

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Aylesham

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118762

Headteacher: Mrs C Clinton

Reporting inspector: Paul Missin 19227

Dates of inspection: 31st March – 2nd April 2003

Inspection number: 247960

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ackholt Road Aylesham Canterbury Kent
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Father J Cridland
Date of previous inspection:	January 1998

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19227	Paul Missin	Registered inspector	English, art and design, information and communication technology. English as an additional language.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9446	Helen Griffiths	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?
14596	Tony Fiddian-Green	Team inspector	Mathematics, design and technology, geography, music. Special educational needs. Educational inclusion, including race equality	
27644	John Tate	Team inspector	Science, history, physical education. Children in the Foundation Stage.	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

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School educates boys and girls aged from four to 11 years. There are currently 118 pupils on roll, 61 boys and 57 girls. This is smaller than most other schools of the same type. At the time of the inspection, 19 children attended the Foundation Stage and were taught in a single Reception class. No pupils speak English as an additional language. This is lower than most schools. There are no pupils from non-white ethnic backgrounds. There are 59 pupils on the school's special educational needs register (50 per cent). This is well above average. The most common areas of need are severe and moderate learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties. Three pupils have statements of special educational need (2.5 per cent). This is above average. The school has one pupil who is a designated Traveller. In the last school year, six pupils joined the school other than at the usual time of admission and ten left other than at the usual time of transfer to other schools. Thirty-two pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals (27.1 per cent). This is above average. When they enter the school, most children are achieving standards that are well below those expected for their age. At the last inspection, attainment on entry was judged to have been below average. The school has experienced significant changes in leadership and staffing in the last few years. There have been four headteachers, including a period of seconded acting-headship, in the last five years. In the previous year, the school experienced significant difficulty in recruiting and retaining members of staff. The school has a projected roll that is falling. The school received an Achievement Award for 2000 and 2001.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Joseph's is a caring community where the safety and welfare of all pupils are high priorities. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils have access to, and are fully involved, in its work. Since her fairly recent appointment, the headteacher has provided good, effective leadership. She has identified some important priorities for development and gives the school clear educational direction and purpose. She is well supported by the senior teacher and other staff. The overall standard of teaching is satisfactory. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good, but its overall effectiveness is limited by important shortcomings in some subjects. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the school achieve well and make good progress towards their own learning targets. Overall, standards in literacy are well below average in Year 6 but are improving in mathematics and science. Standards achieved in music across the school are above average. The school provides an acceptable standard of education for its pupils and gives sound value for money.

What the school does well

- The good leadership of the headteacher and the good support provided by the senior teacher ensure that the school has a clear sense of purpose and that its aims are successfully met.
- The good behaviour and attitudes shown by the pupils across the school are promoted well by the effective way in which teachers support and encourage them.
- The good provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures that these pupils achieve well and make good progress towards their own learning targets.
- Across the school, pupils achieve standards in music that are above those expected for their age.
- The good teaching and challenging curriculum in the Foundation Stage enable these children to make a good start to their time at school.
- The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and for tracking the progress they make in English and mathematics are very good.

What could be improved

- The standards achieved in literacy across the school.
- The priority of raising standards is not sufficiently emphasised in the school improvement plan.
- Governors' procedures for monitoring and evaluating the progress the school makes are not sufficiently rigorous.
- The standards achieved in art and design, history and information and communication technology which are not high enough.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since it was last inspected in January 1998, the school has made satisfactory overall improvement. Satisfactory improvement has been made in addressing most of the key issues from the inspection. Good progress has been made in improving assessment procedures, especially in English and mathematics. Teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics and design and technology has been improved, although this has not been fully achieved in information and communication technology. Teachers' planning now identifies sound opportunities for higher attaining pupils. National Curriculum requirements are now fully met and although standards in mathematics

have been improved, standards in information and communication technology and art and design have not been raised sufficiently. Improvements have also been made in making strategic planning more central to the school's work but the priority of raising standards is not sufficiently emphasised. Since the last inspection, standards in music and design and technology have improved but they have dropped in English and history. Considering the good leadership of the headteacher, the effective support given by senior teachers and the commitment of the whole staff team, the school is well placed for these improvements to be continued.

