planned play facilities with a good range of activities provided.
52. Resources for learning are satisfactory overall. The needs of the library have been assessed, out-of-date stock removed and a programme of replacement has started. The quality of resources for Reception, ICT, design and technology, music and special educational needs is good and for all other subjects except science it is satisfactory. In science more precise measuring equipment is holding back opportunities for pupils to collect accurate data. Although there are good resources in ICT, they are not used sufficiently in lessons to ensure pupils have the regularity of access they need.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science by Year 6 are not high enough. The curriculum is not planned with sufficient detail to ensure good progression in the development of pupils' knowledge and skills, and assessment is not used effectively. The quality of teaching, although satisfactory, is not consistently good enough to ensure high expectations and high pace of learning. Leadership has not focused sufficiently on raising achievement and standards of attainment or the identification of clear targets for improvement, including those within the school development plan. Pupils' levels of attendance are well below average.
54. In order to improve standards further, especially in English, mathematics and science, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
 - a) Organise the curriculum more effectively to meet the needs of all pupils and improve assessment and its use to guide pupils' learning by:
 - i) providing improved guidance to ensure that all aspects of each subject are taught in sufficient depth and that there is logical progression in developing and using pupils' knowledge and skills;
 - ii) establishing suitable systems for assessing pupils' performance in each subject and using the information to aid planning for learning; and

iii) ensuring the school's procedures are followed consistently by all staff.
(Para refs: 7, 17, 21, 22, 23, 36-38, 43, 83, 92, 99, 104, 107, 108, 120, 124, 125, 129, 148)

b) Improve the quality of teaching so that the needs of all pupils are identified and met, and the pace of learning accelerated by:

- i) the use of more detailed planning, in particular in relation to meeting all pupils' needs;
- ii) raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve by increasing the challenge and pace of learning;
- iii) using day-to-day marking and assessment more effectively to help pupils understand their strengths and weaknesses, and how they can improve their work;
- iv) increasing the use of literacy, numeracy and ICT in lessons; and
- v) ensuring homework is used effectively in the juniors.

(Para refs: 1, 5, 6, 8, 10, 15, 17-19, 41, 43, 52, 91, 92, 95, 96, 99, 100, 104-107, 112, 124, 128, 131, 132, 137, 146, 147)

c) Improve the leadership in the school so that there is a greater focus on raising standards by:

- i) identifying clear targets for improvement, including those within the school development plan;
- ii) establishing clear, measurable success criteria, and monitoring the extent to which they are achieved;
- iii) increasing the role of governors in shaping the direction of the school's progress; and
- iv) extending opportunities for subject co-ordinators to monitor and evaluate teaching, learning and standards of attainment within their subject.

(Para refs: 41, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 92, 108, 113, 124, 133)

d) Improve attendance rates and reduce unpunctuality by:

- i) continuing to use the current procedures to encourage attendance and punctuality;
- ii) regularly reminding parents of the impact of extended absences and lateness on the learning of their own, and other, children; and
- iii) emphasising the school's expectations in relation to attendance and punctuality in regular communication with parents, including in the governors' annual report and pupils' written reports.

(Para refs: 14, 34, 42, 43, 44)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	87
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	13	35	37	3	0	0
Percentage	0	14.8	39.8	42.0	3.4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	396
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	87

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	101

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	14

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	31
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	38

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	23	31	54

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	15	22
	Girls	28	27	30
	Total	45	42	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (91)	78 (86)	96 (97)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	19	23
	Girls	29	29	31
	Total	46	48	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (86)	89 (95)	100 (97)
	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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	41	38	79

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	29	37
	Girls	20	17	23
	Total	43	46	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	54 (62)	58 (57)	76 (87)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	31	34
	Girls	23	24	22
	Total	46	55	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (58)	70 (53)	71 (83)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
371	1	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
6	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
7	0	0
0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.6
Average class size	28.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	367

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	808,915
Total expenditure	792,646
Expenditure per pupil	1,848
Balance brought forward from previous year	43,697
Balance carried forward to next year	59,966

Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	396
Number of questionnaires returned	135

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	30	1	1	2
My child is making good progress in school.	59	39	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	51	7	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	39	19	3	2
The teaching is good.	50	47	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	40	13	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	36	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	39	3	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	41	48	8	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	50	44	3	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	44	4	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	40	7	2	10

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

55. There are 60 children in two Reception classes that make up the Foundation Stage. Children who are five years old during the next academic year start school in the autumn term. Children attend initially for half a day and gradually become full time as the year progresses. Those children who have their fifth birthday in the summer term attend half a day until Christmas, after which they attend full time. When children start school their attainment is well below average, with particular weaknesses in language skills.
56. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good, with strengths in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy. Teaching is always at least good, with some very good and excellent features. The curriculum is well planned so children gain relevant and worthwhile experiences in all six recommended areas of learning. Detailed assessments of each child's progress are carried out and used constructively to guide curricular planning. Children make an excellent start to their education in personal, social and emotional development, a very good start in communication, language and literacy and a good start in the other areas of learning.
57. The close working partnership of the two teachers is especially effective. They plan all their work together and this ensures a consistency of experiences for children regardless of which class they are in. The school has developed extremely close links with local playgroups and these ensure parents and children know the school well even before they start.
58. The school has made good progress since the last inspection, maintaining many of the strengths identified then and improving the quality of provision in personal, social and emotional development.

Personal, social and emotional development

59. Children make excellent progress in this area of learning. The very good atmosphere and the stimulating and orderly environment provided ensure that children quickly learn how to behave in school. Children are polite and courteous to each other, to the various adults who care for them and to visitors, often saying 'please' and 'thank you' at appropriate times. Teachers and learning support assistants are very skilful in the manner in which they help children to become independent so that they confidently select their own activities. Daily 'plan, do and review' sessions, where children are given some freedom in their choice of activity, help children to make sensible decisions about their work. A notable feature in both classes is the very good level of sustained concentration that many children manage. Children begin to form friendships and help each other with tasks, such as operating a listening centre or sharing the play dough. Both classes are extremely well organised so that children move from one activity to another calmly and sensibly. Teachers rightly give this area of learning a high priority.
60. Teaching and learning are excellent. Both teachers are very skilful at helping children settle quickly to the demands of school life. They have an especially warm rapport with children and manage astutely to ensure that all children, regardless of background, are fully involved in all aspects of every lesson. The provision of a very wide range of stimulating activities, indoors and outside, ensures that there are excellent opportunities for children to learn through play and develop their social skills

in a friendly, supportive environment. Children with special educational needs are supported in a very positive fashion and are well integrated in the daily life of the school. Children benefit from taking part in regular assemblies with pupils from Years 1 and 2. This involvement helps them develop the idea that they are part of a wider community and some of the themes successfully develop their ideas about friendship. An assembly that focused on the notion that 'we are all different, we are all special', made a very effective contribution to children's personal development.

61. Children learn to share and enjoy playing with the many resources and they take turns sensibly when playing in the role-play corner. Boys and girls play well alongside one another in a friendly and supportive manner. Relationships are excellent and underpin the excellent progress made in this area of learning. All adults are superb role models. In this area of learning most children, despite a low starting point, are on course to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the school year.

