

INSPECTION REPORT

HERNE CHURCH OF ENGLAND INFANT SCHOOL

Herne, Herne Bay, Kent

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118710

Headteacher: Mrs S R J Wilson

Reporting inspector: Michael Allcock
19834

Dates of inspection: 18th – 21st November 2002

Inspection number: 247946

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
School category: Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 – 7 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Palmer Close
Herne
Herne Bay
Kent

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Rev. Patrick Sales

Date of previous inspection: 9th February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19834	Michael Allcock	Registered inspector	History; music; physical education	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9086	Rosalie Watkins	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?
28014	Peter Buckley	Team inspector	Science; art and design; Foundation Stage; special educational needs	
24891	Jackie Johnson	Team inspector	Mathematics; information and communication technology; design and technology; geography	
23999	Catherine Davey	Team inspector	English; religious education; educational inclusion	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Herne Infants is a nine-class Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) school for boys and girls in the village of Herne, near Herne Bay, in Kent. It has 266 pupils on roll, which is about the national average. It serves the village and surrounding area, but pupils also travel from outside the catchment area. About three per cent of pupils come from ethnic minorities, but of these none has English as an additional language, which is low. About four per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below average. Other indicators show that socio-economic circumstances of families are about average. Sixteen per cent of pupils are on the register of special educational needs, although none of these has a statement; this is below the national average. The pupils with the most significant special educational needs have speech and communication or physical difficulties, moderate learning difficulties or autism. Children enter the Foundation Stage in the reception classes with broadly below average attainment.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Herne Infants is a very effective and successful school. The pupils reach well above average standards in writing, above average standards in mathematics and science, and broadly average standards in reading by the time they leave the school. In their three years in the school, pupils achieve very well due to the very effective teaching of a very well designed curriculum they receive, their very positive attitudes to learning and very good behaviour. The headteacher provides outstanding educational direction for the school. She receives very active support from all within the school's close family. The school has many strengths and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Children in the reception classes receive a very good start to their education.
- Standards in English, mathematics, science, religious education, art and music are above average by the time pupils leave the school. They achieve well in these subjects.
- The quality of teaching is very good or better in almost six out of ten lessons, promoting very effective learning by the pupils.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership, with well-informed support from the governing body, ensuring that the school is very well managed.
- The Foundation Stage curriculum is outstanding and that for Years 1 and 2 pupils is very good, providing a very wide range of learning opportunities for all aspects of pupils' development. There are very good arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' progress and achievements.
- Pupils behave very well, work hard and have very constructive relationships. This promotes very good personal development and improving academic standards.
- All pupils are looked after very carefully. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, who make very rapid progress.

What could be improved

- The school has no significant weaknesses.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since its last inspection in February 1998. The minor points for development identified then have been fully addressed. High standards in most aspects of the school's work have been maintained. Pupils' attainments in end of Year 2 national tests have improved over that time, particularly in writing. The quality of teaching and learning has been enhanced with more very good and excellent lessons seen. Behaviour is even better, so pupils are more able to take advantage of the school's very imaginative curriculum, which has attracted regional and national interest. The school sets challenging targets for pupils' attainment, based on careful analysis of the performance of individuals and groups. The school has implemented all national initiatives of recent years comprehensively and still found time to undertake action research of its own to design a programme to uniquely fit its own pupils' needs.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	D	C	C	D
Writing	C	B	A	B
Mathematics	D	C	B	C

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

Standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2002 were well above the national average for writing, above average for mathematics and in line for reading when compared to all schools. Standards in teacher assessments of science were above the national average. When compared to schools with similar levels of free school meals, standards in writing were above average, in mathematics average and in reading below average. However, in work seen during the inspection pupils' standards in reading were on course to exceed the national average by the end of the current school year. Although the level of mobility in the school is broadly average, several pupils predicted to attain the higher Level 3 results in 2002 left the school before taking the 2002 tests. School research shows that these pupils actually did reach these standards at the schools to which they transferred.

Children enter the reception classes with below average levels of attainment overall. However, their personal, social and emotional development is about average. Children make good progress in lessons, achieving well in their time in reception due to very good teaching of an excellent curriculum. The majority are on target to meet the Early Learning Goals in all Foundation Stage areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 also achieve well, reaching above average standards in English, mathematics, science, religious education, art and design and music by the time they leave the school. Achievement is very good overall, as pupils enter the school with below average attainments and leave with above average attainments three years later. Pupils with special educational needs also make very good progress throughout the school, due to the very good provision that the school makes for them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very positive. Pupils love coming to school. They are eager to learn in their lessons and try very hard in them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school, helping to produce a busy, harmonious working environment.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships are very constructive. Pupils' personal development is very well promoted by the school's curriculum.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils' attendance is well above the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence is below average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is very good overall. During the inspection, all teaching was satisfactory or better. It was good or better in nine out of ten lessons. The teaching of English is very good overall, with outstanding teaching seen in one out of every six lessons in Years 1 and 2. Key literacy skills are very well taught in English lessons and effectively reinforced widely in lessons across the curriculum. Mathematics is well taught, so that numeracy skills are quickly acquired and applied by pupils.

Teaching is a very strong feature in all areas of learning in reception. Teaching is also very good in Year 1. It is good in Year 2. The school works very hard to ensure that pupils with special educational needs have very well focused teaching, promoting their very good progress in lessons. There are no weaknesses in any aspect of teaching and learning in the school. Teachers, many of whom have significant additional qualifications, display very secure subject knowledge. They teach the key basic skills very effectively, using a very wide range of methods to motivate and inspire pupils. Pupils are very well managed so that they maintain interest, and concentrate very carefully, working hard in all curriculum areas and quickly acquiring new skills and understanding. Teachers assess pupils' work very carefully and feed back information to them immediately, so that they quickly understand what they must do next to improve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good overall. Excellent for children in the Foundation Stage. Imaginative and well designed, it is very relevant and accessible to all pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very effective. The needs of these pupils are very accurately assessed. They are very well supported and their progress is carefully monitored.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Provision for pupils' cultural development is outstanding. It is very good for their spiritual, moral and social development. The school's inclusive ethos prepares pupils very effectively for life in a diverse society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good overall. The school has excellent procedures for child protection and to eliminate oppressive behaviour. Pupils' work is very well assessed and teachers use information gained very effectively.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. Excellent leadership is provided by the headteacher. Good levels of delegation to the very well qualified and committed staff team mean that all can use their skills to best effect for the benefit of pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors are knowledgeable and effective. Their sub-committees are very well led. Governors play an active part in the life of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good overall. Data are well used to set challenging targets. Strengths and weaknesses are carefully analysed to plan effective action.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Governors seek best value for the money they spend, linking this effectively to priorities on the school improvement plan.

There are an excellent number of highly qualified teachers and support staff to meet the needs of the school's curriculum. The accommodation, inside and out, is very well planned and used. The school is currently adding a computer suite to its excellent specialist provision. Resources are very good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good behaviour, which means that their children like coming to school and are becoming good citizens of tomorrow. • High expectations that their children will work hard and make rapid progress. • Good quality teaching, which means that their children do well in lessons and national tests. • The headteacher is a strong leader and the school is well managed. • They appreciate the accessibility and responsiveness of staff members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information that they receive about their children's progress.

Inspection findings support these and the many other positive views parents have about their school. The school provides many opportunities for parents to find out about their children's progress. However, at present annual reports do not give parents an indication about how their children are doing in the subjects of the National Curriculum against national expectations. Overall, the school works very productively with parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The way standards are judged has been modified since the school was last inspected in 1998. Then, judgements about results in national tests were based on the proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 or above. Now, points are allocated to the levels attained by pupils and schools' average points are compared. Overall, pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science, the core subjects assessed at the end of Year 2, have improved since the last inspection, particularly in writing and mathematics. Standards in reading are broadly similar. The school has worked hard to raise standards, with notable success in writing, due to its imaginative, research-driven approach to this aspect of English, which has attracted significant local and national interest. Standards in the 2002 end of Year 2 tests of writing were well above average. This result shows outstanding achievement made in the three years pupils spend in the school, as children enter the reception classes with attainment below average overall. In 2002 tests of reading, pupils' standards were in line with those seen nationally. In mathematics, they were above average. Results of teacher assessments in science were above the national average at both the expected Level 2 and above and the higher Level 3 and above.
2. Schools are not only compared to all other schools of the same type nationally, but to schools with similar levels of free school meals. Herne Infants has a relatively low take up of free school meals, which places it in the category of the most socially advantaged schools in the country. The school's own research indicates that more families are eligible than actually take up the free school meal entitlement. Other evidence, including census information, points to the school's socio-economic status being broadly average overall. When compared to schools with similar proportions of free school meals, results in the 2002 tests were below average in reading, above average in writing and broadly average in mathematics. Teacher assessments of science were also broadly average overall.
3. Results over the last three years show that boys marginally outperform girls in reading, but that this is reversed in writing and mathematics. The school, aided by its local education authority partners, rigorously analyses information from national test results and its own comprehensive assessment programme to draw conclusions about the value it adds to the performance of whole year groups, boys, girls, pupils with special educational needs and individuals. Test results in reading have remained most resistant to improvement. The three-year average test score for girls, for example, is the only one in the three tested subjects where the school has a score below a national gender average. The school has targeted reading standards for improvement. The current improvement plan prioritises raising the attainment of pupils with below average standards. The aim is to help to ensure that they have the necessary basic skills to flourish as readers, with the additional benefit that they score at least average points in end of Year 2 tests, helping to raise overall attainment in reading. Evidence from the current inspection indicates that this is having the desired effect.
4. Children entered the reception classes in all recent years with standards below average overall, as measured by the local education authority's baseline assessment procedures. This year's Foundation Stage children are no exception, although their standards in personal, social and emotional development were broadly average overall. Children in the three reception classes, taught by a new staff team, are making a flying start to their school careers and the majority are attaining broadly average standards in the Foundation Stage curriculum, with standards above average in personal, social and emotional development. They achieve well in all six areas of learning, with most on course to attain all the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. They are well prepared for the National Curriculum, due to the excellent curriculum they experience in their reception year and the very good teaching they receive.
5. Progress is maintained in Years 1 and 2. Pupils achieve well in these years, so that by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 2 they are attaining above average standards overall, both

in lessons and national tests. This represents very good achievement overall in the three years that the pupils spend in the school. Teaching remains a strong feature of lessons, particularly in Year 1. The curriculum is rich and diverse and particularly well adapted to the needs of young learners. Refinements like the introduction of a multisensory room, cutting-edge approaches to the physical education curriculum, with proven benefits including to pupils' handwriting, and a very positive environment supported by an excellent ethos have helped to raise overall standards in tests in recent years.

6. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 2, they have above average overall standards in English and achieve well in this key subject. Standards of literacy are good. Teachers plan well for core literacy skills to be rehearsed and applied by pupils widely in lessons in all curriculum areas. By the end of Year 2, pupils have above average overall standards in speaking and listening. However, listening skills are better developed than those for speaking and many pupils find it difficult to construct whole sentences, and answer with single word or simple one-phrase answers to the questions teachers ask them. However, the higher attaining pupils speak fluently, linking their ideas into complex sentences in lessons and assemblies. Almost all listen carefully to members of staff or fellow pupils before answering. Careful planning, especially in the reception classes, means that teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to further develop oracy skills. By the end of their time in the school, most pupils have positive attitudes to reading. They enjoy sharing and discussing their current book. Standards are broadly average. Most pupils recognise known words in books with which they are familiar, and have appropriate strategies to try to read unknown words. The school works hard to improve skills further, including by striving to develop home-school approaches to reading. Evidence from reading records indicates that this is not reciprocated in all cases. The school has had considerable success in raising standards in writing in recent years. Imaginative and original approaches to this aspect of English have led to higher test results and enhanced status for individual teachers and the school overall in this field. There is much professional development for colleagues in other schools offered, and further action research is being undertaken to ensure that standards remain high. All pupils learn to write using a cursive script from their earliest experiences as writers. They are encouraged to attempt unknown spellings and soon become confident and enthusiastic writers. By the end of Year 2, many pupils write short pieces with sentences arranged logically, appropriate punctuation used and spelling and grammar well developed. Standards are well above the national average.
7. Standards are above average in mathematics by the time pupils leave the school. By the end of Year 2, pupils order numbers accurately and are using mathematical language appropriately; for example, naming and using partitioning when doubling higher numbers. They apply number bonds and simple tables effectively in their work. They know the names and understand the properties of common two-dimensional shapes and simple solids. The higher attaining pupils identify which shapes are symmetrical. Most pupils are confident when adding and subtracting small numbers. The upper Year 2 set in the first term of the year work with three-digit numbers, showing good understanding of place value. Basic numeracy skills are well taught and reinforced in mathematics lessons and applied widely in subjects across the curriculum, including science and art and design. Pupils achieve well in mathematics.
8. Standards are above average in science and pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 2, pupils show increased understanding of the notion of fair testing. They design and carry out their own simple experiments and use science specific terminology in their reports. This is helped as teachers identify key words in their planning and share them with pupils. Pupils are developing good levels of knowledge in all the strands of science taught, due to the well-designed curriculum that the school has developed.
9. Pupils attain broadly average standards by the time they leave the school in information and communication technology (ICT), achieving as well as they should. Pupils are given well-focused exposure to computers and other ICT products as they move through the school. They share listening centres and work happily with programmable toys from reception onwards. They use tape recorders confidently to record their compositions in music in Year 2. Year 2 pupils use a mouse and keyboard accurately. Most can save and retrieve their work independently. Standards

in this increasingly vital subject area have been targeted for improvement. A new computer room has been built and, during the inspection week, contractors were installing the new computers that the school has ordered.