STANDARDS

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

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

The table shows that, in 2002, when compared with all and similar schools, pupils in Year 6 achieved standards that were well below average in English and mathematics. Standards in science were well below those expected in all schools and below those in similar schools. Great care should be taken when analysing these data because the small year groups make statistical trends unreliable. The trends show some variation between different years but standards are mostly below and well below average. There was an all-round dip in 2002. In that year, the school failed to meet its published targets for the number of pupils reaching the average Level 4 attainment in English and mathematics by a significant margin. Indications are that it will not meet its published targets in 2003 in English but will exceed them in mathematics. The findings of this inspection are that the current Year 6 pupils are achieving standards in English that are well below average. Standards in music are above average. Pupils achieve average standards in mathematics, science, geography, physical education and design and technology. Standards are below average in information and communication technology, history, and art and design. In these subjects, knowledge and skills are not taught progressively, and to a sufficient depth, and pupils do not get sufficient access to computers for higher standards to be achieved in information and communication technology. Standards in English are low because of the language difficulties which many pupils have when they enter the school. In Year 2, standards in reading, writing, mathematics, information and communication technology, history, and art and design are below average. Standards in music are above average and average in all other subjects. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve standards in most areas of learning that are below those expected for their age, except in their physical development where standards are well below average. This is because they do not have easy access to a suitably resourced outside play and activity area.

Most children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and make good progress in their learning. Most enter the school achieving standards that are well below those expected for their age and they make good progress to achieve standards that are still below average by the time they enter Year 1. Across the school, the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs achieve well for their capabilities and make good progress towards their own learning targets. Other pupils across the school make sound progress in their learning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils show interest and generally concentrate well. Most contribute well to class discussion and work co-operatively when required.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour in class is consistently good. Behaviour at playtimes is sometimes boisterous but mostly good humoured.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils get on well together. Staff provide good role models for pupils.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Registration takes place quickly and effectively ensuring a prompt start to sessions.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning across the school is satisfactory, although most of the teaching observed during the inspection was good. Overall, in over nine out of ten lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning was good and in over one in ten it was very good. However, the overall effectiveness of teaching is limited by important shortcomings in some subjects. The overall teaching of English, including literacy, is satisfactory and the teaching of mathematics, including numeracy, is good. Strengths in teaching across the school are in the quality of teachers' planning and their management of pupils. Teachers' planning is clear and detailed and makes good reference to the specific learning intended in the lesson. The agreed planning format is used consistently and it encourages teachers to think and plan very carefully. Teachers have good strategies for managing pupils, some of whom show challenging behaviour. Teachers are firm but fair and they secure and maintain pupils' interest by lessons taught at a brisk pace and the use of interesting and challenging activities. These strengths influence the pupils' interest, commitment and motivation positively and improve the quality of their learning. In information and communication technology, history and art and design, teachers do not ensure that concepts and skills are taught to a sufficient depth. In literacy, teachers do not develop pupils' speaking and listening or presentational skills progressively across the school. Other minor weaknesses are where teachers do not fully explain what pupils have to do and give explanations that are too long. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is good. The teacher is well prepared, has a good understanding of the needs of the young children and manages the children well. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is also good. Overall, teachers meet the needs of the pupils well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	This now meets National Curriculum requirements but is unsatisfactory overall because of shortcomings in information and communication technology, art and design and history. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage and for pupils' personal development are good. There are several good links established with the local community but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to take part in a range of extracurricular activities. The effectiveness of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage is limited by children's lack of easy and regular access to an appropriately resourced outside play and activity area.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Provision is well managed and pupils receive good support in class. Their individual learning plans are well organised and targets are clear and achievable.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted through class prayer times and through collective worship, and pupils are made soundly aware of aspects of their own culture. However, they have insufficient appreciation of their multicultural heritage. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in school and to be involved in wider social issues promote their social development well. The clear promotion of agreed rules and expectations effectively encourages pupils' moral development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school is a caring community where the safety and welfare of all pupils is a high priority. There are clear, effective procedures for promoting good behaviour, and eliminating bullying. Teachers and support staff know the pupils well. This gives pupils confidence and supports their learning. Assessment procedures in English and mathematics are very good. Some procedures are very new. The use of assessment data to track pupils' attainment and to set targets is good.