Communication, language and literacy

62. Many children start school with a very low level of attainment in language skills. Children are effectively encouraged to listen carefully to a variety of stories, rhymes and songs. The calm, orderly atmosphere in lessons effectively supports children's listening skills and they make very good progress in this aspect of learning. The culture of mutual respect that the teachers have cleverly cultivated encourages children to speak and many make very good progress when speaking in front of the class. They feel comfortable about expressing their ideas and making suggestions. In both classes, the teachers skilfully question the children who respond to the challenge in thoughtful sentences. Learning assistants support children well showing considerable care and consideration. However, some opportunities are missed to extend children's vocabulary and questions asked tend to invite just a one-word answer. Overall, children make very good progress in developing their listening skills and good progress in terms of their speaking skills.
63. A strength of the provision in this area of learning is the excellent start children make in terms of their reading skills. Teachers focus carefully and skilfully on developing children's knowledge of initial sounds (phonics) and these are used effectively to help children read simple words. Children enjoy playing with a wide range of games and puzzles that extend their reading skills. Every child has its own reading diary and book-bag and many children are immensely proud of these, treating them with considerable care. They take them home every day and the tremendous support given by parents makes a significant contribution to the excellent progress children make in this key area of learning.
64. Children make good progress in developing their early writing skills. A wide range of opportunities is organised to encourage children to write. Almost all children hold a pencil correctly and more able children are beginning to use capital letters and full stops.
65. Teaching and learning are very good. Both teachers are superb role models in the way they speak, as explanations are given clearly and in a manner that enables all children to take a full part in the lesson. Planning is very good and makes effective provision for children of differing prior attainments. Teaching of initial sounds is given a high priority and this is clearly very successful in enabling children to develop their early reading skills.
66. By the end of the Foundation Stage, almost all children understand that print conveys meaning and all children handle books with respect and care. Most children recognise their own name and many can copy their name unaided. Despite the very good

progress overall in this area of learning, few are on course to reach the early learning goals by the end of the school year.

Mathematical development

67. Children's understanding of mathematical concepts is very weak when they begin their school life in Reception. A good range of activities and games encourages children to develop successfully their knowledge and understanding of numbers and other aspects of mathematics so that they achieve well in this area of learning. However, the majority are not on course to meet the early learning goals by the end of the school year.
68. Children are given a wide range of opportunities to count to ten through singing and action rhymes such as 'Ten Green Bottles', 'Once I Caught a Fish Alive' and 'One, Two, Buckle My Shoe'. Teachers take every opportunity to ask children to count during activities such as calling the register, lining up, as well as drawing, painting and role-play. Good use is made of the sand and water trays to develop children's vocabulary and concepts of capacity and volume.
69. Games and planned activities successfully support children's understanding of shape and space. More able children name flat shapes such as square, circle, triangle and rectangle and are beginning to identify their properties. Some identify solid shapes such as cubes, cones and cylinders.
70. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well organised and proceed at a lively pace. Teachers' explanations are very clear and enable children of all abilities to take a full part. Teachers plan their work in this area of learning very carefully, ensuring that children experience a wide range of stimulating games that develop their knowledge and understanding effectively. A weakness is the limited use of computers to support children's learning in mathematical development.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71. Children have a below average knowledge of the world around them when they start school. Although the good provision and teaching do broaden children's knowledge and understanding of the world, the majority are not on course to meet the early learning goals by the end of the school year.
72. Children develop their knowledge of the locality through their study of local buildings and the school grounds where they learn about flowers and birds. Most children recognise that plants are living things that grow, change and die and that most plants have flowers, leaves and roots. They use a weather station to make simple recordings of the weather. There are good links with a wide range of nursery rhymes, such as when 'Incy, Wincy Spider' was used to talk about the sun and rain.
73. Children learn about other cultures through the celebration of festivals such as Divali and Hannukah. The former was brought to life for children when a Hindu parent and teaching assistant spoke to the children about her own family's celebration of Divali. The positive use of visitors was also evident during an assembly when a member of the local church visited and gave a moving and lively account of the story of Gideon.
74. Teaching and learning are good. A strength of the teaching is the range of well-organised activities that engages children's interest and provides a stimulating learning environment. Teachers' questioning skills are good and frequently challenge children to think about 'why' and 'how' and 'what if'. A weakness is the limited use of computers to promote children's learning.

Physical development

- 75. Children have access to a well-resourced playground that is used exclusively by the Reception classes and, in addition, children use the main infant playground and have regular lessons in the school hall. In the summer, they also have access to the school field.
- 76. When using their own playground, children enjoy using the range of bicycles, tricycles and scooters and develop their physical skills effectively. The climbing frame enables children to experience travelling under, over, around and through the apparatus. Most use the equipment with care and skill and show a good regard for other users. Most learn to climb, balance, run, jump and pedal with reasonable skill.
- 77. They handle a variety of small tools with increasing control. With the play dough, they successfully make spheres and representations of different letters. They handle construction toys carefully and manipulate them with reasonable skill.
- 78. The time spent on the infant playground is less productive. It does give children a chance to meet and socialise with older children but, although these sessions are carefully supervised, little actual teaching takes place and some find this session rather daunting, especially in the cold weather. During the inspection, this was the only occasion when children expressed pleasure that an activity had to be concluded.
- 79. Teaching and learning are good. Planning is detailed and teachers keep useful assessment records to ensure children have a wide range of experiences covering all aspects of physical development. Children make good progress and most are on course to meet the early learning goals by the end of the school year.

Creative development

- 80. The attainment of children as they start school is below average but the good progress they make in the Reception classes means that most will meet the early learning goals by the end of the school year.
- 81. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers provide a wide range of well-organised, well-resourced activities that engage the interest of all children and successfully cover art, design, music and imaginative play. Children have made useful attempts at colour mixing and completed skilful drawings of the teapots that they have made in clay. There are good links with nursery rhymes as children make lively 'junk' models of spiders as part of their work on 'Incy, Wincy Spider', as well as some colourful three-dimensional pictures of 'Humpty Dumpty'.
- 82. A strength of the provision is the emphasis given to singing. In lessons, children are taught a wide range of simple songs and rhymes and children especially enjoy joining Years 1 and 2 pupils in assemblies where they sing a wide range of songs, all learnt by heart, with considerable commitment. Children's senses are successfully explored in simple cooking activities and in the making of sandwiches, where they develop their sense of touch, taste and smell.

ENGLISH

- 83. The majority of pupils enter Year 1 with below average skills in all aspects of language and literacy. Progress in reading is good, so that pupils reach a standard close to that expected by the end of Year 2. Subsequent progress is steady so that they maintain this level to the end of Year 6. However, standards in other aspects of the subject

remain below average. This standard is reflected in the 2002 National Curriculum tests where attainment in reading by Year 2 is below the national average but average when compared to similar schools. Pupils' attainment in writing is well below average by the end of Year 2 and below average when compared with similar schools. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests, Year 6 pupils attained well below the national average in writing. Attainment in English was well below average when compared with similar schools. Compared with the national picture, the school's results have showed a gentle improvement. Since the last inspection, the school has made unsatisfactory progress in its attempts to raise standards in English. Progress since the last inspection has been erratic and the reasons for the variations in the results from year to year and between the results of boys and girls have received insufficient rigorous analysis so that the school has not made the general progress anticipated in the last report. Although there are some signs of improvement, attainment remains at least below average.