10. Pupils' standards in religious education are above those expected by the locally agreed syllabus by the time the pupils leave the school. Pupils achieve well. Sensitive teaching of a well-planned curriculum, with clear links to other subject areas, promotes good levels of knowledge and understanding. The school's very positive ethos and its strong links with the local church and the Canterbury diocese have helped to create the inclusive, welcoming atmosphere that characterises the school. The school is aware that it must work harder because there are few pupils from different religious and ethnic backgrounds on roll. The excellent range of multifaith and multicultural artefacts that are displayed and used widely around the school helps in this.
11. The teaching of art and design is strong and the high quality of artefacts and commissioned works displayed around the school create a vibrant and welcoming environment. Pupils' own work is also well displayed. As a result, pupils achieve well in art and design, reaching standards above the national average. The subject leader for music is very well qualified. She has designed a rich curriculum, which is well taught by herself and her colleagues. Resources are excellent, with the benefit of a dedicated music room helping to raise standards, as the resources are well displayed and easily accessible for class use. Pupils attain above average standards in music and achieve well. Standards in design and technology, geography, history and physical education are broadly average by the end of Year 2. Pupils achieve as well as they should in these foundation subjects.
12. The school works very hard to create an ethos of care and inclusion. Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). They are very well supported in lessons and make very good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well over time and make equally good progress in lessons, due to carefully planned work and very good support from good quality teaching assistants. The setting of all pupils for spelling and numeracy once a week in Year 2, provides additional support for pupils with special educational needs. As a measure of success, the SEN register shows the effectiveness of pupils' individual education plans. Higher attaining pupils achieve well, as work is structured to their particular needs in most lessons. The small number of pupils from ethnic minorities, none of whom has English as an additional language, are well integrated and achieve well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

13. The very positive attitudes to learning, and strengths in behaviour and personal development, noted at the previous inspection, have all been maintained. Parents are very happy about the way their children love coming to school because learning is made so interesting and enjoyable for them. Attendance has recently improved and is now very good. Parents do their best to bring their children in good time each morning so that lessons can start promptly.
14. With few exceptions, pupils of all ages take great interest in their lessons and show much enjoyment of school life in general. In lessons, they listen intently to their teachers and are often eager to answer questions. At times, a real sense of wonder is apparent, as they meet with new ideas. For instance, in an art and design lesson they were fascinated as they examined a picture by the artist Miro, because the teacher so skilfully focused their attention on each detail in turn. They can be trusted to persevere and work without direct supervision when this is appropriate; for instance, if the teacher sets them a task to do while she takes another group for reading. They work sensibly together aiding their progress, as in a Write Dance lesson where, in pairs, they found ways to move their arms in flowing patterns. Even the youngest ones usually manage to share resources amicably. Just occasionally, if the pace of a lesson falters, pupils' attention tends to wander, although they soon become absorbed when the work becomes more interesting again. The children in the reception classes show even greater interest and concentration than older ones, because of the very consistent and skilful way they are presented with stimulating learning activities, pitched at just the right level to help their development. Pupils with special

educational needs have very positive attitudes to their work, and their behaviour is very good because they are fully integrated into classes and participate in an inclusive curriculum.

15. Pupils' behaviour is very good. All pupils, regardless of ability or other differences, mix well together in the classroom and playground. They show respect for property, and they are friendly to each other and polite and courteous to adults. They develop a strong sense of what is right and wrong and learn to consider each other's feelings, because of the way teachers exploit opportunities to encourage this. They help to decide their own classroom rules and understand that these guide them to be kind and considerate towards each other. Unkindness such as bullying seldom arises; as one girl said, when describing what she liked about the school, 'Everyone is kind'. Exclusion never becomes necessary.
16. Pupils of all ages respond very well to the well-judged opportunities they are given to use their own initiative and take responsibility. For instance, those in the school council took very seriously the task of helping to choose new large play equipment to install in their playground, because they knew that their choices should benefit all in the school. In all classes pupils readily take their turn at various classroom duties, carrying them out with care. Very good moral and spiritual development is displayed in the way they also learn to think about those in need in the wider world, as in a religious education lesson when they empathised with the poor, unhappy people whom Mother Theresa helped. They regularly join in a range of fund-raising activities to help others less fortunate than themselves.
17. Pupils' cultural development is particularly strong because of the way the school promotes this. For instance, helped by what their teachers tell them about other countries, pupils are keen to learn more and talk enthusiastically about their project to post 'Flat Stanley' off on his travels to find information for them about distant lands. They show an easy acceptance of other peoples' differences. For instance, they are keen to demonstrate how to say 'good morning' in five or six different languages. They achieve this confidently, pleased with their ability. Those who communicate in other ways are not forgotten either, as pupils can also offer a greeting in sign language.
18. Attendance is even better than at the previous inspection. It is very good both in the reception classes and in the older age groups. It is rare for pupils to miss school without good reason, although the growing number of family holidays taken in term time causes the school a degree of concern.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching is very good overall. It contributes significantly to the very effective learning seen in the majority of lessons and to the improving standards by the time pupils leave the school. Teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons seen during the inspection. It was good or better in almost nine out of ten lessons and very good or excellent in almost six out of ten. This represents good improvement, even on the high standards of teaching and learning reported following the school's 1998 inspection. Then there were fewer lessons rated good or better and a lower proportion of very good and excellent lessons. Then, as now, the most consistently high quality lessons were seen in the reception classes. The school identified a common planning format, enhanced professional development and revised curriculum documentation as key areas for development. These have had the planned effect, with the improvements to teaching and learning now feeding through into higher standards in lessons and end of Year 2 test results.
20. Teaching is very good overall for reception age children in the Foundation Stage, where a very productive beginning is made to formal education. During the inspection, almost all teaching seen was either very good or excellent. Children acquire very effective work habits, develop the capacity for concentration over extended periods and are sensitively managed, so that they have the time and space to become increasingly independent and take a high degree of responsibility for their own learning. They are independent in most self-help skills, such as changing for physical education lessons, and confident when given choices as to what activities to undertake and which resources to use to complete their tasks. Children enter school with attainments broadly below

average. They make good progress in lessons, achieve well in all areas of learning due to the consistently high quality teaching they receive and enter Year 1 classes with standards now in line with those expected for pupils of that age.

21. Teaching quality is also very good overall in Year 1, with one lesson in ten rated excellent and almost six out of ten very good or better. Overall in Years 1 and 2 teaching is good, with eight out of ten lessons good or better and four out of ten very good or excellent. Every teacher in the school, including those on temporary contracts, was seen teaching at least one very good or excellent lesson. Learning is very good overall. However, like teaching it is better in reception and Year 1. Lesson pace is brisk so pupils are used to working productively. They acquire new skills and understanding very readily. A very good range of teaching and learning styles are employed and lessons are very well organised, so that they can proceed at a brisk pace. Teachers and support staff work very productively together. Relationships are very constructive, so overt discipline is seldom needed. Almost all teachers are very effective managers, so when pupils need to be gently reminded of the school's expectations or class rules, lessons are not disrupted.
22. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is very effective. This has a significant impact on the progress that pupils make in lessons, their achievement over time, especially in writing and mathematics, and the standards attained in national tests. The school has worked hard to plan and implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies consistently, helping pupils to build securely on previous learning. Teachers plan carefully for pupils to make regular use of their literacy and numeracy skills in all curriculum areas. Numeracy skills and standards in the subject have been enhanced by setting for the subject in Year 2. The headteacher joins the three Year 2 class teachers, so that the mathematics sets are smaller than normal class sizes. However, the school does not at present focus teaching even more directly at pupils' levels of attainment by careful matching of tasks to pupils' capacity within the sets. The teaching of basic skills within other curriculum areas is also very strong. The school has an unusually high proportion of advanced skills teachers, plus one teacher who is at present seconded to the General Teaching Council. This, and a dedicated commitment by all staff to continuous professional development, has given teachers a particularly secure knowledge base across the primary curriculum. The high level of secondments, plus maternity leaves, has meant that new teams are in place in all year groups. They have gelled quickly into very effective teaching units.
23. Teaching is very good overall in English. One in six of the lessons seen during the inspection was of outstanding quality. Teaching is good overall in the other core subjects, mathematics and science, and also in the extended core subject of religious education. There are very strong elements seen in many lessons, particularly in English where almost one half of the lessons seen were judged excellent or very good. Insufficient direct teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) was seen to make a secure judgement on teaching quality. However, overall the teachers use ICT effectively when planning and during their lessons. In the foundation subjects, very effective teaching of art and design and music was seen, leading to above average standards in these subjects. Teaching was also a strong feature of work seen in design and technology, geography, history and physical education.
24. In almost all lessons there are strong features, which help to create the excellent ethos and very effective working environment seen within the school. For example, in a library lesson in Class 7, groups of pupils were withdrawn into the adjacent multisensory room by the teaching assistant. A specialist in this approach, she used stimulating sounds and music, reinforced by pupils' bursting of paper bags they had blown up and the use of streamers, blown bubbles, torches and coloured filters to create a fireworks theme. A high-energy output was followed by a period of deep reflection, as the group lay on the floor, spent fireworks themselves, listening to music and reviewing the session. Very high quality language enrichment is a result of this multisensory/multimedia approach. The school's very well devised curriculum contributes to the pupils' good achievement and their open response to their learning. Effective planning, a close working partnership between staff and the effective use of some very good and excellent resources result in lessons of this motivational level. However, occasionally the highly skilled and effective teaching assistants are not used effectively during the extended introductions to literacy or numeracy lessons.

25. The quality of questioning and ongoing assessment is very good overall; it is excellent for children in the reception classes. Teachers interact regularly with individuals or groups of pupils to assess understanding. Direct feedback gives pupils a very clear understanding of what they should do to improve their performance. The final review sessions at the end of most lessons is very well used to undertake work of this kind. However, when there has been some slippage of time during the lessons, or the lesson planned is too short to enable a full plenary session to be profitably undertaken, opportunities to share work from different groups, reinforce learning and move it on are missed. Homework is well used to extend pupils' learning overall. It is often set during final sessions and some of the best arises naturally from work in progress and leads to pupils taking responsibility for their own learning by following up suggested leads. For example, in a Year 1 lesson in Class 5, informal religious education homework was set when pupils were asked to think of a special gift for a special person, following a lesson about the Christmas story.
26. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Well-qualified teaching assistants work closely with class teachers to promote pupils' understanding and encourage them to stay on task and persevere. In most lessons, teachers match the work closely to the learning needs of the pupils. They identify pupils with special educational needs on their planning and state what, if any, specific support, resources or focused activities they will undertake. Pupils' individual education plans contain clear targets planned by the special educational needs co-ordinator and the class teacher to ensure that the work is matched to pupils' needs. These plans are reviewed and updated regularly. However, the co-ordinator's teaching of pupils with special educational needs is limited to the once a week setting of Year 2 pupils in mathematics and spelling.