The effective care and welfare procedures provide a secure environment where pupils' learning is encouraged. The school is beginning to get a clearer view of the progress pupils are making and this is helping to raise standards. Parents have a positive view of the school and its achievements and most give sound support to its work.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. In the relatively short time she has been in post, and despite several difficult challenges and some uncertainty, the headteacher has brought stability and vision to the school. She has acted decisively in several important areas. She manages and involves the full staff team well and is well supported by other senior teachers. The current school improvement plan is sound but the priority to raise standards is not given sufficient emphasis. The roles and responsibilities of co-ordinators in some subjects are underdeveloped.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The period of time when there was no chair of governors has limited their effectiveness. However, since the recent appointment of a new Chair, the governors now provide sound support to the school. The involvement of individual governors, especially in their oversight of the management of the building, has been good.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The headteacher and staff evaluate curricular initiatives well. However, a weakness has been that governors have not been sufficiently proactive in their critical evaluation of the school's work and in their encouragement of the school to raise the standards achieved.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Resources provided for the support of pupils with special educational needs and for staff training are used well. Resources for information and communication technology are not used effectively. Financial planning is sound and the priorities in the school improvement plan are appropriately costed. The school has a clear view of value for money when resources are purchased or building improvements are made but a less clear view of the comparison made with the work of similar schools.

The headteacher's effective leadership has provided a period of stability in a time of change and uncertainty. She has settled well to her post and has worked hard to keep governors fully informed. Her open management style has gained the confidence of staff and parents and now the school is well placed for further improvements to be achieved. Overall, the school's accommodation is satisfactory but the library area is too small to sufficiently pupils' learning adequately. Resources are satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provision for special educational needs seen to be good. ▪ Pupils show good behaviour and good manners. ▪ The headteacher is approachable and listens to parents' concerns. ▪ The school had improved since the current headteacher had been in post. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The provision of homework. ▪ The range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection's findings confirm the parents' positive views of the school. Homework supports work done at school satisfactorily but the team agrees with the parents' concern that there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to take part in a wide range of after school clubs and activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. An important factor which affects the standards pupils currently achieve in the school and explains changes which have taken place since the last inspection has been the continuous rise in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the school and those with significant levels of difficulty. In 1998, the proportion was 31 per cent and this had risen to over 50 per cent by 2003. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is also well above average. A related issue is the distribution of pupils with special educational needs in each year group. The current Year 6 group has the highest proportion with over 60 per cent of this group with special educational needs. Several of this group have significant behavioural and language difficulties which adversely influence the pupils' ability to reach average standards, particularly in English. The changes in leadership in the school, and the several changes of teacher in the Year 4/5 class recently, have also been factors which have limited the capacity of pupils in Year 6 to achieve higher standards. The small size of many of the year groups in the school makes the analysis of statistical data unreliable.
2. When they enter the school, most children are achieving standards that are well below those expected for their age. When children enter the school, the basic language and communication skills of most are often poorly developed. By the end of the Reception year, most children make good progress in their learning but are still achieving standards in most areas of learning that are below those expected for their age. This good progress is achieved by the good teaching and the carefully matched curriculum which is provided. Progress made in the development of physical skills is only satisfactory and standards are still well below average at the end of the Reception year. Children do not have sufficiently easy and regular access to an appropriately resourced outside play and activity area for higher standards to be achieved. Overall, children make good progress and achieve well in the Reception class, but only a few are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals and be ready for the National Curriculum before joining Year 1.
3. In the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2002, compared with all schools, pupils reached standards in reading and writing that were below average and, in mathematics, standards were well below average. When compared with similar schools, standards in reading and writing were average, and those in mathematics were below average. The assessments made by teachers in science were below average. The trends in these assessments have shown that, since 1999, standards in reading and writing have been improving steadily, but those in mathematics have remained below or well below average.
4. The findings of this inspection are that pupils in Year 2 are currently achieving standards in reading and writing that are below average and standards in science that are average. Standards in music are above average. They are below average in information and communication technology, history and art and design and average in all other subjects. Since the last inspection, where it is possible to make comparisons, standards have dropped in English, mathematics and history, have improved in design and technology and music and have remained the same in all other subjects. Standards currently being achieved in reading and writing are in line with those in the 2002 national tests but there has been good improvement in mathematics where standards have risen from well below to below average. This is the result of the good teaching in Years 1 and 2.
5. In the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2002, standards in English and mathematics were well below those expected in all and similar schools. Standards in science were well below those expected in all schools and below those expected in similar schools. The trends in attainment since 1998 have shown wide fluctuations between different years and show all-round below and well below average attainment except for closer to average standards achieved by the 2001 group.