84. Pupils enter Year 1 with below average speaking and listening skills. They listen attentively in lessons and the school's emphasis on speaking and listening encourages pupils to build on the levels they have achieved by taking an active part in question and answer sessions. Most pupils find it difficult to use words other than the specific language of the story that they are reading and even asking them about matters of immediate interest to them, such as their toys, does not enable them to say much more. They are keen to answer the questions that teachers ask but, although they listen carefully and sometimes become very involved, when they are chosen they do not have very much to say for themselves, although one pupil gave a good definition of 'barbed wire' in one lesson. The picture is similar in Year 2 but pupils are better able to link events in books to aspects of their own life. They listen to one another and convey simple meanings but they lack confidence when they speak and still use a restricted vocabulary. Attainment in speaking and listening by the end of Year 2 is below average.
85. Pupils continue to develop their oral skills as they move through Years 3 to 6 with regular, planned opportunities for them to discuss and plan their work together both in English and other subjects. Teachers challenge pupils' initial responses and encourage them to add extra detail. Pupils respond well to this input but they find it very difficult to frame questions that will help them to work out what an imaginary object placed in the middle of a circle might be and the pupils placing the objects find it equally hard to give clues to their peers. Oral work on the development of an argument in Year 6 takes several sessions to develop in a logical and sustained way. Informal conversations are livelier even when they are asked to talk about the merits of films and books but they remain rooted in their own limited use of language and do not reflect any real development of ideas. Attainment in speaking and listening remains below average by Year 6.
86. Reading skills on entry to Year 1 are below the standard expected but in Years 1 and 2 pupils enjoy reading, want to read in groups and are developing a good understanding of how to use, not only phonics to read words they do not immediately recognise, but also to use their visual awareness of what familiar words look like. Pupils enjoy reading 'big books' with their teachers and read with great emphasis whenever a bold typeface is used. They learn about the power of words such as 'terrifying' and supported reading promotes pupils reading for comprehension. Pupils understand the meaning that pictures convey and try to talk about it even when they lack the vocabulary to do so. Pupils know about how the library is now organised and colour coded and know which books are at the right level for their ability and make choices by themselves. Reading is well supported by parents. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. Although many pupils achieve standards in line with national expectations, there is limited higher attainment.

87. Pupils continue to make satisfactory reading progress in Years 3 to 6. They talk about a range of authors with enthusiasm and give examples of reading a range of different kinds of writing from poetry to non-fiction. Pupils take time to develop library and retrieval skills. They learn to read with expression and to follow punctuation but these improvements also take time because many pupils do not read extensively out of school. The school uses supported reading activities to promote reading for understanding and these not only give all pupils a regular opportunity to work by themselves but they also allow the teachers to extend their work in literacy. The use of additional staff to support reading means that most pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, read to an adult frequently and are challenged regularly about the meaning of different words and ideas. Pupils talk about borrowing books but in Year 6 several of them prefer television and film adaptations to the original books themselves on the basis that the adaptations miss out most of the descriptive writing which they feel slows things down too much. Evidence from the inspection suggests that overall reading skills at the end of Year 6 are close to the expected standard, but there is limited higher attainment.
88. Attainment in writing upon entry into Year 1 varies considerably and ranges from those pupils with special educational needs, who make meaningful marks on the page, to those higher attaining pupils who can write a simple sentence. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 provide pupils with regular opportunities to develop their handwriting and awareness of phonics. They focus on the development of basic English skills relative to the age of the pupils and they give them the chance to write for different purposes such as giving directions, retelling a story and predicting how a story will end. Pupils also write a sequence of directions for making a sandwich. Pupils do not, however, have very much work to show for the time spent writing and there is a considerable amount of inconsistency in what pupils achieve from page to page in their books. Capital letters and full stops are used in some work and then do not reappear for a while; neat handwriting on one page is followed by indecipherable work on the next; spelling is variable. Annotations about how pieces of work are completed are rare and the input of staff to some pieces has to be inferred from the wide variations in the quality of the finished work. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 is below average overall, although some pupils are working at the expected level.
89. Pupils continue to have a wide variety of opportunities to use different forms of writing in Years 3 to 6 but from year to year there is more inconsistency, particularly with regard to grammar and style so that it is hard to find examples of a steady growth in pupils' skills. Basic punctuation, apostrophes and capital letters are all used inconsistently and some work in Year 3 is more accurate in that respect than work in Year 6, but not across the whole sample of work. Grammatical exercises are usually completed well and handwriting is often very good in handwriting books but, in neither case, does this formal work transfer fully to other writing. There is little use of pronouns, whilst connectives tend to be restricted to 'but', 'and' plus the occasional 'so'. The use of adverbs and adjectives is limited and it is rare to find an example of any kind of lengthy sentence or consistently accurate spelling.
90. The involvement by the school in the 'We're Writers' project is having a positive effect on pupils' imaginative work and they are trying out different ideas of their own in their writing journals, with the support of prompts from teachers and friends. The range of different kinds of writing that the pupils undertake does offer opportunities for them to write traditional stories, poems in different forms, notes from research, television interview scripts and letters of complaint. Much of this work is then well displayed around the school or used in assemblies to stimulate interest and involvement of other pupils. Books of poetry written in class are also available for other pupils in the library. Opportunities are given to pupils to improve their work through the use of

drafting and re-drafting skills but there are few opportunities to do so in individual lessons using ICT although other work is wordprocessed.

91. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory across the school, and reflects a balance between the teaching observed and the work examined in books. The majority of the teaching seen in class is good and only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed. Teachers teach to their lesson objectives, keep a sense of time and work hard to involve pupils in their learning using breaks and changes of activity or approach to re-energise them. The adoption of the National Literacy Strategy has given shape and direction to teachers' practice and lesson objectives are shared with pupils throughout the school and are often used at the beginning and end of every lesson to give structure. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and pupils have positive attitudes towards their work. However, expectations of pupils vary from class to class and are not consistently high enough. Overall, the achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and matches that of the majority of pupils. There are occasions when individual teaching support is good and these result in accelerating progress. Teaching and learning for pupils whose first language is not English is satisfactory, but good when support is provided by the Kent minority achievement service. There were no observed differences in the attitudes of boys or girls and, despite the recent differences in National Curriculum test results favouring the attainment of boys in Year 6, the majority of higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 are girls. Teachers' contrived 'mistakes' encourage pupils in Years 1 and 2 to look and listen carefully. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are given time to think about whether open or closed questions will best suit their questioning of a Greek athlete and they are then challenged to suggest suitable follow-up questions that will clarify matters further.
92. The two co-ordinators lead the subject satisfactorily and have a clear commitment to raising standards throughout the school. Following observations of lessons and pupils' responses, they have rightly chosen to focus on speaking and writing because of the poor standards on entry and the inter-relationship between these different aspects of English. The use of a specialist teaching assistant to carry out speech and language therapy is a useful additional support for children with special educational needs in this area. The curriculum is broad and balanced but not enough is done to ensure that similar tasks are not repeated in three different years. Although the school introduced a new marking policy at the start of the school year, teachers have not implemented it consistently when marking and correcting pupils' written work. As a result the pupils are not given enough focused help to know what they need to do to improve further. The aims of lessons do not always match closely enough the targets that pupils need to reach in order to improve the standard of their work. These discrepancies mean that topics may be covered in lessons but make no impact on pupils' work. In one lesson, for example, two day's work emphasising the use of apostrophes resulted in only one pupil using one apostrophe because the writing task did not allow for their use. Work that is left incomplete remains so even after teachers ask for it to be finished and so pupils' standards go unchallenged. Marking is sometimes over generous in its use of praise and, although this supports the school's policy about encouraging pupils as much as possible, it can mean that work is rewarded even when it does not fully meet a target, such as about the use of adjectives. The school is beginning to use specific descriptions about the quality of pupils' work in English to record their progress over time and this should, when it is shared with pupils, provide them with much clearer individual targets for improvement in reading and writing. Teachers are not explicit enough in their use of the technical vocabulary of the subject as pupils are still unsure about the meaning of such terms as 'simile' and 'adverb' and this weakness inhibits their language development and also means that teachers and pupils have to work harder than is necessary to identify areas for development. There is a good deal of hard work going on in English, but

there has not been a sharp enough focus on standards in order to lead to a sustained improvement in attainment.