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

27. The school provides a very rich, exciting curriculum that takes account of the needs of all its pupils. This is a major strength of the school. The quality and range of learning opportunities are very good and include visits to local places of interest such as Herne Windmill, as well as visits to places farther afield. The Year 2 annual visit to France gives pupils opportunities to learn in a different setting as well as promoting their social and independence skills. Visitors are a regular feature of the curriculum and include poets, authors and musicians. Provision for activities outside school hours is excellent. Involvement with a Premier League football club has improved pupils' ball skills. A significant number of pupils, from both Years 1 and 2, attend French lessons and dance classes. These, together with participation in local and national programmes aimed at improving pupils' performance in literacy and numeracy, provide stimulating and exciting learning opportunities. As a result, pupils show high levels of enthusiasm for their work and life at school; a view endorsed by parents.
28. The curriculum provides good coverage of the National Curriculum and religious education. All statutory requirements are fully met. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are very securely implemented. The time allocation for literacy is generous. Although the time allocated to other subjects allows them to be taught to sufficient depth, some lessons are too fragmented because the timings on class timetables are sometimes unrealistic. As a result, teachers do not always have time to evaluate what pupils have learned in the plenary sessions at the end of lessons. Although good use is made of the limited number of computers in school, there is insufficient opportunity for 'hands on' experience. This does inhibit pupils' progress in the subject. Literacy is used very effectively to promote pupils' learning in other subjects. For example, during the school's European week, pupils wrote letters and postcards to children in other countries and because the school provides access to a wide range of reading materials, pupils read from a 'big' class book in extending their knowledge of changes to homes over time. Good use is also made of opportunities to enhance pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects. Topics are often linked together to provide an enjoyable learning experience for pupils. During one such topic on 'Africa', pupils learned to play African drums in music and made calabashes and kufis in design and technology. Art and literature were also featured strongly.

29. Provision for health education is very good and is often taught through the science programme. Pupils evaluate the contents of their lunch boxes in deciding what constitutes healthy eating and the school makes good use of the annual visit from the 'drugs education' bus. Provision for personal development is very good. However, the school is implementing a more formal approach to monitoring provision to ensure that best use is made of the opportunities provided. A new development is the multisensory area that provides pupils with a calm, atmospheric environment. Following suggestions from the school council, a wider variety of playground games have been provided and these, together with designated quiet areas, make the playground a happier place. Children in the Foundation Stage have access to a sensory garden where their senses of sight, sound, touch and smell are aroused. Pupils throughout the school are given responsibilities and are expected to work independently and co-operatively in small and large groups. Pupils' self-confidence is very effectively developed through their contributions in school council meetings, as well as giving them opportunities to speak in a different setting.
30. The contribution that the community makes to pupils' learning is excellent. Local residents have helped to make exciting story sacks for literacy, and older residents are often invited to special concerts and services and help to make Easter bonnets. Links with local companies have resulted in the provision of beautiful stained glass windows for the school entrance, as well as the development of the school wildlife area. Involvement with Charlton Athletic football team has greatly enhanced sports provision for pupils. Links with other schools are very good. The school's staff often work alongside those from other schools. Examples of writing have been moderated together to ensure consistency of judgements, and other joint training days are a regular feature in the school's programme. Pupils take part in joint concerts and sports events, and visits to and visitors from the local church further enhance learning opportunities.
31. The school is very vigilant about ensuring that all pupils are fully included in lessons. Teachers plan lessons carefully and tasks are well matched to pupils' attainment. Modifications are frequently made to planning to further enhance learning opportunities and careful assessment of pupils' progress in subjects such as literacy, numeracy and science ensures that all pupils are making at least good progress.
32. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. They are given as many opportunities as other pupils to be involved in all areas of the curriculum, and particularly in developing their skills in English and mathematics. Teachers plan well for these pupils and tasks are matched to targets in their individual education plans. Careful ability grouping within the class contributes effectively to pupil progress.
33. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. Provision for cultural development is excellent. Overall, this is a similar picture to the last inspection. Pupils' spiritual development is fostered in a number of ways. Pupils often have time to reflect during lessons, a good example being during a literacy lesson when the teacher dimmed the lights and played atmospheric music to stimulate pupils' desire to write about space travel. Covered areas in classrooms are provided for quiet discussion. Exciting displays around the school positively arouse pupils' senses of touch and the multisensory area explores pupils' emotions through the use of atmospheric lights and music. Teachers read stories and poetry dramatically and sensitively impart information, as was seen during a lesson on the life and work of Mother Theresa. The playing of atmospheric music throughout the school day provides a calm, relaxing atmosphere where pupils can feel secure and safe. Time for reflection is an important part of assemblies, although in these and in some lessons this time is sometimes rushed and does not, therefore, always fulfil its purpose. Pupils have frequent opportunities to respond to art, music and literature and in history and religious education they develop their awareness of how beliefs and customs are passed down over time.
34. Provision for moral development is very good and is reflected in the high standards of behaviour exhibited in lessons and around the school. Pupils are taught from the outset what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, lapses only occurring when management of pupils is less secure than it should be. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to co-operate in small and large groups and rewards provide an incentive for pupils to try hard. Behaviour of

individuals is carefully monitored and class charts record how well pupils are doing. The quality of relationships is very strong and makes a significant contribution to the quality of education provided. Stories about moral issues are a regular part of the curriculum and teachers are very good role models and work hard to foster caring attitudes. As an example, pupils with special educational needs can often be seen working with other pupils. Pupils are always polite and conscientiously persevere with their tasks because they know that their efforts will be appreciated. Pupils' respect for the beliefs and customs of other people is fostered from the start.

35. Pupils' social conscience is aroused when they participate in raising money for people less fortunate than themselves. Following a recent Harvest Festival service, pupils distributed gifts to older members of the community. In raising pupils' awareness of the need to care for their surroundings, the school council helped to organise a litter pick. This also helped them to understand what constitutes being a good citizen. Pupils' participation in visits helps to develop their independence, and also the need to work and play together harmoniously in a different social setting. Pupils' awareness of the wider world is developed through the annual European week; for example, when pupils compare their lifestyle with that of others.
36. Provision for cultural development is excellent. Pupils are exposed to different customs and cultures in a variety of ways. Pupils participated in an African day when they learned to play drums and performed African dances and songs. They study the works of famous artists and then try to incorporate what they have learned into their own work. Following a visit to France pupils participated in a typical French breakfast, and French lessons further reinforce learning. In learning about their own rich cultural heritage, pupils visit places of interest such as Herne Mill and Dover Castle. Poetry is a regular feature of the curriculum and pupils often read stories with a strong cultural theme, such as that of 'The Mango Tree'. The programme for religious education includes the study of other faiths such as Hinduism and Judaism. Pupils participate in celebrations such as that of Diwali, and vivid displays associated with different cultures stimulate pupils' desire to want to learn. Teachers and pupils greet each other in different languages during register time. In raising pupils' awareness of the importance of Remembrance Day in marking special events in history, pupils recall both happy and sad occasions in their own lives. Pupils wrote their own definitions of 'love' and 'peace' following the celebration of United Nations Day. The warm and caring ethos of the school is clearly evident throughout its life and work and is a very significant factor in pupils' learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The school makes very good provision for the care and guidance of its pupils. Staff have a very good understanding of pupils' individual, personal and academic needs and combine this with warm care and respect as they provide for each one.
38. The very high quality of support for all aspects of pupils' development is underpinned by the way the headteacher provides excellent leadership for staff to maintain a very happy and hard-working community. Staff manage the pupils very skilfully. They present them with stimulating tasks and consistently uphold high expectations about attention to learning activities and behaviour. Even the youngest ones in the reception classes are very secure and happy because when they start school they are enabled to quickly understand classroom routines and to become absorbed in learning activities. Praise, encouragement and small rewards are used to great effect, building pupils' self-esteem and confidence as learners. Procedures for monitoring and supporting personal development are very good. Only rarely does a teacher allow any hint of failure to creep in even when a pupil gives a wrong answer. Because good behaviour is promoted so well, there is little room for misbehaviour, but any lapses are quickly resolved. In lessons; a brief look or quiet word of correction from the teacher or support assistant is nearly always sufficient. The lunchtime supervisors similarly manage the pupils very well, showing very good care for them and making a full contribution to the high standards of behaviour. Well-judged sanctions, calculated to promote thoughtfulness about what is right, are devised by the headteacher on the rare occasions when one or two individuals show rather more serious lapses in behaviour. Bullying or any other oppressive behaviour is almost unknown, because good relationships are promoted so effectively. Nevertheless, effective systems are in place to resolve the rare instances that arise. A number of

children have particular requirements arising from wide-ranging social, behavioural or other individual needs. Staff are particularly knowledgeable and thoughtful about how to cater for each one's differences. They manage this with great skill and sensitivity, so that all benefit from being fully included in each activity.

39. Child protection procedures remain excellent as at the previous inspection. The well-constructed policy and procedures are most effective because they are underpinned by the high level of care and concern that staff have for all the pupils. The headteacher, as designated person, makes sure that all staff are regularly reminded of such issues. She carefully monitors any concerns and liaises fully with social services when this is necessary. The expert presentations, arranged to inform parents about the control of child protection risks that may arise from access to the Internet, are another mark of the very thorough attention given to promoting this aspect of pupils' welfare.
40. Good attention is given to recording and monitoring attendance. Parents are reminded regularly that family holidays taken in term time interrupt children's learning. Recently, administrative staff have made a special point of telephoning parents if a child is absent without explanation. This contributed to a good rise in attendance levels during the year preceding the inspection.
41. Other aspects of pupils' welfare are catered for very effectively. Staff are fully briefed about any individual medical requirements and a good number of trained first-aiders are at hand to care for any who become sick or injured. Very good attention is given to maintaining the school as a safe learning environment and to ensuring the safe conduct of lessons and other activities.
42. The school has effective procedures for early identification of pupils with special educational needs, placing them on the special educational needs register and providing what further help is needed in accordance with the school's policy. The special educational needs co-ordinator is conscientious in maintaining individual education plans. She ensures that the school has very good relationships with external special educational needs support staff and agencies. Termly reviews of individual education plans by the co-ordinator, class teacher and parents with the full involvement of the pupil contributes to very good assessment arrangements for pupils with special educational needs.
43. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' attainment and monitoring of pupils' achievement are very good overall. The assessment of English and mathematics is very good and the assessment of science is good. All pupils undertake the standard assessment tests in English and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and these, together with the teachers' assessments in science, are analysed thoroughly. This has resulted, for example, in a whole-school response to improve pupils' problem solving skills in numeracy and the extra provision of a 'Superstar Club' to raise the literacy performance of higher attaining pupils, boys in particular, in literacy. Termly assessments are completed in these three subjects and following this, group and sometimes, individual targets in literacy and numeracy are sent home to parents. Targets related to National Curriculum Levels are also regularly completed in order to ensure that pupils are on track and that achievement over time is at least satisfactory. Moderation workshops based on pupils' assessments in the core subjects are held regularly. This includes sessions held with the partner junior school. All this has helped the school to provide appropriate tasks for the range of pupils within each class and to monitor pupils' progress. Improved assessment procedures and its very effective use in forward planning has had a positive impact on Year 2 pupils' improving attainment in National Curriculum tests and assessments since the last inspection.
44. New assessment procedures related to National Curriculum Levels have recently been introduced in ICT and these are of good quality. They will provide helpful information for teachers who will be planning whole-class lessons in the near future now that the new information and communication technology room is nearly ready for use. In music and physical education new procedures have almost been completed and will be ready for implementation soon. No formal assessment procedures have been developed for the other subjects in the curriculum. However, teachers in each year group hold weekly planning meetings and an integral part of these meetings is the evaluation of the previous week's work in order to plan appropriate provision for the coming week.