There was an all-round dip in 2002. The school failed to meet its published targets for the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 and above in English and mathematics in 2002 by a significant margin. The published targets for 2003 have been more recently raised in mathematics and lowered in English. The school is on line to meet its revised targets and they provide an appropriate degree of challenge for the pupils.

6. The findings of this inspection are that the current Year 6 is achieving standards in English that are well below average. Standards in mathematics and science are average. Standards are above average in music, below average in information and communication technology, history, and art and design and average in all other subjects. Compared with the findings of the previous inspection, standards in English have dropped significantly. They are also lower in history. They have improved in mathematics, design and technology, music and in physical education in Years 3 to 6 and remained the same in all other subjects.
7. Across the school, standards in music are above average as a result of the confidence and expertise shown by teachers and the good range of opportunities provided for pupils. Standards are low in history, art and design and information and communication technology because all the elements of the subject are not taught to a sufficient depth. Also in information and communication technology pupils do not have sufficient access to computers and the subject is not used sufficiently across other curriculum areas. No significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls was observed during the inspection.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and reach good standards compared with their previous attainment. The very good knowledge, which teachers and learning support assistants have of their pupils, helps pupils to feel confident and secure. Parents are pleased with their children's rate of progress and the very caring ethos of the school. Pupils' progress is more marked in literacy and numeracy, because they receive support which is well matched to their needs, and the school has effectively developed good systems for tracking pupils' progress in these core areas.
9. Across the school, most pupils achieve satisfactorily and make sound progress as they move through the school. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress towards their own learning targets. This is achieved by the good support they receive from their teachers and learning support assistants and from the clear, achievable targets which are set in their individual learning plans. Children in the Foundation Stage also achieve well and make good progress. The good teaching and effective curriculum ensure that they make progress from the very low standards they achieve on entry to the school to the below average standards with which most begin Year 1. Other pupils in Years 1 and 2, and in Years 3 to 6 achieve satisfactorily and make sound progress. Across the school, the teachers' clear planning makes reference to work for pupils of all abilities and ensures that the few more able pupils are fully stretched.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes to learning and personal development are good, an improvement on the findings of the last inspection. Behaviour continues to be good. Nearly all parents feel that behaviour is good and that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. The school's aims in its mission statement are concerned with the promotion of qualities such as compassion, forbearance and forgiveness. Staff aim for high personal standards and self-discipline in a spirit of co-operation and consideration. Pupils' attitudes reflect the school's aims well. Most are keen to come to school, though punctuality continues to be a problem for a small number of pupils, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Participation in extracurricular activities is satisfactory.
11. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Teachers work hard to ensure that lessons are interesting and engage pupils' attention so that pupils show a good level of interest and

concentrate well. For example, in a Year 4/5 mathematics lesson on the 24-hour clock, pupils were well motivated because the tasks were well suited to their needs. However, Year 6 pupils are sometimes lacking in motivation and enthusiasm and, although teachers try hard to encourage them to forward their ideas, they are sometimes unresponsive. Pupils in the anger management sessions respond well to their helper's expectations. Younger pupils listen very well and are keen to contribute to discussions. Pupils are generally keen to undertake personal research when the opportunity is given them.