MATHEMATICS

93. In 2002, National Curriculum test results showed that the proportion of Year 2 pupils who reached the expected Level 2 or higher was similar to the national average. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 was below average. Evidence derived from this inspection indicates that attainment in Year 2 is currently below average. Results in Year 6 have been consistently well below average in the past three years, although they have improved at a rate similar to that nationally. There are signs of improvement, particularly in the attainment of girls and in Year 5; attainment in Year 6 remains below average. Recent national tests show that girls have lagged behind boys but this is not evident in current year groups.
94. The teaching and support staff create a positive learning atmosphere. The subject co-ordinators recognise that greater rigour is essential if standards are to improve. This recognition is creating a mood of optimism. There is a clear determination to adopt more tenacious approaches to learning. This is essential since most of the issues from the previous inspection are still present and progress has been inadequate. Pupils' achievement during their time in school is satisfactory, since many have limited skills when they enter the school.
95. Teachers concentrate strongly on the development of proficiency in number. Well-planned lessons in Year 1 ensure a good start. Pupils' initial understanding of tens and units is sound and there is an appropriate emphasis on the development of mathematical language. Mental arithmetic is practised regularly, although teachers' presentation is often at a gentle pace. Since this session always occurs at the beginning of a lesson, it sets the tone for the rest of the activities. Too often these do not contain sufficient challenge. Consequently, although teaching is always well intentioned, the focus is too narrow and the pace of progress suffers. In Year 2 lessons about 'position' for example, insufficient time was allocated for pupils to reflect on, or consolidate, their work. In another, although pupils were always busy when arranging coloured cubes into patterns, there was not enough challenge to stretch them. This activity was, however, well suited to a small group of pupils with special educational needs who worked hard when receiving special teaching to concentrate on this same activity. A top ability set working on rotation and reflection benefited from the opportunity to explore patterns by themselves. As a result, pupils showed a desire to explore further possibilities in their own time.
96. A striking feature of provision is the use of individual whiteboards. In many lessons, pupils work out problems on their own board for much of the time. This strategy often works, but sometimes it is overused and pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to consolidate the technique being practised. It also militates against different levels of work being presented to the various ability groups in lessons. It can also lead to pupils waiting too long for the teacher to present them with their next calculation.
97. From Year 2 onwards, pupils from the two classes in each year group are organised into ability sets. There is still a wide range of ability in each set. When lessons are planned to meet identified needs, pupils approach their separate work confidently and make significant progress. In Year 4, the subtraction problems matched the potential of pupils of lower ability; this ensured that most pupils experienced success. As in many classes, pupils of lower ability benefit from the enlightened support of a dedicated team of support assistants. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs are catered for sensitively and make solid progress towards their

targets. Similarly, effective support and clear explanations help pupils for whom English is an additional language to make steady progress in mathematics.

98. All teaching in Years 3 to 6 is at least satisfactory and some of it is good. There is variability in the way mental calculation is approached. In lessons, where teachers emphasise the different strategies that can be employed and move along at a brisk pace, pupils become much more adept at manipulating number. One very good lesson was observed. This was a higher ability group in Year 5 where expectations were high and planning was clearly linked to assessment information. The school has adopted a commercial 'error analysis' process to identify more precisely levels of attainment. In various classes throughout the school, where this is being used methodically, there are clear signs of much more rapid progress, since teachers are tailoring their lesson plans to the needs of all individuals in the class. In the classes where teachers have adopted a rigorous approach to assessment, they regularly identify specific areas of strength and weakness and adapt their lesson plans accordingly. This is good practice. The Year 5 pupils, for example, now know how to use brackets and extend number sequences, both of which were pinpointed by the assessment process.
99. The volume of written work is low, and too often exercise books are not used extensively. This lack means that investigational work, projects on shape, space and measure and data handling are not well documented. These aspects of mathematics are fully covered in the scheme of work, but teachers do not record detailed evidence of when and how aspects are taught. This makes it particularly difficult to assess the range of investigational work. The examples presented to inspectors were of the expected quality for the age of the pupils concerned. Talking to pupils and teachers, it is clear that these elements are covered in detail. Year 6 pupils have covered topics such as symmetry of two- and three-dimensional shapes and interpretation of graphs. Good work on angles was observed in both Years 5 and 6. Concepts such as acute and obtuse angles are presented well by teachers and understood by pupils.
100. In most lessons, pupils concentrate well, respond positively to the effective questioning techniques of their teachers and enjoy challenge. For instance, a lower ability group in Year 3 was very positive when using the points of a compass to examine half and quarter turns and contributed well to the final summing up session. When teachers' presentation is more sedate or unstructured, boys in particular can soon become disinterested and distract others. This does not happen often, but when it does the learning ethos in the class is adversely affected. Strong relationships are the norm and most pupils are willing participants in lessons. They enjoy making predictions, asking questions and working in groups. Homework is not used sufficiently or consistently, especially in Years 3 to 6.
101. Many of the issues raised in the previous inspection are still in evidence. Pace, challenge and matching work to the abilities of the identified groups are still to be implemented consistently. ICT is not yet fully integrated into curricular plans. Structured planning, allied to purposeful homework assignments, particularly as pupils get older, is not fully in place.
102. Leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory. The co-ordinators are fully committed to a rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluation. The new assessment framework is already acting as a springboard for the radical steps necessary for the move to an ethos that focuses more precisely on levels of attainment. Strong classroom management skills and solid inter-personal relationships already provide a sound basis for improved standards. The school is well placed to focus unashamedly on raising academic standards.

SCIENCE

103. Attainment in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 between 1999 and 2001 has increased at a similar rate to that nationally. Despite this, attainment has remained well below the national average from 1999 to 2002. Results were less good in 2002 than in the previous year. In 2002, three-quarters of pupils achieved the expected Level 4 or better, but less than one fifth achieved the higher Level 5. These results were well below the national average and the results of similar schools. Over the past four years, boys' attainment has been better than that of girls. In 2002, teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 indicated that most pupils achieved the expected Level 2, and about two-fifths the higher Level 3. Inspectors' judgements of these same pupils' work in Year 3 suggest that these results overestimate pupils' attainment. Inspection evidence shows attainment of the current pupils to be below average in both Years 2 and 6, although there is little significant difference in the work of girls and boys.
104. The previous inspection suggested that attainment was in line with the national expectations by Years 2 and 6. Pupils' progress and teaching were satisfactory. Attainment now is not as good, and pupils do not consistently work at the level they should. Teaching in some lessons seen was good, but too much does not challenge pupils sufficiently. Pupils' work does not demonstrate enough progression in learning and depth of coverage. Improvement overall has been unsatisfactory.
105. In Years 1 and 2, pupils acquire knowledge and skills at a satisfactory rate, but there is a lack of depth in too many aspects of the subject. Attainment remains below that expected. In Year 2, pupils understand different ways of keeping healthy. They understand the need to care for young babies or animals, and are aware of the changes that occur from birth to a full grown adult to old age. Literacy skills inhibit pupils' ability to communicate their scientific ideas. Lower attaining pupils record limited observations of change that occurs when various materials are heated. Little use is made of pupils' numeracy skills. There are a few examples of good use of literacy skills, such as when describing sounds in the environment; 'It was windy, the tree was rustling'. The work recorded by most pupils is too similar, and it is not always matched to the needs of different groups. Work in pupils' books suggests that the challenge for pupils is not consistently high enough.
106. Although during Years 3 to 6, pupils build satisfactorily on the base achieved by Year 2, the pace of learning is not high enough to overcome previous low attainment. As a result, pupils' attainment by Year 6 is below expectations and not as high as it could be. Pupils' scientific knowledge and skills are not developed systematically, and there is a lack of depth. In lessons observed, pupils showed satisfactory understanding of a range of skills, but these are not put together to achieve high enough standards. They know the factors that need to be controlled to make a test fair, but do not phrase scientific questions for investigation. Learning is limited because of too much teacher direction, rather than allowing pupils to learn through their own ideas and experiences. In the best lessons, such as in Year 5, pupils make effective use of their numeracy skills by recording measurements and ICT to enter and plot data related to changing heart rates. The session was well organised by the teacher, and pupils were led well to consider how to conduct the experiment. In Year 6, pupils understand that forces of gravity and air resistance act on a falling object. However, planned work was a repetition of a previously completed experiment. The work recorded by most pupils is very similar, and it is not always matched to the needs of different groups. In virtually all books and lessons, planning did not reflect the need to cater for pupils with special educational needs, or to extend the work of able pupils. Pupils enjoy their science and are well behaved. Attitudes and behaviour in science are much better when pupils are