The school has made good improvement in its assessment procedures and their use since the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The very strong partnership achieved with parents at the previous inspection has been maintained. As before, most of those who express a view are very happy with the way the school provides for their children. Staff work hard to encourage parents' interest and involvement, so that they are enabled to make their own very good contribution to their children's learning.
46. The headteacher and staff have an open and welcoming attitude to parents. It is easy for parents to talk to their child's class teacher at the start and end of the day. A particular feature contributing to the very good day-to-day flow of information is the way in which whiteboards placed outside each classroom are regularly used to give parents reminders about activities, backing up the well-composed newsletters. Communication with parents is also very well developed through the use of home-school contact books. Teachers, together with most parents, use these very effectively to exchange regular messages about the child's reading, and also, when the need arises, to tell each other of all sorts of individual concerns. Parents speak appreciatively of how they always get acknowledgement straightaway when they send messages, with later follow-up whenever this is called for. It is disappointing that a few parents, often of lower attaining pupils, frequently fail to respond to messages sent home in this way. The school works actively at involving parents of pupils with special educational needs to provide appropriate support. All parents have appropriately signed up to the home-school agreement.
47. Various other very good arrangements operate for informing and involving parents. For instance, parents come in good numbers to join their children for the afternoon sessions of 'marvellous maths' and 'lively literacy' to which they are invited every term. They speak enthusiastically of how these events give them an insight into how their children learn, so that they feel more able to help them at home. The termly curriculum information sheets and target sheets also help parents to support their children through relevant activities at home. As well as appreciating the ongoing opportunities to talk to teachers, many parents come to the parents' evenings, in the autumn and spring terms, to discuss their children's progress. The reports that parents receive in the summer inform them well, giving much helpful detail of the progress their child has made, especially in English, mathematics and science. They also mention the next steps in learning to be tackled. However, except at the end of Year 2, parents do not get any record of how their child is doing in comparison with national expectations, and some of them would like this information. Similarly, a few parents are unhappy or unsure about homework expectations. There is a policy, which parents were consulted about and which explains what is expected, but they have not recently been reminded about it. In most respects, however, the headteacher keeps very well in touch with parents' perceptions of the school's work. She is very willing to hear about individual concerns, meets regularly with a focus group of parents and also uses an annual questionnaire to invite the views of all parents and to find out their ideas for improvements. There is ample evidence that she considers suggestions and criticisms seriously and strives to respond to each one. She is also sensitive to the needs of the small minority of parents who tend to avoid getting involved in the work of the school and is seeking to appoint a family liaison officer to foster partnership with them.
48. In addition to helping their children at home, a good number of parents come into school to help, knowing that teachers will welcome their assistance and make good use of it. A small, but hard-working group runs the very successful parents' and friends' association, which supports the nearby junior school as well. They use funds raised to support learning; for instance, they meet the costs of the school swimming pool, which Years 1 and 2 use regularly through the summer.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The headteacher provides excellent educational direction for the school. This has enabled the school to make good improvement on the already high standards reported in 1998. The school has an outstanding ethos. It is based on a Christian, family atmosphere, a highly motivational

environment for pupils to work in and a continuous striving to develop new curricular ideas to help to drive up pupils' standards. The headteacher has established a very effective partnership with her recently appointed deputy headteacher, the whole staff of the school, the committed governing body and parents. The deputy headteacher and other senior management are very effective in their role. Therefore, all within the school's community have considerable confidence in the way the school is led and managed, and give very active support. There is strong commitment to inclusion, including the promotion of race equality. This results, for example, in regular sampling of parents' views by questionnaire and a focus group of parents who meet with the headteacher. Pupils' opinions are established through the active school council. The very good provision for pupils with special educational needs is an example of the school's commitment to social cohesiveness. The staff team works very well together. Senior staff, many of whom have significant additional qualifications, willingly accept additional responsibilities and several work hard promoting curriculum development both in the school and across a range of schools. Subject managers, some new to their posts, manage budgets and monitor standards in their subjects. However, despite having time allocated for their monitoring role, insufficient direct classroom observation of teaching and learning has been undertaken by most subject managers in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

50. The strength of the provision for special educational needs has been sustained since the last inspection. The co-ordinator provides clear leadership and support for class teachers and liaises very well with support agencies. The special educational needs governor is fully involved and holds termly meetings with the co-ordinator to review the progress of all pupils on the register. The governing body receives regular reports on the provision for special educational needs and is committed to providing high quality teaching assistants in the classroom. Provision, including specific funds intended for this purpose, is well managed, with the special educational needs co-ordinator managing part of the budget directly.
51. The governing body plays a very active role in the management of the school, very effectively led by the Chair of Governors. The governing body is reflective and hard working. It has recently reorganised its sub-committees into fewer, more effective working groups. These sub-committees are very well led and work closely with the senior management of the school to support the school's work and to assure continuing high standards of provision and results. Governors monitor teaching and learning directly, but at present they do not have a direct link to a class or subject, although focus is provided by the school improvement plan, which informs which lessons governors observe, as priorities within the curriculum are targeted. Governors also meet regularly with the staff and invite subject managers to attend governing body meetings to give papers on the current status and recent developments in their subject. In this way, the governors have first-hand experience of the school's environment and current curriculum initiatives. This gives them insights when asking senior staff to account for strengths and areas for development within the school. Almost all statutory requirements are met in full. Minor improvements needed have already been identified and are being dealt with.
52. The school has effective systems to monitor and evaluate its performance. Teachers' planning and pupils' current work are regularly appraised by senior staff and subject managers. Overall, the monitoring of teaching is good. However, classroom observations are mainly carried out by senior staff and local education authority inspectors, so the process is capable of further development so that subject managers can fine tune elements of teaching, learning and the curriculum. Very detailed analysis is made of National Curriculum test data and the results of the school's own assessment regime. This has helped to target areas for development, as with writing, with considerable success, or the specific needs of groups within the school; for example, the provision in science for higher attaining girls. Pupils' work is examined thoroughly. Detailed, annotated portfolios of pupils' output have been assembled. The contents have been moderated across the local consortium of schools, including the partner junior school, to assist teachers to assess pupils' completed work more accurately.
53. The school improvement plan is a powerful tool for institutional development, involving all within the school's community in its formulation. The school works very hard, as a team, when addressing the targets agreed in planning, to ensure that they are met in full to the benefit of the pupils. The

plan covers the current year in detail and has a view of the next two years. At present the plan is not constructed as part of a rolling programme, so that at any time there is a longer-term vision of what the priorities for the following two years might be. This school year the whole process has to start from scratch, as the current plan runs from 2000/1 to 2002/3. Agreed priorities are very well supported by very careful financial planning. The headteacher and governing body have a very well thought out approach to the appraisal and development of all staff. Performance management targets are clearly linked to priorities on the school improvement plan. A well-designed policy and programme have followed appropriate training, with governors, the headteacher and other senior members of staff, acting as team leaders, all actively involved. The school is justly proud of its creative approach to the curriculum and the research opportunities and study visits undertaken to provide the rich and diverse opportunities devised for the pupils, with commensurate professional development for staff. The recent upturn in standards is directly attributable to a needs assessment approach linking improvement planning and performance management.

54. Financial management and control are very good. The day-to-day management is very efficient. Exceptional support is provided by the administrative officer to the headteacher and very effective Chair of the finance and staffing sub-committee. This close and productive working partnership enables clear and effective monitoring of spending to be done, so that any budget variation can be responded to very quickly. This careful management of the budget has been especially necessary while the school has been engaged on its current major project; the building and equipping of a specialist ICT suite. This has been funded by careful accumulation of budget surpluses and any income generated by the staff, offering specialist curriculum or management services to other schools or local education authorities, an entrepreneurial activity that also has benefit in terms of additional professional skills acquired by the teachers involved. The current budget will run into deficit when all costs for the ICT suite are paid. This will be covered by a small loan from the local education authority. This undertaking represents good value for money and a worthwhile use of surplus funds carefully carried forward until sufficient was available for this large scale undertaking to be commenced. The school uses new technologies well to manage its financial affairs. The minor recommendations made by the local education authority following a recent financial control visit have been fully addressed. The governing body has a financial professional chairing its finance and staffing sub-committee. It is fully committed to the principles of best value when buying goods and services. Taking into account the levels of income allocated to the school, the standards pupils attain and the high quality of provision, including teaching, the school provides good value for money.
55. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are very good overall. The teaching and non-teaching staff are an outstandingly good match to pupils' needs and to the demands of the curriculum. More money is spent on staffing than in similar schools. Between them the teachers have a wealth of professional training and experience, as well as wider personal experience and interests such as world travel, that they draw on to enrich their teaching. In addition there are a good number of classroom assistants who work closely with the teachers and usually make a very strong contribution to pupils' learning, as at the previous inspection. Just occasionally though, during the introductory part of a lesson, they are not usefully deployed and the chance for them to be profitably occupied; for instance, in recording pupils' response, is missed. Other support staff make very effective contributions to the care of pupils at lunchtime, to administration and to the cleaning and maintenance of the buildings.
56. The accommodation, indoors and out, is a very good environment for learning. Throughout the building, attractive displays, rich with a fascinating variety of pupils' work, excite interest in learning activities. The classrooms are slightly on the small side, but teachers manage activities so well; for instance, making full use of the shared activity areas available for each year group, that no problems arise. Each classroom also benefits from opening into its own small outdoor garden area. These too are well used to extend the available teaching space. All classes are within easy reach of the good-sized hall. The pleasantly arranged, well-provided and well-used library, together with the music room with its wondrous variety of musical instruments, are also close at hand for all. Lack of specialist facilities for ICT, including a shortage of computers for pupils to use, has been a deficiency, but the newly built information and communication technology suite will soon be equipped ready for use. Another recent improvement to

accommodation consisted of imaginatively fitting out a multi-sensory room. Early evaluation suggests that this is a valuable addition to pupils' experience. The headteacher is always seeking for further improvements and knows that a larger staffroom and roomier administrative offices would make it easier for everyone to continue working at their present high level of effectiveness. Outdoors, the playground is laid out thoughtfully to provide interesting areas for pupils' play. Access to the field of the neighbouring junior school contributes to sports provision. Physical education is further enhanced by the way Years 1 and 2 use the school swimming pool, shared with the partner junior school, which is just an easy walk away.

57. Learning resources are very good, as at the time of the previous inspection. All are used to very good effect so that they make a considerable contribution to pupils' learning. Spending on resources is carefully thought out. They have been updated in response to developments including the literacy and numeracy programmes, so that overall, they remain very good in relation to the demands of the curriculum, as at the previous inspection. They are very good in several important areas such as the Foundation Stage, English, science and physical education. They range from excellent in music to satisfactory in geography, history, and design and technology.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. The school has no significant weaknesses, so there are no key issues to address. However, in the context of its many strengths the following minor points for improvement should be considered as the basis for an action plan:

- (1) monitor whole-class reading sessions to ensure that the best possible use is made of this time;*
(paragraphs 1, 3, 72, 75)
- (2) promote reading in other subjects; for example, by displaying key vocabulary;
(paragraphs 1, 3, 74, 82, 108)
- (3) improve the monitoring role of subject managers, especially outside the core subjects, to enable them to directly observe teaching and learning;
(paragraphs 49, 52, 63, 72, 81, 88, 94, 103, 112, 134)
- (4) ensure that teaching assistants are always efficiently deployed; for example, during extended introductions in lessons like English and mathematics.
(paragraphs 24, 55, 85, 110)

*Items already identified by the school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	61
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	29	20	7	-	-	-
Percentage	8.2	47.5	32.8	11.5	-	-	-

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 – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		266
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		43

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	37	48	85

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	35	35
	Girls	40	47	47
	Total	70	82	82
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (88)	96 (94)	96 (95)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	32	34	35
	Girls	46	44	47
	Total	78	78	82
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (92)	92 (91)	96 (94)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	174	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.3:1
Average class size	29.6

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	283

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
	£
Total income	649,623
Total expenditure	623,790
Expenditure per pupil	2,354
Balance brought forward from previous year	62,967
Balance carried forward to next year	88,800

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0.0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0.0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

QUESTIONNAIRE RETURN RATE

Number of questionnaires sent out	266
Number of questionnaires returned	124

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	25	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	45	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	36	0	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	44	4	0	6
The teaching is good.	71	26	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	44	7	2	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	23	1	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	31	1	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	63	31	1	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	80	19	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	27	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	34	7	0	16