12. Pupils know the school rules well and feel they are treated fairly. They respond well to teachers' expectations of good behaviour and, as a result, behaviour is good in assemblies, lunchtimes and in lessons. For example, in a Year 2/3 mathematics lesson on symmetry, pupils' behaviour was good because the teacher set high standards. Behaviour at play times is sometimes a little boisterous but generally good-humoured. Pupils are friendly to visitors. Teachers and teaching assistants offer good role models of courtesy and fairness. Relationships are consistently good among pupils and between pupils and all staff. Pupils get on well together and co-operate willingly when required. For example, in a Year 2/3 science lesson where pupils were investigating the amount of stretch in elastic bands as different weights were attached, the groups worked together and supported and helped each other well. Bullying is rare and parents and pupils are confident that it will be dealt with quickly and effectively. There were four fixed-period exclusions last year and one this year. Proper procedures were followed.
13. Pupils' personal and social development is good. There are many good opportunities for them to take responsibility and they take these seriously. For example, Year 6 pupils act as captains in the playground and older pupils act as 'buddies' to younger ones. The house system encourages the sense of community well. Pupils value the rewards system. They understand some of the values of other cultures through art, music and geography and show respect for the feelings and beliefs of others.
14. Children in the Foundation Stage also show good attitudes to school and their work. Although many of them are immature when they begin school, they nevertheless enjoy the varied activities on offer and soon develop positive attitudes. They listen attentively, are able to concentrate for increasing periods of time and generally conduct themselves in a sensible way. Their behaviour is good and they play happily together. Relationships between children, teachers and assistants are very good. Children move through the school sensibly on the way to the hall and, during assemblies, they sit and listen for fairly long periods of time without becoming distracted.
15. Attendance and authorised absence figures are in line with national averages. Registration takes place quickly and effectively and ensures a calm and efficient start to sessions.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. Overall the quality of teaching and learning across the school is satisfactory. This is similar to the judgement made at the last inspection. Improvement has been made because at the last inspection over one in ten lessons were unsatisfactory and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed in the current inspection. The quality of teaching and learning observed in the inspection was strong. Over nine out of ten lessons were good and over one in ten was very good. However, the impact of the teaching over time and the unsatisfactory curricular provision in several subjects has meant that the overall effectiveness of teaching is satisfactory.
17. Important strengths in teaching across the school are the quality of teachers' lesson planning and the positive way that teachers manage and encourage pupils. Most teachers' lesson planning is very good. As well as identifying the specific learning intended in the lesson and matching it to appropriate National Curriculum levels, teachers are very well challenged by the agreed planning proforma to explain and develop their planning further. They are encouraged to answer useful and challenging questions, such as, 'How will I stimulate pupils' interest?' 'What opportunities will I provide for pupils to apply or explore new learning?' and 'How will I celebrate progress?' This

perceptive approach to planning adds significantly to the quality of teaching and the impact on pupils' learning. The way that the learning intended in the lesson is clearly shared with the pupils helps to involve them in their own learning. The other major strength in teaching is the positive way that pupils are managed. All pupils are given clear instructions and the planned learning is shared with them at the beginning of the lessons and the extent to which it has been achieved is often assessed during the whole class summing up at the end of the lesson. A good range of challenging activities interests pupils and their motivation is maintained by lessons which are taught at a brisk pace. The pupils with specific learning and behavioural difficulties are managed well. They are treated sensitively and with patience and their contributions to class work are valued well by teachers and others in the class. Across the school, literacy skills are taught and used satisfactorily while numeracy skills are taught and used well.