engaged in practical activities. In Year 5, good concentration and teamwork were evident when planning an investigation, and when measuring and recording pulse rates. In Year 6, pupils concentrated well when investigating the rate of fall of spinners.

107. The quality of teaching seen in lessons varies from satisfactory to good. It is satisfactory overall. The absence of detailed guidance to ensure progression in the development of pupils' skills limits the impact of teaching. Much of the completed work in most classes lacks variation and teachers' expectations of pupils are not high enough. Planning does not take sufficient account of the needs of pupils who have special educational needs. In a good Year 5 lesson, the teachers' planning, enthusiasm and effective use of questions helped pupils to think how they could investigate a problem logically. Similarly in Year 6, pupils were given the opportunity to plan how to investigate fairly the effect of different numbers of paper clips on the rate of fall of spinners. Teachers, however, do not give pupils enough opportunity to raise their own questions and plan suitable investigations to test their ideas. In Years 1 and 2, teachers tend to attempt to cover too many skills within one session, and this limits the effectiveness of the lesson. Teachers do not extend pupils' speaking and listening skills sufficiently and have a tendency not to ask pupils to explain their ideas; this limits how aware pupils are of how well they have understood a topic. Satisfactory use is made of pupils' numeracy skills to promote learning in science, but literacy skills are not developed sufficiently. Insufficient use is made of ICT, although an exception was its good use in a Year 5 class when recording the results of pupils' investigation into pulse rates.
108. Insufficient detail is given in the school's guidance to ensure that pupils' skills and knowledge are developed in a systematic way. Commercial material and national guidance is not interpreted clearly to meet the needs of pupils in the school or to provide helpful support for teachers. The lack of detail means that some of the work is not at an appropriate level, such as when Year 6 pupils simply labelled and coloured the main parts of a plant. Similarly, a Year 6 lesson's plans featured an activity that pupils had completed previously. Assessment of pupils' scientific knowledge is satisfactory, with regular end-of-topic recording. Statutory testing is carried out and the data are analysed to indicate trends, but not yet in sufficient detail to be sure of strengths and weaknesses illustrated by pupils' replies. The systematic assessment of pupils' skills, which is a weakness, is seen as a priority for development. Science makes a limited contribution to pupils' personal development, mainly because there is little opportunity for pupils to raise questions and design investigations to answer them. The co-ordinator, who took up the post in September 2002, has identified a suitable range of areas that require improvement. Her own enthusiasm should go a long way in helping to improve science throughout the school. She is already providing good leadership through the example set in her own work in science in Year 5. The range of resources, particularly for accurate measurements, limits opportunities for pupils to achieve the highest standards.

ART AND DESIGN

109. By the end of Years 2 and 6, the standards reached by pupils are above the expected standard. This is a good improvement since the last inspection, when they were judged to be satisfactory. Pupils demonstrate skills in the use of a wide range of media and techniques. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make at least satisfactory, and often good, progress. Pupils show good attitudes to their work and develop confidence to apply the techniques they are taught.

110. Pupils are given opportunities to see the work of famous artists, such as Van Gogh, and learn to use pastels to copy his pictures, making effective use of line, shading and colour. In Year 1, pupils learn to draw self-portraits, and study and copy those by artists such as Matisse and Virginia Woolfe, making good use of pastel and crayon. They show good attention to detail when they study patterns in nature and make copies of them. Year 2 pupils apply and develop techniques of drawing, painting, cutting and sticking to illustrate real and imaginary scenes. New skills are acquired when they learn to print pictures and patterns using polystyrene, and to inscribe patterns on clay. They improve their ability to record from first-hand observation, and paint bold and lively portraits of their friends in the class to illustrate their poems. They look at different ways that artists such as Lowry and Van Gogh painted buildings, and then use the ideas to paint their own, showing developing skills in the use of pencil and watercolour. Links are made with science when pupils experiment with different materials to make striking pictures of 'Wooden Wendy', 'Fabric Freddy' and 'Paper Penelope'. They show competence in using a computer program to create a range of interesting coloured pictures and patterns.
111. Year 3 pupils show progression in their skills of cutting, sticking and assembling a range of materials to make striking pictures of Tutankhamen's mask and friezes in the style of the Ancient Egyptians. They show imagination in producing attractive patterns using pastel and crayons, and produce intricate patterns in pencil when they 'take a line for a walk'. In Year 4, pupils refine their portrait skills when they make framed water colour portraits of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. Their pastel drawings of musical instruments show good attention to perspective, shape, colour and shading, whilst their pen and ink drawings and patterns show great care and attention to detail. Year 5 pupils link art with history in drawing realistic pictures in pastel and pencil of people and transport from the Victorian era; they show well developed skills in observation and accuracy in representing form and detail. Higher attaining pupils show good skills in observing and drawing human figures and the details of their clothing. Pupils' pencil drawings of scenes from the Bayeux Tapestry are very impressive, and show skilful use of line and shading, and attention to detail, especially in the representation of people. Some pupils show exceptional skills in the use of chalk and pastel when they make eye-catching drawings of imaginary planets, which are colourful and skilfully shaded. Pupils also learn to evaluate and develop their work, and write thoughtful critiques of each other's drawings, discussing how they might be improved. They paint in the style of the square and circular patterns of Wassily Kandinsky and contrast tone, colour and texture, showing dexterity in the use of their paintbrushes. Year 5 pupils investigate different kinds of art when they visit the local museum and art gallery and meet a practising artist. They make good efforts to copy his style to enliven and use contrasts in their own art. Year 6 pupils demonstrate good use of pastel and pencil in their detailed observational drawings of musical instruments. They show sensitive use of colour and shape when drawing pictures in crayon in the style of Salvador Dali. Pupils broaden their knowledge, skills and understanding when they investigate the features of a container as a three-dimensional form, and explore ideas for its design. They learn and practise papier-mâché techniques and then design and make a simple container, which they paint and decorate. However, they make limited use of the designs in their sketchbooks, and their skills in using sketch books are under developed.
112. The overall standard of teaching, illustrated by the quality of pupils' work, is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan effectively, with clear objectives, which they explain to the pupils. They have high expectations of the pupils, and provide good support to them during lessons, by demonstrating, questioning and making suggestions, and by providing opportunities for critical evaluation during review sessions at the end of the lesson. Where teaching is satisfactory, as seen in

lessons in Years 4 and 6, planning and objectives are unclear, expectations are insufficiently challenging and suitable guidance and stimuli are not provided.

113. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of her responsibilities, and shows enthusiasm and commitment. She monitors colleagues' medium-term plans and samples of pupils' work, and visits classes at the end of lessons to examine new work and displays. Teachers are invited to see artwork from other classes, and examples of good work are framed and displayed around the school. There are plans for the co-ordinator to observe teaching, which is not being done currently, and to compile a portfolio of assessed work to assist staff development. The scheme of work provides a sound basis for planning, and was adapted using national guidance to offer a wider range of suggestions to teachers and pupils. Assessment, also based on national guidance, is satisfactory. Resources are stored centrally and are adequate, apart from a shortage of three-dimensional artefacts and sculptures.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

114. At the time of the last inspection, standards in design and technology were judged to be below the expected level and provision in this subject was identified as a key issue for the school to address. Since then, under the astute and determined leadership of the subject co-ordinator, provision has been significantly improved and is now a strength.
115. Standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations and at the end of Year 6 they are above the expected level. From a low starting point all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2, and well in Years 3 to 6.
116. Pupils make a good start in Year 1 designing and making musical instruments and pop-up toys. In Year 2, pupils show considerable skill in making jointed puppets and imaginative birdfeeders. They make sensible attempts to develop their own ideas and change their designs as these ideas grow. Weaknesses in Years 1 and 2 are the limited range of written work to support the developing ideas and the rare opportunities there are to use ICT in this subject.
117. A notable strength of pupils' work in Years 3 to 6 is the wide range of lively projects that are undertaken in each year group. There are good links with work in other subjects, exemplified by the design of masks as part of their historical studies of Ancient Greece and Egypt. Links with science are made as pupils in Year 6 use their knowledge of electricity to design and make moving vehicles. Pupils' skills in writing are developed well in all classes in Years 3 to 6, with many thoughtful and detailed evaluations. Pupils' designs are of a particularly high standard with many having carefully labelled drawings and explanations. A further strength is the good quality of pupils' finished projects. Good examples are the delightful pop-up books that pupils in Year 6 made for their younger peers; many of these show considerable care and skilful control. Weaknesses in Years 3 to 6 are the limited use of numeracy and ICT skills to support pupils' work.
118. No lesson was observed during the inspection. This was because the school has sensibly decided to teach design and technology in one weekly block each term. The objective is to raise the profile of this subject and ensure that projects are undertaken in great detail. This has been a very successful strategy and underpins the significant rise in standards. The good quality of pupils' work and the impressive range of projects indicate that teaching over time is at least satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Teachers make effective use of a helpful scheme of work that

guides their planning and makes sure that there is a gradual build up of skills as pupils move up through the school. Teachers' marking gives pupils useful feedback on their designs and often indicates what needs to be done to improve further.

119. The leadership and management of design and technology are very good. The subject co-ordinator has introduced a detailed scheme of work and monitors teachers' planning and pupils' work thoroughly. A well-presented photographic portfolio of pupils' work in every year group not only shows the range and quality of pupils' finished products but acts as a useful guide to new teachers in appreciating the quality of work that is expected in each year group. Resources have been significantly improved and are extremely well organised and accessible.

GEOGRAPHY

120. Standards at end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with those expected. This matches the judgements made at the last inspection. However, there have been improvements in other aspects of the subject. The enthusiastic co-ordinator now oversees a suitable scheme of work and resources have been fully catalogued. These factors have helped teachers to plan and resource lessons effectively. The main difficulty is the lack of continuity since the subject is taught in two terms out of three term, alternating with history. Consequently, months can pass after pupils have completed one module and start the next one. This inhibits progressive learning and means that teachers have to go over previously taught skills.
121. In Years 1 and 2 there is particularly good work in comparing different locations. Good links with literacy are nurtured when, for example, pupils write imaginary postcards from Arizona relating that they have seen scorpions, lizards and snakes. There is early awareness of the difference between human and physical features. In their work about the imaginary island of Struay, pupils show a greater understanding of the impact of buildings than, for example, rivers and hills. Simple work on co-ordinates is completed efficiently. Much of the work uses Barnaby Bear as a theme. This approach has enthused not only pupils but also their families. When abroad, numerous parents and friends of the school send cards to the school, purporting to come from Barnaby. This enlivens provision.
122. In Years 3 to 6, a good range of skills is developed. Pupils in Year 3 show a sound knowledge of symbols in the key to a map. They know that early settlements needed such essentials as wood and water nearby, and tackle their work robustly. By the time they reach Year 4 pupils justify opinions when comparing life in High Brooms and in Kenya. These pupils are also adept at note taking. Pupils in Year 5 have undertaken a local study of traffic flows in Powder Mill Lane. This activity is helping to develop research skills and pupils produce cogent arguments to support their suggestions of pedestrianisation, and re-siting the on-site vehicle hire company! Their mapping skills are well developed. The study of coasts is enhanced by the annual visit to the Isle of Wight. This provides invaluable experience of fieldwork to augment skills acquired in the classroom.
123. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good features. Most teachers show an enthusiasm for the subject. Explanations are clear and questioning often generates vigorous discussion. Research skills are emphasised and resources well prepared. In their geography lessons, teachers make sure that speaking and listening skills are practised regularly.
124. All pupils, including those with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language, enjoy their geography lessons. They make satisfactory progress. However, opportunities to use ICT are limited. Assessment is rightly recognised as an

area that requires refinement. The current focus on the quality of learning objectives in each lesson is entirely appropriate. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has undertaken a limited amount of monitoring of the teaching of enquiry skills. She also maintains an informative photographic record of key moments in the year. A portfolio of work showing standards expected for each year group is planned. The bubbly nature of the co-ordinator shows through in the approach to geography throughout the school. The school is ideally placed to raise standards further.

HISTORY

125. Standards in history are broadly in line with the expected standards at the end of Years 2 and 6. There are periods in the school year when no history takes place with particular groups and this lack of continuity means that pupils are unable to develop their skills in a consistent, planned way. Although the work available during the inspection indicates a match to the national expectations, there was still not enough of it to show whether pupils achieve this standard in all aspects of history.
126. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn about the past in a variety of interesting ways. In Year 1 they pretend to flee on the River Thames from the Great Fire of London and row their boats faster when it becomes too hot for them. They stand up to model the way that the wooden houses were built close together and then dramatically enact the way that the fire spread from house to house. Drawings, painting and clay models support this work very effectively. In response to the teacher's questions and prompts, pupils are keen to show off their knowledge about where the fire started and on which day and year. In Year 2, work on Guy Fawkes elicits some lively ideas in support of King James, and pupils advance reasons why they would not support the plot to blow up parliament. Careful observations of the school's own memorial to the dead of World War One are used well to underpin work about Remembrance Day.
127. In Years 3 to 6 pupils cover a range of topics linked to specific historical periods. In their study of the Ancient Egyptians pupils begin to learn about the importance of artefacts and work together to research into the importance of the River Nile. Simple comparisons between the lives of the rich and the poor make links between work on the Ancient Egyptians and life in Tudor times. Pupils begin to go beyond simple observations to suggest reasons for Henry VIII marrying six times. By the time they reach Years 5 and 6, pupils do research into the lives of eminent Victorians, such as Dr Livingstone and Florence Nightingale, and write accounts of their lives as child miners or chimney sweeps. Work on the Ancient Greeks builds on what the pupils already know about the modern Olympic Games and quickly leads them into finding out about the ancient games. The fact that different books contain different information and that television and video resources are also selective in the information they contain stimulates good discussion and some understanding about the nature of historical enquiry.
128. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In the teaching seen, teachers used a good range of questions and a variety of approaches to involve pupils. Discussions contributed to the school's emphasis on speaking and listening skills and numeracy links are made when pupils study Roman numerals and make number pyramids. The analysis of work, the scrutiny of planning and detailed information in the co-ordinator's file, as well as discussions with Year 6 pupils, show that teaching is closely based around national guidance that is used within the school. Although some pupils look up information on the Internet and in encyclopaedias, there was little evidence for the planned use of ICT to support the subject, except to wordprocess some pieces of work. There are good examples of cross-curricular links, particularly with art and design, and the results are well used in displays. The use of assemblies to share