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

59. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is excellent. Three reception classes are taught in classrooms and a shared area that are all very well equipped and imaginatively arranged to promote areas of learning. Children's work is attractively displayed, creating a high quality, stimulating environment. Each class has a small secure outdoor area, that includes a well cared for garden, and its daily use is planned as an extension of the classroom. A further outdoor area, shared by all three classes, provides opportunities for children's physical development through a range of activities, including wheeled vehicles and a sensory garden. The early years co-ordinator provides excellent leadership and is very well supported by two enthusiastic and committed teachers and a team of high quality teaching assistants. The curriculum has been thoroughly revised and now fully reflects the nationally accepted Early Learning Goals for children in the Foundation Stage. This is particularly commendable as the team is new and the co-ordinator recently appointed to her post.
60. Children enter the school in September on a part-time basis until half term, when most start full-time. The school is very sensitive to the needs of individual children and, in consultation with parents, some children may not attend full-time until later. A well-planned programme that includes; for example, a 'Teddy Bears' Picnic', introduces the new children and their parents to the school and ensures that positive relationships are quickly forged with families. Links with the main feeder playgroup, and the other local pre-school providers, are well developed and include visits by the co-ordinator. Workshops for parents to help them to understand what children are taught in the Foundation Stage make a valuable contribution towards links between home and school.
61. The strengths identified in the previous inspection have been significantly built upon and there have been very good improvements that include:
- planning the curriculum based on the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals, focused on the 'stepping stones' within these, which encourages child initiated activities;
 - planning that allows for the development of the children's increasing independence during the year, and works towards longer teacher-directed learning, especially in literacy and numeracy sessions in the summer term, in preparation for children's transition into Year 1;
 - very good quality individual assessment procedures over time, and excellent assessment procedures that inform day-to-day planning;
 - a developed outdoor area to enhance physical and sensory provision;
 - improved quality of teaching from good to consistently very good with some excellent lessons seen.
62. All children are eager to come to school, behave very well and in their learning, work very hard and show sustained levels of concentration. They respond very positively to the very good teaching and high quality support from teaching assistants in all the Foundation Stage areas of learning. As a result, children's learning is very good in all six areas of learning. Planning is very thorough and teachers are very skilled in challenging the children to extend their knowledge and vocabulary and seize every opportunity to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers use their assistants very effectively to support groups, including children with special educational needs, and individual children's learning. Teaching assistants are always well briefed and know how to guide and encourage the children. At times they observe and record; for example, the contribution individual children make to group discussion, as part of the assessment procedure. This is very effectively used to guide and inform future planning for individual children. Teachers take every opportunity to capture children's interest and to reinforce their learning across the curriculum. For example, while sequencing the events of the 'Three Bears', the children were taught a quick rap:
Goldilocks in the house of the Bears,
Ate their food, even broke their chairs...

63. The quiet, but firm management of pupils and the consistently high expectation of good behaviour have achieved a calm purposeful working atmosphere, where relationships between both children, and children and adults are very good. Children with special educational needs make very good progress through a fully inclusive curriculum and very well targeted support. Although the quality of teaching is very good, it would enhance the team if they all had the opportunity of seeing each other teach.
64. In recent years, the local authority baseline assessment has indicated that children's attainment on entry to the school is below average, with children's personal and social development being the strongest element. Through high quality teaching and provision most children are expected to reach the Early Learning Goals, and some will exceed them in all areas of learning by the end of their reception year and be confident and ready to start in Year 1. In personal and social development most children are likely to exceed the Early Learning Goals. Overall, this represents good achievement in all areas of learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

65. Children in all classes are happy and have settled very quickly into the class routines. They have quickly learned the rules and conventions associated with the classroom and school life. This area of development is very well taught and teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of what pupils should do for themselves. A great deal of time has been spent on organising the environment, and activities are provided to enable children to make choices and decisions. They are beginning to work and play together collaboratively, as for example, when they use their wheeled vehicles outside and in themed areas. The use of 'circle time', when children discussed, 'what makes us happy', contributes to their development by providing structured opportunities to share views and experiences, only speaking at the appropriate time. Children play and work happily together and know the rules associated with taking turns, tidying up and listening to others. They undress and dress themselves for physical education and put on their outdoor clothes and collect their belongings at the end of the day. Teachers use background music very effectively and this encourages listening skills as well as having a calming influence. Before home time in one class, the lights were dimmed, music played and the children lay down and reflected on the day. Most children are on course to exceed the expectations of the Early Learning Goals by the end of their reception year.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

66. Teachers provide many purposeful activities, which make a valuable contribution to this area of learning. For example, children at various times during the day learn to sing a large repertoire of rhymes, which helps them to practise putting words into sequence as well as their pronunciation and listening skills. Children's speaking skills are sound, but not well developed and teachers structure situations to encourage them to discuss, for example, the sequencing of the events in 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. Further opportunities for speaking are provided as children develop their imagination and language through role play, as in the many imaginative themed areas. Children enjoy books and delight in taking them home to read. Comments in children's home-school reading journal indicate a high level of support and encouragement of reading. Boys and girls handle the books carefully and understand that print is read from left to right and talk enthusiastically about the pictures. All classrooms provide a rich language environment and many clearly displayed captions encourage children to read. They follow text in their group reading with the teacher, and in, for example, 'Handa's Surprise', they named the animal and predicted the fruit that it would take from the basket. They are quickly learning a range of initial letter sounds and letter names. They follow, predict and retell the sequence of a story when reading; for example, 'Sleeping Beauty'. While most pupils recognise their name none have a sight vocabulary on entry to school, but they are making good progress in sharing books and learning letter sounds. The classes have a very good selection of books that represent a wide range of cultures. Children enjoy a wide range of pre-writing activities. After a class 'Write Dance' session in the hall on the theme of 'volcanoes', children returned to the class, some using pencils, others paints and chalks to develop their hand control. They use the writing areas well, some scribbling a note. All children are making good progress in improving their writing skills. Teachers take every

opportunity to reinforce communication skills, and reading and writing play a big part in lessons. A consistent approach and emphasis on learning new vocabulary is successful in leading children to meet the Early Learning Goals expected by the end of the reception year.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

67. Day-to-day use of number is used effectively by the teachers to encourage children's development of mathematics. Children enjoy their work with numbers, responding quickly and with a good degree of accuracy in their mental mathematics work. They can 'count on' given a random number below ten and know numbers 'less than' and 'more than' a given number. In an excellent lesson, the children were arranged in a circle and the teacher asked one of them to count out four beakers then add two more, involving all the children at the same time by asking them to hold up the correct number of fingers. Pointing to the hanging display of numbers, children were to touch the number, and the importance of zero was emphasised. Activities that followed were very well matched to children's attainments, the higher attaining rolling two die and recording their answers by finding the correct number card. In another lesson the story 'Ten in a Bed' reinforced counting up to ten. They use language such as 'circle' and 'bigger' to describe the shape and size of solids and flat shapes and start to handle data when finding out the most common eye colour in the class. These practical activities give children a range of experiences to consolidate their understanding. Number songs and daily routines are used to reinforce counting activities and, as a result, the children learn quickly and make good progress.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

68. Children are gaining good understanding of the world in which they live through their topics, 'All about me' and 'Our school'. They find out about past and present events in their lives and in those of their families and other people they know and identify the main features around the school. In their class gardens, they identify features of plants and in the sensory garden reflect on the wonders of nature. They further use their senses by investigating objects and materials. They discover something of the natural world as they explore volcanoes through 'Write Dance', moving in response to the volcano erupting, stones flying out, the volcano resting and finally rain. Two boys later tried to recreate lava flow by mixing soda and vinegar. Through celebrating festivals such as Diwali and using their 'Indian restaurant', children begin to know something about other cultures and beliefs. They learn good mouse control on the computer, and estimate size when arranging the correct sized bears in beds and on chairs. In religious education, children explored kindness and sharing with a friend. Teachers make very good use of reinforcing learning in all areas. For example, when one boy, in a group using a construction kit to make a 'Sleeping Beauty' castle likened his to Dover Castle, he was sent to find a book on castles. Teachers use the school and its surrounds so that children gain an awareness of places in relation to each other. Boys and girls have good opportunities to use a variety of construction kits to make their own models. Very good teaching enables children to have a good balance of formal investigation and child-initiated activities, which helps them to 'discover' new knowledge and make good progress.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

69. The area of physical development is very well taught and children achieve well. Children have many opportunities to develop fine motor skills as they handle small tools such as pencils, crayons, paintbrushes, glue-sticks and scissors. They frequently put together and take apart construction materials and work with jigsaws and other table-top equipment. These activities are making a significant contribution to their physical development. Regular planned times in the hall provide a structured time for physical education. In a ball skills lesson, children were able to bounce and roll the ball, showing good awareness of space, and very good teaching gave children the opportunity to show what they could do. Opportunities to use the wheeled vehicles and other apparatus in the outdoor area contribute well to pupils' physical development.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

70. Teachers organise the curriculum very well and integrate creative activities into all areas of learning. The classrooms and the shared areas are alive with artwork. Children have a wide range of opportunities to explore colour and texture through a variety of materials in two and three dimensions in art and design, and regular planned opportunities for music and dance. They explore colour mixing, tear and stick paper when making volcanoes and use a range of materials in the autumn collage. Exploring colour and shape using an art program on the computer stimulates children. In music, children respond to songs with actions and use percussion instruments. They know a variety of rhymes and jingles and are beginning to develop a sense of time and rhythm through clapping and clicking their fingers and other body sound.

ENGLISH

71. Overall, the above average standards in English, identified at the time of the last inspection, have been maintained. Results of the most recent standardised tests confirm this and affirm overall continued improvement in pupils' performance. Standards are above average because the quality of teaching that the pupils receive is very good and the environment in which pupils learn is rich and exciting. The planned programme of work places high emphasis on the sequential teaching of basic skills, and regular, very good quality assessment of what pupils know and can do is used to plan what they need to do next. The school's recent focus on writing has resulted in rapid improvement in the quality of pupils' written work.
72. In the national tests in Year 2002 standards were above those of schools nationally overall. The exception was in writing where results were well above those of schools nationally and above those of similar schools. Reading results were not as good as those for writing. When compared to results nationally, standards in reading were average and below those for similar schools, although analysis of test results shows that standards almost reached the above average level. Nevertheless, the school is working hard to raise standards in reading and has prioritised reading comprehension as a focus in its school improvement plan. The school now sets pupils by ability for spelling, but acknowledges the need for more formal monitoring of the teaching and learning of reading in the classroom. Between 1999 and 2002 results in reading rose steadily, but improved dramatically in writing, although results did dip considerably in Year 2000. This was because the Year 2 classes taking the tests in that year contained a significant proportion of lower attaining pupils. Early indications are that the current Year 2 are in line to achieve above average standards in reading, and standards in writing are set to be well above average. The very good practice of moderating pieces of written work, not only with the school's own staff, but also with the staff of the local junior school means that there is a consistent approach to the teaching and assessment of writing.
73. Pupils enter Year 1 with average attainment in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Inspection findings and the school's assessment data show that pupils' overall attainment by the end of Year 2 is good in reading and speaking and very good in listening and writing. This includes pupils with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils. Pupils achieve well because teachers plan exciting activities specifically designed to suit their differing abilities.
74. By the end of Year 2, standards in speaking are in line with the national average, but pupils' listening skills are above average. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and are keen to talk about topics that interest them. Staff provide frequent well-planned opportunities for pupils to ask and answer questions. Although key vocabulary in other subjects such as history and religious education is identified in planning, this is not always displayed prominently or referred to sufficiently. As a result, pupils do not always retain what they have been taught. Pupils usually listen with rapt attention, as was evident when a Year 2 teacher told them about the life and work of Mother Theresa. They comment unprompted and offer advice and suggestions. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to speak for a range of audiences. As an example, pupils attending a school council meeting made valid suggestions on improving playground facilities. Pupils often lead special assemblies such as that for the Harvest Festival. Listening centres are a prominent feature in classrooms and pupils can often be seen listening carefully to stories, songs and poetry. Drama and role play are also part of the curriculum and pupils' contributions are sometimes recorded on tape and film. In discussion, pupils show understanding of the main

points, as was seen following a well-told story when Year 1 pupils decided that Jesus was a special gift from God.

75. Standards in reading are set to be above average by the end of Year 2. A significant number of higher attaining pupils read confidently and fluently and show a secure understanding of the main points of the text. They name favourite authors such as Beatrix Potter and J K Rowling and know that the contents and index pages in books provide a means of finding information quickly. Books are plentiful and varied and have a prominent place in the school. The school library, which is very well maintained by parents, is visited frequently and pupils are encouraged to choose both fiction and non-fiction books to take home. A home/school contact book provides very good dialogue between teachers and parents, although a minority of parents do not hear their children read as often as they could. Parents are offered regular advice and guidance on how to help their child to improve and the school is beginning to set small achievable individual targets, although these have not been in place long enough to fully impact on standards. The allocation of time for literacy is generous; this includes a designated time for pupils to read both individually and in groups. Pupils are exposed to both fiction and non-fiction texts in these sessions. In one good lesson seen, a text describing changes in the home over time was used successfully to promote reading skills in history. Nevertheless, best use is not always made of these reading sessions. For example, some of the activities have a higher emphasis on writing rather than reading. In one excellent lesson seen, a Year 1 teacher had very high expectations, which meant that she could focus her energies on developing the reading skills of different groups of pupils without interruption. The rest of the class were engaged in meaningful, exciting reading activities and were well supported by able classroom assistants. This enabled them to make very rapid gains in learning as well as promoting independence skills. Teachers are very careful to teach the skills that pupils need to decode unfamiliar words in careful sequence. As a result, pupils' word attack skills are well developed. As a result of very good teaching in a Year 2 class, higher attaining pupils were able to identify and write a significant number of words containing long vowel sounds. Because the teacher had carefully planned for differing needs, lower attaining pupils worked with simpler letter combinations. Opportunities are occasionally missed for pupils to read together from 'big' books and, although the focus of lessons is clearly displayed, pupils' attention is not always drawn to it.
76. Standards in writing are high. From an early age pupils are taught joined handwriting, and teachers are careful to use innovative ways of stimulating pupils' desire to write. As an example, pupils wrote letters of congratulation on the occasion of the Queen's Jubilee, and during a European week, sent postcards to friends in France. The use of writing in other subjects is promoted very successfully. For example, pupils write up results of experiments in science and in understanding the significance of special dates in history, such as Remembrance Day, write interesting accounts of memorable days in their own lives. Careful thought is given to the sequential teaching of writing skills. As a result, pupils are rapidly developing skills in story writing. During a very good lesson in a Year 2 class, higher attaining pupils compared two stories about space travel and then wrote their own versions, while at the same time incorporating interesting ways of linking sentences together. This learning was considerably enhanced by the playing of atmospheric music and the dimming of lights, giving pupils time to reflect on what it might be like in space. The school's focus on spelling is paying dividends and standards in spelling are now very good. Good use was made of ICT during a very good lesson in Year 1, enabling pupils to produce their own personal storybooks. Because lower attaining pupils were well supported, they composed an exciting poem about fireworks, with the classroom assistant sometimes acting as scribe, then imported suitable pictures from the computer to enrich their work. Nevertheless, each class has currently only one computer, therefore, opportunities for 'hands on' experience are limited.
77. Pupils enjoy literacy lessons and are keen to participate because teachers make learning an exciting experience. This view is endorsed by parents. Puppets are often used to capture pupils' imagination and curiosity. Pupils ask and answer questions sensibly and offer comments unprompted. They co-operate fully and offer help to others. Behaviour in lessons is nearly always very good because the behaviour policy is consistently applied. Pupils can be trusted to work hard and conscientiously because they know that their efforts will be rewarded. Plenary sessions

at the end of lessons are used very well to celebrate achievement, when pupils receive 'Champion' badges for special effort; this raises pupils' self-esteem considerably. Time is then given for pupils to reflect on ways of improving their work. Very good links are made to pupils' personal development. As an example, the importance of friendship was emphasised when pupils wrote pretend letters from the three bears to Goldilocks asking her to visit them again. Pupils talk and write about proud moments in their own and others' lives and write letters of thanks following a visit to Legoland, for example. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and lessons proceed in a calm, orderly manner. Thus the contribution that the subject makes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

78. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and overall, is very good, which represents an improvement since the last inspection. This produces very effective learning from the pupils. Teachers know pupils well and, as a result, plan very carefully for their individual needs. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported, as was seen when a pupil with physical difficulties was provided with a table stand for her writing. In the best lessons seen lessons move at a rapid pace, a high level of challenge keeps pupils motivated and teachers use well-considered questions to test pupils' understanding. During one Year 2 lesson, the teacher worked very hard to establish pupils' understanding of the meaning of 'plurals'. As the teacher had high expectations and used interesting starts to their sentences, some higher attaining pupils wrote at considerable length. Marking of work is constructive and pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve. The quality of teachers' planning for literacy lessons is very good and is regularly evaluated with other colleagues to ensure that all pupils are fully included in lessons. Pupils' work is displayed sensitively and attractively, and captions, posters and 'word walls' of commonly used words are easily accessible and referred to regularly. Members from the local community have considerably enriched learning opportunities by the provision of exciting 'story sacks' containing books and associated games and toys. Visits by authors and poets are another part of a very rich curriculum. Pupils visited the cinema to see a filmed version of a Harry Potter story, then compared it to the story in the book. As a result of the school's involvement in local and national initiatives, special writing classes have been set up for both higher and lower attaining pupils. These have considerably boosted attainment. The school now needs to review class timetables to ensure that best use is made of the generous amount of time allocated. The school council's views have been considered and as a result, the allocation of time for writing is currently being evaluated. The subject leader is an advanced skills teacher for literacy and, together with other members of staff, provides clear educational direction, therefore, the potential for further improvement is very good.

MATHEMATICS

79. National test results for pupils at the end of Year 2, with the exception of the Year 2000, have been improving annually and are now above the national average. As pupils enter Year 1 with average attainment in mathematics, this represents good achievement over time for all pupils, including those with special educational needs.
80. The standard of work of pupils in Year 2, as at the time of the last inspection, is above that expected nationally. Most average and higher attaining pupils in Year 2 have a secure knowledge of the appropriate language of mathematics, are secure with the place value of numbers up to 100 and are at the early stages of recognising multiplication as equivalent to repeated addition. Lower attaining pupils are secure with place value up to about 20 and double single-digit numbers with reasonable confidence. Most pupils know the names of simple plane shapes and solids and draw simple bar charts as, for example, ones based on habitats. Higher attaining pupils find all the different ways of ordering three items, while lower attaining pupils find a few. They cope with investigations well; for example, finding out how many bicycles and go-carts would have a total of 22 wheels. Higher attaining pupils enjoy devising their own word problems.
81. The pupils' competence in numeracy is used well in other curriculum areas through the use of standard and non-standard units of weight when making Christmas cakes in design and technology, for example. The quality of teaching overall is good and broadly similar to that noted at the time of the last inspection. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good,

with the stronger teaching in Year 1, but with examples of high quality teaching in Year 2 also. The quality of pupils' learning is good overall.

82. Teachers identify clear learning objectives and display these at the start of each lesson. In effective lessons, these play an integral part in the learning process and the pupils' understanding of what they have achieved. In the majority of lessons, however, the objectives are not written in 'child-friendly' language, which the pupils can try to read together with the teacher in order to further enhance their literacy skills. Key words are also identified in teachers' planning, but these are rarely displayed on word cards and used during the lesson.
83. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the key skills required and teach these well. In the majority of lessons, work is well matched to pupils' needs. In a Year 1 lesson based on solving problems, for example, higher attaining pupils worked on two-stage problems that included using addition and subtraction. Average attaining pupils worked on one-stage problems, with lower attaining pupils coping with simpler problems with good support from a teaching assistant. This provided all pupils with tasks of very good challenge that resulted in very good learning overall. In the weekly lesson where Year 2 pupils (and Year 1 pupils after Easter) are taught in sets, however, the work set is not as well refined to need and some pupils are capable of coping with greater challenge.
84. Teachers employ effective methods and these captivate the interest of the pupils and raise motivation. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils showed great skills of observation and concentrated well trying to discover what 'naughty teddy' had done to their numberline that day. In a lower set in Year 2, pupils collaborated very well reinforcing their learning on doubling through a group number game. In both these lessons, pupils' motivation was high throughout and learning was very good.
85. Teachers' management of pupils is very effective overall and very good relationships are evident in the classroom between the pupils and the pupils and adults. Consequently, pupils respond positively to lessons and feel secure when offering answers in whole-class sessions. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils and reinforce teachers' objectives well. However, they are not as effectively used in whole-class sessions as they could be and on these occasions their talents are underutilised. A pleasant and purposeful working atmosphere was a feature of all the lessons observed.
86. Teachers generally use the allocated time appropriately. Lessons are suitably structured and well organised with resources and instruction/task sheets ready to hand, so that minimum time is spent during lessons on unnecessary organisation. This maintains the good pace of lessons and encourages purposeful activity as the norm. In a small minority of lessons, however, the balance of the three parts of the lesson was inappropriate.
87. Teachers mark pupils' work clearly, with some annotation for the reader. The use of homework to support learning is satisfactory. This helps to develop independent learning in Year 2; for example, where pupils devised their own number problems. The support of the subject by ICT has developed well in the circumstances and has the potential to be further reinforced now that the ICT facilities have been radically upgraded.
88. The subject is effectively managed. For example, the lack of opportunities for pupils to use and apply mathematics, noted in the last report, has been effectively addressed and has contributed to the improving standard of attainment. The curriculum is good and has improved since the last inspection. The requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met. Assessment procedures are very good and the analysis of the results of statutory tests is carried out thoroughly. The school responds to the results of analysis promptly with whole-school planning for improvement in standards. A good example of this are the strategies introduced across the school to improve the pupils' understanding and response to word problems. Assessments are completed each term and the results of these are translated into group, and sometimes, individual targets for the pupils for the next term. These are regularly communicated to parents. Pupils' progress is monitored thoroughly. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and competent, but her role has not yet been developed by the school to include the regular monitoring of teaching. Resources are good and

are used well. Overall, the school has made good improvement since the time of the last inspection.

SCIENCE

89. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average and reflect the level of attainment by pupils in national assessments in 2002. Progress in lessons observed is good and pupils are achieving well over time. Pupils with special educational needs, supported by experienced teaching assistants, are fully included in all lessons and achieve very well.
90. From the lessons observed, samples of work provided by the school and discussion with the subject co-ordinator, all aspects of science, life and physical processes and materials and their properties, are well covered and there is a strong emphasis on teaching scientific enquiry and investigative skills. Pupils record their work well by writing and drawing and they use their numeracy skills to communicate information through tables and block graphs.
91. In all three Year 1 lessons pupils learn about the sources of light, that darkness is the absence of light and how shadows are cast. All three teachers took the same objectives and planned investigations successfully in different ways that ensured good levels of learning. Pupils were enthusiastic about the investigation and the plenary session at the end of lessons confirmed, through their answers, that they had achieved their objectives. Display in the shared area outside the classroom focused on sources of light, mirrors, kaleidoscopes, reflections and rainbows, to reinforce the science unit. Pupils' silhouettes linking shadows with colour and light enhanced the topic.
92. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils looked at the sun as a light source and how the moon reflected its rays. The teacher and the teaching assistant gave a good demonstration of the phases of the moon and pupils watched, listened carefully and answered sensibly. As a result, by the end of the lesson, most pupils had a good knowledge and understanding. This lesson was well supported by a virtual reality phases of the moon CD ROM.
93. The teaching of science is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Teachers recognise and use scientific vocabulary and always insist on its use by pupils. The introduction of 'key vocabulary' appears in all planning. Teachers manage their pupils well, make science interesting and maintain a good pace. This has a clear impact on pupils' learning and their good progress in lessons. All aspects of pupils' learning are at least good and the quality of learning is good overall. Class organisation allows opportunities for pupils to work together collaboratively to plan and discuss their work, and this contributes to their social development. Teachers question pupils to assess their understanding and use their teaching assistant very well for this purpose too. Visits with a science focus are also a strength of the subject.
94. The subject is very well managed by the two co-ordinators and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. Particularly impressive is the development of the environmental area, with its pond, stone and log piles and other features. Assessment is being developed well to track pupil progress and national test results are well analysed and used to inform future planning. Recent improvements in investigative work are a result of this and currently the underachievement of higher attaining girls is being addressed. The curriculum is well planned in appropriate units of study, with each teacher having the freedom to choose how they are delivered. To improve the teaching of science and to raise standards, the co-ordinators should consider in-service training before each unit so that all teachers are aware of the range of investigations, and afterwards how to evaluate the effectiveness of their strategies. In addition, while planning is well monitored, the monitoring of teaching by the co-ordinators is underdeveloped.