information about what pupils have discovered about a topic helps to maintain interest in the subject even when there are long gaps between the times when it features on the timetable. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is a second language, are fully included in the subject and are supported by materials that address the needs of pupils with differing levels of skills in literacy.

129. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic about history and its place in the curriculum, and provides satisfactory leadership. Teaching expertise in the subject is now more evenly balanced across the school and the resources are better organised than at the time of the last inspection. Resources provided by parents provide useful additional materials to support work on the Queen's Golden Jubilee and World War Two. The development of one of the recently re-discovered air raid shelters, as part of the school's centenary celebrations, should make a substantial addition to the school's ability to bring history alive and will also be an interesting example of the school celebrating its own history. The use of the local area is, however, underdeveloped, as is the assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding, especially when so many responses to topics are made orally. Although pupils are assessed against each unit they study, teachers do not analyse pupils' progress over time against the expected National Curriculum standards for history. The collection of examples of pupils' work illustrating standards expected for each year group, that is now underway, is a useful start to this process. There has been satisfactory development in the subject since the last inspection because of the way that standards are now more uniform across the school and because teachers plan more for the varying needs of pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

130. At the time of the last inspection, provision in ICT was good with standards attained judged to be above the national expectations. Since then the school has struggled to keep pace with the rapid changes in this subject, teachers' confidence has declined and standards now are just at the expected level at the end of Years 2 and 6. There has been improvement in the resources available for ICT,
131. Levels of achievement are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Pupils make good use of a 'paint' program and select the brush size and colour of their choice and use spray effects confidently. Pupils in Year 2 use a database effectively to search for information about animals. As pupils move up through the school, these skills are developed successfully and, by Year 5, pupils use a database using correct vocabulary such as 'fields' and 'criteria'. Most pupils access and interrogate a database and higher attaining pupils realise the importance of framing careful search questions and some do produce their own appropriate questions. In all classes, pupils use wordprocessing to produce their written work in different fonts, colours and sizes. In Years 3 to 6, ICT is used adequately to support learning in other subjects. Pupils produce graphs as part of their studies in science and use CD-ROMs to find out information for their history work. Overall, though, teachers miss many opportunities to enhance pupils' learning through the creative use of ICT. A significant weakness in every year group is the very limited range of opportunities for pupils to use computers in routine class lessons. One consequence of this is that, by Year 6, pupils' keyboard skills are very weak indeed and this significantly reduces their ability to use computers confidently.
132. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the lessons observed teaching was good, particularly in Years 2, 5 and 6. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work over the course of the year indicates some weaknesses in terms of teachers' subject expertise and the knowledge of how to use ICT to support learning in other subjects. This is a key weakness and statutory requirements in this respect are just met. Teachers' knowledge of how pupils exchange and share information is especially weak. During

the inspection, effective use was made of those teachers with good subject knowledge; in Year 5 the subject co-ordinator taught both classes, with the other Year 5 teacher sitting in on a lesson as part of her professional development. A similarly effective exercise took place in Year 2. In these lessons, the teacher's thorough subject knowledge and confidence with the data projector ensured lively, successful lessons in which pupils made good progress. In these lessons, teaching assistants worked effectively to ensure that pupils with special educational needs were supported well and made good progress. Similarly, pupils whose first language is not English are supported well and make satisfactory progress

133. Leadership and management are adequate. This judgement reflects a range of strengths and weaknesses. Good use has been made of specific grants to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The school has been part of an EAZ (Education Action Zone) initiative to raise standards across the curriculum and this has greatly improved resources and is now having a positive impact on teachers' confidence in ICT. In particular, 16 laptops have been introduced and used effectively by pupils; those with special educational needs have benefited from this initiative. A weakness has been the lack of opportunities the subject co-ordinator has to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. One consequence is that the school has no reliable data by which to judge its effectiveness in this subject. Resources are good and, although the computer suite, used for the discrete teaching of ICT, is put to good use, classroom computers are seriously underused.

MUSIC

134. Standards attained by pupils in Years 2 and 6 are in line with those expected nationally. This shows a good improvement since the last inspection when attainment was below expectations. All pupils, including those who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils have positive attitudes to music and enjoy participating in the lessons and other musical activities provided for them. As reported in the last inspection, singing, especially in assemblies, is a particular strength.
135. Year 1 pupils make very good progress in learning to understand and recognise the sounds of different instruments, and how the sounds are made in different ways. They distinguish between soft and loud sounds. They listen carefully and learn to discriminate between different types of sounds. When given opportunities to make sounds with untuned instruments, they are keen to demonstrate to their peers, and describe the sounds they create with some accuracy. In singing practice, pupils use their voices expressively and sing lustily and tunefully together to the accompaniment of the piano. They memorise the words of popular children's songs, and enjoy singing them, often performing actions demonstrated by their teachers. They clap their hands together and learn to keep time together in rhythm. In assemblies, the standard of singing is above average, and pupils partake with enthusiasm and panache.
136. In Year 3, pupils progress well in performing instrumental and non-instrumental sounds to imitate the noise made by winds of different strengths. Useful links are made with science and geography when the Beaufort scale is discussed. They show creativity in making different types of sounds using a range of untuned instruments and everyday objects, such as bottles, paper and card. They then perform confidently a conducted sequence of accompaniments to a story. In a well-conducted singing assembly, pupils participate fully in songs and hymns as part of an act of worship, and show confidence in their abilities to sing together, with clear diction and control of pitch. In this, they effectively develop and apply their reading, speaking and listening skills. In Year 6, prior to composing and performing an instrumental sequence, pupils listen with attention and concentration to instrumental recordings representing the

journey of a steam train. They become involved in thoughtful discussion about the music played to them, and show good understanding of tempo, timbre, pitch and duration. However, when they compose their musical sequences, although they competently produce suitable sounds, they are less successful in using musical notation to record these on paper. They are very competent and perceptive in their appraisal of each other's efforts in the end of lesson review session. Pupils also demonstrate their skills in the appraisal of music from different times and cultures when they explore and explain their own ideas and feelings about pieces of music, using appropriate musical vocabulary.