ART AND DESIGN

95. By the end of Year 2, the standard of pupils' work in art and design is above average and their achievement is good. Art and design has a high priority in the curriculum and is very attractively displayed throughout the school, helping to show pupils that their work is valued, as well as

contributing well to their spiritual and cultural development. Art and design is often usefully linked with other areas of the curriculum. For example, when celebrating Diwali pupils produced Mendhi patterns and created spiders and their webs to aid number work.

96. Throughout the school, pupils experience a good range of activities, using a vast range of materials. A good example of this is the autumn collage in Year 2 using wool, wheat, barley, lavender and other natural objects. Pupils explore the basic techniques and tools of drawing, painting, printing and collage in a wide range of situations, and particularly impressive is the variety of three-dimensional work. Pupils are progressively taught the skills of colour mixing. The youngest pupils learn to mix colours to find a colour they like. As they grow older, they learn which primary colours make the secondary colours; red and yellow make orange, for example. Pupils are taught regularly about the work of famous artists. In a Year 1 lesson, a Joan Miro painting was used as a stimulus for pupils to paint in a similar style. Year 2 combined their work on cogs from a visit to Legoland with the line drawings of Paul Klee. They make good gains in learning about the style and technique of the artist they are studying and then use that knowledge in their own work. Artwork is sometimes linked to ICT and pupils use a variety of programs to draw and make patterns on the computer.
97. Only two art and design lessons were seen during the inspection. However, from these and the quality of work seen around the school the teaching of art and design is judged to be very good; an improvement since the last inspection. Improvement in the subject is good overall. Teachers demonstrate well the skills that they want their pupils to learn and this has a significant bearing on the good progress pupils make. The management of the pupils is a particular strength, enabling lessons to run smoothly and resources to be used carefully. A very good variety of resources are available in every classroom and this enables pupils to make choices and work independently. As a result, they enjoy lessons and make good progress. Another strength in the teaching is the good level of questioning to explore ideas and preferences when reviewing work at the end of the lesson.
98. The subject is very well managed by the inspirational co-ordinator and art and design permeates the school. Although there is evidence of ceramics in the school, the new kiln will contribute to raising standards in this area. The art and design curriculum is very well planned and structured to ensure regular coverage and to help pupils to develop their skills progressively, and assessment is being developed. The budget is generous and well spent to provide a high quality, stimulating learning environment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

99. The attainment of pupils at the end of Year 2 is in line with the national average, as it was at the time of the last inspection. By the end of Year 2, pupils understand the process of 'plan, do and review'. They experience working with an appropriate range of materials and use relevant tools adequately. In Year 1, for example, pupils design and make individual calabashes, working with papier mâché. They gain an understanding of moving parts and in Year 2 construct card models of teddy bears, using split pins to enable the limbs to move. They investigate different ways of producing movement; for example, the use of cogs, after a visit to a theme park and an examination of the various fairground rides there. Pupils also develop a sound understanding of textiles and how they are produced as; for example, through the production of an attractive woven wall hanging representing autumn. As part of their development in food technology they plan, produce and sample items like fruit faces, 'hedgehog' bread rolls and harvest bread. These and similar experiences contribute to the sound achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs.
100. The quality of teaching overall is good and has improved since the last inspection, when it was judged as satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and organised and the presentation of tasks engages the interest of the pupils. In Year 1, for example, the teacher showed the pupils a good range of candle holders made from various materials, which the pupils examined and handled and this helped them to decide on the requirements for their own designs. In the most effective lessons, the teachers question the pupils effectively about their designs and the comparison

between these and the items produced, helping the pupils to recognise where differences have occurred between the two and that design modifications may be required. In some lessons, the teachers do not sufficiently emphasise design requirements of items; for example, stability or inflammability, in whole-class discussions.

101. Teachers manage pupils very well and very good relationships are evident, contributing very well to the learning process. Examples of the use of ICT in the support of learning are evident as, for example, in the Year 2 lesson where some pupils designed their rooms, which would be constructed later in a shoebox, using an appropriate computer design program. However, opportunities to support pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are sometimes missed. Teachers use pupils' developing skills well in the support of other subjects in the curriculum. Good examples of this are the three-dimensional model of Dover Castle in Year 1 history and the kites made to support learning in science in Year 2. Teachers display pupils' work well and this maintains the high profile of the subject and motivates the pupils.
102. The curriculum is good and has improved since the last inspection. Its breadth is good and design and technology is now an integral part of the pupils' learning across the curriculum in general. Effective links with a partner school also contribute to the good curriculum provision. In a recent liaison activity, pupils linked with older pupils to produce boats for the 'Owl and the Pussycat' to go to sea, for example. The scheme of work is in the process of being updated term by term in order to incorporate the best of the school's good practice with aspects of the nationally produced scheme. There is little evidence, other than by outcome, that tasks are planned to challenge the range of pupils in a class, however.
103. The subject co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and manages the subject well. She has been instrumental in raising the standard of the display work in the school, however, her role has not yet been extended to include the systematic monitoring of teaching. Some photographic evidence and samples of work are kept, but these are not linked with National Curriculum Levels. Overall, the school has made good improvement since the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

104. The attainment of pupils in Year 2 is in line with the national average, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Throughout Years 1 and 2, pupils build and consolidate knowledge and understanding of geography and develop appropriate geographical skills. Pupils are introduced to maps through the travels of their individual versions of 'Flat Stanley', who travels the world via their relatives and family friends, completing a journal en route. Pupils are given opportunities to use their developing map reading skills in real life situations as, for example, when visiting a large theme park in Year 2.
105. They learn to recognise the key features in the environment by first examining the area around the school and a neighbouring apple orchard. Good use is made of the school's digital camera in the identification of features in the environment of the school and in subsequent class discussions of those features that the pupils like or conversely would like to change. Pupils are given the opportunity to compare their own school environment with that of a link school in a built-up area of Calais, and this is enhanced by the annual Year 2 visit. This also enables the pupils to experience French language and culture and contributes well to other aspects of the school curriculum. Good examples of this are the comparison of a French breakfast for design and technology, the support of literacy through writing letters to French pupils and early experiences of French language skills by counting in French.
106. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of the effects of weather and the changing seasons on people and the environment. In Year 1, for example, pupils draw the changes they have observed in a tree over the span of a year. In Year 2, pupils observe and record the weather over a two-week period, using an appropriate computer program to record the class results.
107. By the end of Year 2, pupils are familiar with the physical and human features in their own environment and that of their link school in France, understand the use of symbols to represent

things on a simple map and have appropriate knowledge and understanding of the wider world. Overall, pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve as well as they should.

108. The quality of teaching overall is good and has improved since the last inspection, when it was judged as being satisfactory. Teachers plan appropriately together in year groups. However, the detail of the planning is not sufficient to ensure that effective ideas contained in all the geography lessons observed are shared for the benefit of all pupils. The use of key words is generally identified in planning and these are used appropriately in lessons, however, the use of word cards to reinforce geographical vocabulary and support literacy was not evident. Relationships within the classroom are very good and pupils are managed well. This enables pupils to respond positively in whole-class question and answer sessions and group work, knowing that their contributions will be valued. This underpins the good learning evident in lessons. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, pupils worked well together identifying features in their school grounds, and later in the lesson shared their results with the teacher and the rest of the class with confidence in an atmosphere of security.
109. Resources are used effectively and these captivate and hold the interest of the pupils. In a Year 2 lesson based on the points of the compass, the teacher had prepared four bags containing items that were related to places north, south, east and west of the British Isles. The pupils responded enthusiastically to these and the items enabled them to consolidate and extend their knowledge of world geography, as well as to develop an understanding of the compass and its directions. In another Year 2 lesson based on a similar theme, the teacher had planned to start the lesson by observing an appropriate website and again the pupils were well motivated by this. Generally pupils enjoy lessons and have a sense of curiosity about the world around them.
110. Teaching assistants are used well to help pupils to access the class task. In one lesson, for example, a competent teaching assistant worked with a group of pupils in the playground helping them to record what features they noticed when they looked in four different directions. However, on some occasions; for example, whole-class question and answer sessions, the skills of the teaching assistants are underutilised.
111. The subject co-ordinator is new to this post, but is very enthusiastic about her new role. She is already being instrumental in adapting the scheme of work, so that it contains the best practice of the school scheme, together with aspects of the national scheme, showing good leadership. This has already been completed for the first term of the year. The curriculum is now good and has improved since the last inspection. The curriculum is supported well by the use of the environmental area and good quality school grounds. The use of ICT enhances learning satisfactorily and some use is made of the pupils' numeracy skills. However, the support of numeracy could be developed further.
112. The monitoring of teaching and learning is capable of further development. The role of the co-ordinator has not yet been developed to include the monitoring of teaching. Although some photographic evidence and pieces of work are collected, these are not annotated with National Curriculum Levels. Evaluation of the week's work, however, is an integral part of year group teachers' planning meetings. Reports to parents are satisfactory and overall assessment procedures are sound. No comment on assessment procedures was made at the time of the last inspection. Resources are generally satisfactory to support the delivery of the curriculum as they were at the time of the last inspection. Overall, the school has made good improvement since the last inspection.

HISTORY

113. Standards in history have been broadly maintained since the school's last inspection. The recently appointed subject manager has ambitious plans for history. She has adapted the nationally recognised scheme of work to suit the school's requirements and is working with a local education authority colleague to improve resources for history, including artefacts.
114. By the end of Year 2, pupils' standards are in line with the national average. Pupils achieve as well as they should. In work on their topic on 'houses', pupils considered and discussed changes to the inside and outside arrangements in domestic buildings in the last 100 years. This sequential approach promoted effectively their overall understanding of chronology and how changes occur over time. Pupils recognised that some features on older houses are still considered desirable design statements on newly built houses, including leaded windows. In completed work on toys, pupils' sense of how things change was further developed in personal research, involving their parents and grandparents, looking into the favourite childhood pastimes of generations of their family. Pupils clearly enjoy the practical activities they undertake in history. They behave well in lessons and share materials and resources willingly. They handle artefacts and photographs with care, showing respect for the object and a positive attitude to the subject. Pupils work quickly and concentrate on their tasks, including when working independently. The quality of their learning is good overall.
115. Teaching is good overall. Only two lessons were seen, both in Year 2. However, with a comprehensive survey of pupils' completed work and subject displays, a secure judgement can be made on teaching quality. The use of resources is a good feature in history lessons. Large-scale model houses and photographs of homes from around the village produced a good oral response from pupils, many of whom recognised the buildings concerned. Teachers display secure understanding of the subject and use it effectively to teach core skills of literacy and numeracy; for example, when talking about the ages of houses they are considering. ICT skills are appropriately promoted by work pupils do on computers, including simple reports, and the use of listening centres and tape recorders, as in Class 7 when a group recorded its research findings with a parent helper. Displays of completed pupils' work, to promote pupils' self-esteem and to create a stimulating environment for the current topic, are of very high quality and give history a suitably high profile in classrooms and around the school. Time management varied in the lessons seen in parallel classes. In one, all the key learning objectives were met in full and reinforced in the closing review session. The other lesson started late and finished early.
116. The teaching of local history is supported by a good level of visits to major sites of interest. For example, a Year 1 visit to Dover Castle produced a good level of well-produced models and pupils' own little books, where they used newly acquired specialist vocabulary like 'drawbridge' and 'battlements'. This use of Kent's rich heritage is well employed by teachers to put pupils into places where history has been made, to help them to imagine more clearly how people felt, thought and behaved in the past. The use of visitors, including older local residents, is also a good feature of work in the subject, promoting good awareness of the value of oral history and a sense of citizenship alongside it.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

117. The attainment of pupils in Year 2 is in line with the national average, as it was at the time of the last inspection. By the end of Year 2, pupils understand that a variety of information, text and drawing can be entered and stored on the computer. Pupils in Year 1, for example, produce their own coat peg labels that include their pictures, and produce Christmas gift tags to use with the cakes made in design and technology. Year 2 pupils word-process short stories; for example, 'Sleeping Beauty', and show in examples of work like 'Remember' related to Armistice Day that they are able to use different fonts in their work. They produce effective pictures of fireworks in art too. Pupils understand that information and communication technology can be used to produce movement and, for example, a floor turtle can be programmed to move prescribed distances and right and left turns, as evident in the Year 2 group work guided by a teaching assistant.

118. Through the use of a variety of appropriate programs, pupils in the Foundation Stage begin to understand that situations can be modelled through ICT. Consequently, in Years 1 and 2, pupils are used to using the mouse to make choices and to move items on the screen. In a Year 2 design and technology lesson, for example, a pupil designed a kitchen that he was later to construct in a shoebox.
119. Pupils know that data they collect can be represented in pictograms, bar charts and pie charts using appropriate software. Good examples of this are found in Year 2, through the representation of weather over a period of days, favourite foods and evidence of types of dinosaurs found in various habitats. They are aware also that information; for example, in geography and history, can be accessed via a computer as well as books.
120. The use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum is generally sound. The school has a good range of software, but a small number of computers and some of these are old, although well used. Consequently, pupils have limited time in which to practise skills and receive cross-curricular support. Pupils use information and communication technology appropriately in a variety of ways in support of learning. They use cassette players and headphones to listen to stories in literacy, and in art and design pupils use the overhead projector to help with work on silhouettes, for example. Overall, pupils in Years 1 and 2, including those with special educational needs, achieve appropriately.
121. It is not possible to judge the quality of teaching overall, as little direct teaching was observed during the inspection. Where it was observed, either as part of a literacy lesson or by teaching assistants working with pairs of pupils, the provision was sound. Teaching was deemed satisfactory at the time of the last inspection.
122. The curriculum is sound with significant strengths in its support of learning in other curriculum areas. Assessment procedures have been developed and the recently introduced provision is good, although the collection, annotation and moderation of sample pieces of work would ensure standardisation between classes and year groups. The school has worked hard in recent years, with barely adequate hardware, to fulfil the requirements of the National Curriculum and to provide appropriate support of the school's curriculum by the use of information and communication technology. They are to be commended for this. However, the new teaching room has been completed and new hardware was being delivered during the week of the inspection. This will enable the school to provide more 'hands on' experience and a degree of independent learning for the range of pupils in each year group. The curriculum and assessment procedures were not judged at the time of the last inspection. Overall, the school has made good progress in the development of this area since the last inspection.

MUSIC

123. There has been good improvement in music since the last inspection. Teaching quality has been enhanced, which has resulted in higher standards in the subject. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 2, they now attain above average standards and achieve well. Year 1 pupils in the first term of the school year are confident when repeating simple patterns. Pupils use ICT routinely in lessons to record their performances. ICT is well used both to support pupils' work in music and to develop pupils' personal ICT skills. When working in groups, pupils play a simple score on a grid, showing mature awareness of other players and following the conductor, whether an adult or a classmate, carefully. Year 2 pupils build effectively on this secure start. When composing they consider choices they have, regarding dynamics and pitch, for example, and the means to achieve them when using instruments or parts of their bodies to make music. Pupils play in a controlled fashion. They select suitable instruments for the composition on which they are working, considering the musical elements; for example, the tempo of the piece. The quality of singing is high, both in whole-school assemblies or smaller group sessions. Pupils sing a large number of songs and hymns from memory, remembering the words and melody accurately. They sing tunefully and expressively, often in two parts.

124. Pupils have very positive attitudes to music. They enjoy making music together and respect the excellent range of instruments they can work with and the special space that is dedicated to the subject. They behave very well in lessons and assemblies, listening carefully to instructions and watching the lesson leader attentively so that they come in on time. Music is made great fun and pupils respond very well to this approach. In special lessons; for example, the Years 1 and 2 singing assembly, the whole staff team takes part, many taking leading roles in action songs or to help to teach the words of new material; for example, Christmas songs and carols. This enthusiastic approach turns the pupils on to music, especially its joyful, celebratory nature, which involves everyone, not just a minority of the particularly talented.
125. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Teachers are very confident and knowledgeable lesson leaders. They teach the key skills very effectively. Planning is detailed, so that non-specialists can deliver well-paced, challenging lessons. They use a good mix of activities from across the Programmes of Study, deploying their teaching assistants and parent helpers efficiently and using the comprehensive range of resources available to them to motivate and stimulate pupils. Teachers assess pupils' performances, either live or recorded, effectively. The very best lessons leave time for a final review session, but so much is crammed into music lessons that this can be rushed. Teachers share a capacity to make music lessons enjoyable and transmit their own enthusiasm for the subject directly to the class. Pupils respond in kind and work very productively and imaginatively, sharing ideas and group leadership confidently. Very good relationships in almost all music lessons mean that there is hardly ever the need for overt management strategies to be deployed. The quality of pupils' learning is very good overall.
126. The subject manager is very effective in her role. She is an advanced skills teacher and is an excellent practitioner. Her leadership of whole-school musical activities, like the singing assembly, is outstanding. She has enthused her colleagues by her example and provided a well-adapted curriculum for enthusiastic non-specialists to enjoy with their classes. Assessment in music is well developed and pupils' self-assessment is encouraged. The dedicated music room is an excellent teaching space. Levels of resourcing are exceptional, especially in terms of the number of multicultural instruments available to pupils. Many of these have been brought back from foreign holidays or study visits undertaken by members of staff all over the world. This provision helps to ensure that music plays an excellent part in promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school uses music as a key part of its ethos and environment. High quality taped music is played in the hall for much of the day, introducing pupils to the output of major composers at an unusually high level of input. Music is also played frequently in classes to create atmosphere and mood, to promote reflection, and for its own sake.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

127. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 2, pupils attain broadly average standards in physical education (PE). They achieve as well as they should. However, in lessons seen during the inspection standards were above average overall in Year 1. Year 1 pupils are well aware of space and the need for others to have their share of it. They show above average ball control when dribbling a ball around an obstacle course and when working as a member of a team on a slalom course relay. Boys and girls direct the ball accurately with their feet towards a partner. The receiver confidently stops the ball, either trapping it with one foot, or, if off target, showing good goalkeeping skills to save it. When dancing using ribbons, not all, particularly boys, listen attentively enough to the music. However, when moving to music as robots, almost all are more in time, and the higher attaining, mostly girls, are very creative in their responses. In a Year 2 'Write Dance' lesson, pupils controlled their movements, matching them to the mood of the music more closely, showing good progress over time. In gymnastics, Year 2 pupils devised movement sequences including jumps and balances, as they travelled safely and confidently over large pieces of apparatus. They are appropriately aware of the reasons why exercise is good for them and that it makes for a healthy heart and a good supply of oxygen to their brains and muscles.
128. Pupils are very responsive to PE lessons. They work hard and behave very well in all aspects of the subject. Almost all are independent in the self-help skills, including changing for the subject. All are fully kitted-out in the school PE kit ready for energetic activity. However, in the shorter hall

sessions associated with 'Write Dance', which are then followed up in the classroom, only footwear is removed to save time.

129. Teaching is good overall, with some very good teaching seen in Year 1. All teaching was good or better in lessons seen during the inspection. This resulted in good learning from the pupils. Teaching methods are particularly effective, with considerable thought and research having gone into the school's PE programme. Teachers show good understanding of this programme and the needs of young learners in their lesson leadership. They teach the key skills carefully, building progressively on those introduced in previous lessons, often by an introductory session where teachers also share the learning intentions for the current lesson with pupils. Lessons are challenging, so pupils get used to working hard and learning new skills quickly. They show keen interest in most aspects of PE, and work with concentration, either individually or as part of a group, promoting good team spirit. Teachers make good use of the spacious accommodation and very good resources available to them. Teaching assistants work very closely with teachers, particularly to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have full access to all strands of the subject. Staff are very effective models for pupils. They change appropriately, so they too are ready for vigorous activity, and demonstrate skills confidently. Teachers make good use of pupils' demonstrations to help promote higher standards, but too little use is made of pupil or peer evaluation of these performances.
130. The subject is imaginatively led by a highly qualified manager. She has very ambitious plans for the subject. Much of the work is research led, particularly the movement work, including 'Write Dance' and the 'Sherborne Method', which has attracted considerable interest outside the school. This gross motor activity is used to promote effectively fine motor skills, with noticeable benefit in such areas as handwriting, for which the school is well regarded. Leadership and management is very good overall. The curriculum is particularly well designed, with a strong focus on swimming alongside the other elements. The subject manager has worked alongside her colleagues to their obvious benefit. Professional lessons in dance and football, linked to Charlton Football Club, enrich the curriculum further. Documentation for the subject has been remodelled and very good resources are now in place. The school has made good improvement since its last inspection and initiatives now coming on stream place it very well to improve further. The use of video-recording of pupils' performances in PE to enable them to assess their own skill levels and of the specialist CDs used in 'Write Dance' lessons are examples of the profitable use of ICT to support work in the subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

131. The good standards identified at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. The quality of teaching and learning is good and the planning of lessons is shared between classes to ensure that pupils continue to make progress. Class tasks are interesting and are supported by a good range of well-used learning resources. A strength is the way in which teachers link Bible stories to events in pupils' own lives. This means that pupils are rapidly learning the importance of showing respect for not only their own religious beliefs and customs, but also those of others. Pupils receive their religious education in a variety of ways including class lessons and assemblies, as well as through general school activities. The school provides an exciting learning environment where all can thrive.
132. The planned curriculum is mainly of a Christian nature and celebrates major festivals while taking good account of other world faiths. Pupils recently celebrated the Hindu festival of Diwali and produced exciting Rangoli patterns and greetings cards. They know that a church is a special place and recall important events in Bible stories. Because the teacher asked thought-provoking questions during a good Year 1 lesson, pupils rapidly developed their understanding that Jesus was a special gift from God. They then reinforced this learning by drawing and writing their own suggestions for both spiritual and material gifts, before posting them in a 'special' box. Sensitive teaching in a very good lesson in a Year 2 class evoked a spiritual atmosphere. As a result, pupils began to understand how famous people such as Mother Theresa had to make sacrifices in their own life in order to help others. Music often sets the scene for learning by the use of atmospheric music and the singing of pertinent hymns in assemblies. Pupils' social conscience

is aroused when they take their Harvest Festival gifts to older residents in the community and when they collect clothing for the homeless. Links are carefully made to other subjects such as literacy, art and design, music and science. As an example, pupils' work on birth and baptism is linked to life cycles in science.

133. Attitudes and behaviour are very good because the quality of relationships is high and pupils know that their efforts will be rewarded. Pupils respond well to the spiritual atmosphere evoked in lessons. In one lesson seen, pupils empathised with the reasons why St Francis gave away his wealth to help the less fortunate. Pupils often work harmoniously in pairs and small groups. In one such lesson, pupils shared with each other their thoughts on special people. Following a Remembrance Day service, pupils recalled proud moments and happy and sad occasions in their own lives.
134. The quality of teaching is good. This judgement is based not only on the lessons seen, but also on analysis of past work, scrutiny of planning and through discussions with staff and pupils. Teachers are very good role models and treat all with high levels of respect. Lessons begin with thought-provoking questions aimed at testing what pupils have learned and what they need to do next. As a result of one very good lesson, pupils were able to compile an extensive list of the things that they take for granted that poor people may not have. Teachers tell stories dramatically, thus focusing pupils' attention. Homework is used well to promote learning further. Planning is shared across year groups to ensure consistency of approach and delivery and is regularly amended in the light of experience. Members of the local clergy, as well as visitors from other faiths, make significant contributions to pupils' learning. Good use is made of a teacher who is of the Muslim faith.
135. The recently appointed co-ordinator has a clear vision of how to take the subject forward. Recent developments include the rewriting of the scheme of work to better suit the school's needs. Although examples of pupils' work, including photographs and written work, are kept, more formal monitoring of pupils' progress is being trialled. The co-ordinator provides sound advice to staff, although her role in the monitoring of teaching and learning in lessons is capable of further development. ICT is appropriately used to support work in religious education. The impact of the school's warm and caring ethos is evident throughout and the very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development promotes a learning environment aimed at encouraging pupils to live together in peace and harmony.