137. The quality of teaching varies, but it is satisfactory overall, and a number of good lessons were seen. Some teachers are more confident and competent than others in teaching music. Good teaching results from lessons that are well planned and resourced, with clear objectives related to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, and are thoroughly organised. Teachers draw on good subject knowledge to challenge the pupils, and interact with them to interest and stimulate them. In a very good lesson in which the pace is brisk and businesslike, pupils are keen to participate and their interest is sustained; they work well, and clearly focused questioning and prompting by the teacher enable them to learn effectively. During lessons, pupils are given good opportunities to handle the instruments and to experiment with making sounds with them. In a good lesson, pupils listen carefully to sequences of clapping performed by the teacher, remember them and then imitate them; this proves to be an effective way of developing pupils' listening and performing skills. Where teaching is less successful, lesson objectives lack focus on the teaching of specific musical skills, expectations are not high enough, the pace of the lesson is too slow and there is insufficient guidance and support to enable pupils to achieve well.
138. The subject is well led and managed by the co-ordinator, who has been in post for five years, and is ably supported by a colleague with musical skills. The co-ordinator gains an overview of standards by monitoring medium-term planning, observing lessons, followed by feedback to the teachers, and interviewing pupils. On occasions, teachers exchange classes to enable more confident and competent staff to have a wider influence on standards across the school. The school's music policy was updated recently, and the scheme of work has been revised, using national guidance, to take effect from 2003. This document provides opportunities for the use of CDs to support the needs of colleagues with a range of musical competence. Assessment is satisfactory, and draws on national guidance. Resources are stored centrally and provision is satisfactory, apart from a shortage of percussion instruments for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Provision for extra-curricular music is good, and includes the recorder group, the choir and violin lessons. Pupils also participate in the annual carol service, an instrumental workshop run by the county music service and the local music festival.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

139. At the end of Year 6, pupils' standards are at the level expected. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily, and there is no evident difference in the performance of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Standards have remained broadly at the level reported during the last inspection. All pupils have an equal opportunity to develop their skills and there are no marked differences between boys and girls in gymnastics, games, dance or swimming.
140. Owing to the organisation of the timetable it was not possible to observe pupils in Year 2 in physical education and hence judge their standard. In a Year 1 lesson that links with the history topic, pupils develop sequences of movement well to illustrate

events during the Great Fire of London. Pupils responded well to the directions from the teacher. Many pupils refine their movements following the teacher's comments.

141. By the end of Year 6, pupils understand the effects of exercise on the heart rate, and develop control and fluency in a range of gymnastic movements. In Year 4, pupils produced an above average performance in dance. They responded very positively to the African music and a song about Africa by Paul Simon. Boys and girls performed with enthusiasm and skill, and refined their work well. Year 3 pupils also worked well together to develop rhythmical dance skills. Pupils in Year 4 were confident in the water, and almost half had already achieved the minimum swimming standard expected. In Year 5, pupils' control of a table tennis ball with a bat was about average, but improvement in the lesson was limited.
142. Teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school, although there are examples of good teaching in dance and swimming. The management of pupils overall is good, although in Year 3 occasions when management became less effective restricted opportunities to extend pupils' skills. Pupils learn well when teachers concentrate on how to achieve improvements in performance. In all lessons observed, teachers used demonstration by pupils well to illustrate good practice, but opportunities to develop pupils' evaluative skills were missed. Good attention is paid to health and safety. Teachers ensure that pupils warm up and warm down effectively and pupils understand the need for these activities. Not all staff set a good role model and dress inappropriately for physical education, including occasions when outdoor shoes were worn. Good expertise helped to ensure pupils improved stamina, style and range of strokes in swimming, although members of one group were inactive for too long.
143. The curriculum planned for physical education meets statutory requirements and provides a wide range of activities, especially in Years 3 to 6. Extra-curricular activities, such as the dance club, make a positive contribution to performance. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. They learn to work as a group or team and to support each other. In Year 1, they were encouraged to think how people felt when trapped in their homes during the Great Fire of London, and cultural development was well promoted in Year 4 with the use of traditional African music. Assessment in swimming is good, and a satisfactory assessment scheme is used for each other unit of study. Good co-operation with local schools is leading to improved, consistent curricular planning. Outdoor activities are supported as part of a residential visit. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and has a clear understanding of the subject. She supports colleagues effectively by monitoring planning and offering guidance. Resources are satisfactory and accommodation includes two halls.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

144. Standards attained by pupils in Years 2 and 6 are in line with those expected. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection when they were below those expected and identified as a key issue in the report. Pupils have a positive attitude to the subject, and their behaviour is generally good. Learning is satisfactory. Pupils gain a broad knowledge about Christian and other principal religious traditions in Britain, and their main similarities and differences, although more able pupils do not examine sufficiently the essential value and belief systems underpinning them.
145. Pupils in Year 1 learn about Jesus and John the Baptist, the ritual of baptism and religious symbols. They participate well in discussion, but follow-up tasks show limited knowledge and understanding of the topic. In Year 2, pupils write confidently about some of the activities that take place within a church. They show that they

understand about prayers, and write a thoughtfully worded prayer of thanks. When they study the life of Jesus, they produce well-illustrated accounts of the story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand, or Jesus walking on the water, which they describe using cartoons. They also learn about religions other than Christianity, such as Hinduism. They learn that Hindus pray to many Gods, and they are curious to find out about them. In their written tasks describing pictures of the Gods, they show good knowledge and understanding, and achieve well.

146. In Year 3, pupils study Judaism and explain clearly the meaning of key vocabulary such as 'shema', 'rabbi' and 'synagogue'. In Year 4, they study Islam and learn about the Five Pillars of Wisdom. Pupils of all abilities clearly show that they understand the similarities between a church and mosque. In Year 5, they study Sikhism and develop their use of related religious vocabulary; they describe the 'five ks', and the 'gudwara' clearly and accurately. In Year 6, pupils show interest in learning about childhood ceremonies in Judaism, such as naming ceremonies. They participate well in whole-class discussion with the teacher and in small groups. However, there is limited evidence that more able pupils have sufficient understanding of religious beliefs, or are sufficiently challenged in their learning about them; this applies to their understanding both of Christianity and of other world religions.
147. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and the time allocated to religious education is now matches that recommended. Examples of good teaching, seen in Years 1 and 2, results from teachers having clear learning objectives based on the locally agreed syllabus and the school's scheme of work. They make skilful use of pictorial, book and other suitable resources to stimulate the pupils' interest and to provide sufficient insights for pupils who come from a range of religious and non-religious backgrounds and traditions. They are also confident in their subject knowledge, and involve pupils in meaningful discourse about essential religious ideas and beliefs. In a good lesson, the teacher introduced the subject in a lively and animated manner, with effective use of questioning to check on pupils' previous knowledge. Clear picture resources were used, and pupils were given a helpful framework to guide them in their written tasks later in the lesson. Work was suitably challenging and matched to meet pupils' differing needs, and there was suitable teacher intervention to support and encourage pupils of all abilities. Where teaching is satisfactory, objectives are not so clear; they are not fully explained to the pupils, and tasks are not suitably adapted to meet the needs of the full ability range in the class. In such cases, pupils are taught about religion, but insufficient emphasis is placed on learning from religion. Teaching in religious education is well supplemented by school assemblies, which provide pupils with opportunities to reflect on a range of important issues and support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
148. Management and leadership of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator works well to support staff with the provision of resources, and to maintain an overview of standards by checking planning and examining samples of pupils' work. The school's religious education policy was updated in 2001; the scheme of work draws upon national guidelines and the locally agreed syllabus. However, there is limited evidence that the school makes sufficiently close reference to the latter, especially in relation to the assessment of pupils' progress. The local education authority adviser has provided appropriate training. Provision and storage of resources for teaching the subject are satisfactory, although no list is available to the staff. There are good links with the local church, which supports the provision of religious education in the school.