18. Minor shortcomings of teaching in otherwise satisfactory lessons are where teachers do not fully explain what pupils should do and, as a result, they are unsure and not fully involved in their learning. Also some of the explanations of teachers are too long and this leads to a loss a pace to the lesson and some restlessness and loss of concentration by the pupils.
19. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is good. In the lessons observed in Year R during the inspection, a half was good and a quarter very good. Particular strengths include the cohesive planning, supported by very effective methods of assessing children's work and the emphasis placed on the development of thinking skills. Good teaching of basic skills in English and mathematics ensures that children move forward in a logical, progressive way. Teaching methods, the management of children and the use of time and support staff are also good. Role-play is well organised to foster language and social development.
20. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, although in the inspection, all the lessons observed were at least good and a small proportion was very good. The reason for this difference is the unsatisfactory impact of teaching over time in several subject areas. The quality of teaching was also judged to have been satisfactory at the last inspection. In these year groups, teaching and learning are good in English, mathematics, geography and music and satisfactory in science, physical education and design and technology. Teaching is unsatisfactory in information and communication technology, history and art and design because topics and specific skills and techniques are not taught in sufficient depth and detail and pupils have insufficient access to computers for higher standards to be achieved.
21. A geography lesson to pupils in Year 2/3, where pupils were investigating aspects of the local environment of the school, illustrated several features of very good, effective teaching. The specific points intended to be learnt in the lesson were read together and carefully explained to the pupils. They were to appreciate and improve the school's environment by undertaking a survey of some of the things which were spoiling the school's appearance. The teacher had provided a clear plan of possible sites of interest and the groups made collections of litter and produced sketches of different areas. One group, which was well supervised by a teaching assistant, took photographs using a digital camera and analysed and printed them when they returned to the classroom. The effect of this very good lesson was that pupils were well challenged and motivated and they developed a good appreciation of how environments could be damaged and also improved.
22. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In these year groups, in over eight out of ten lessons seen, the teaching was good. The reason for this difference is the unsatisfactory impact of teaching over time in several subject areas. The quality of teaching was also judged to have been satisfactory at the last inspection. Teaching is good in mathematics, geography and music, satisfactory in English, science, physical education and design and technology. Teaching is unsatisfactory in information and communication technology, history and art and design because topics and specific skills and techniques are not taught in sufficient depth and detail and pupils have insufficient access to computers for higher standards to be achieved.

23. A science lesson to Year 4/5 pupils who were investigating the process of evaporation, illustrated several features of good, effective teaching. The teacher's lesson plan was detailed and very clear. The activities and related resources had been well organised. Pupils were finding out if the water in strips of cloth, which had been previously soaked, evaporated at the same speed under different conditions. Pupils' attention was drawn to the importance of fair testing as they set up their investigations and they were able to talk confidently about the different variables which they were dealing with. They decided that the cloths should be weighed and the temperature of the different areas of the classroom should be recorded. They did this with appropriate accuracy. The teacher carefully timed the activities and her assistant worked effectively with the groups as they undertook the activities. A further strength was the way in which the teacher used the activity as an assessment opportunity and made useful assessment notes on pupils' performance. By the end of the lesson, pupils' appreciation of fair testing, devising and carrying out an investigation and aspects of the process of evaporation were developed well.
24. Overall, the school has responded satisfactorily to the key issue from the last inspection which identified the need to improve the quality of teaching across the school. Teachers mostly have appropriately high expectations for pupils of all abilities, including the higher attainers. Teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics has been improved well and that in design and technology has been improved satisfactorily. However, there is less evidence of sufficient all-round improvement in teachers' subject knowledge in information and communication technology. Teachers' marking supports pupils' learning satisfactorily. Work is marked regularly. The sample of pupils' work indicated that there are some very good examples of effective marking where teachers show pupils clearly how their work could be improved. Also there were several examples of marking that was over celebratory without sufficient comment on the quality of the work being reviewed.
25. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers and learning support assistants plan effectively together on a daily basis. This ensures that lesson activities match pupils' individual education needs well. Targets in individual education plans are clearly expressed and provide realistic stages of development. In most numeracy and literacy lessons, learning support assistants provide good support in whole class sessions as well as in small group work. This is a productive use of their time and makes a good contribution to the school's monitoring of individual pupils' progress.

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

26. The overall curriculum now meets National Curriculum requirements, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Appropriate provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education. However, overall provision is still unsatisfactory because of shortcomings in information and communication technology, art and design and history. This means that the curriculum is not sufficiently broad and balanced and it does not support the aims of the school as it is intended to do. This represents a decline in provision since the last inspection when it was judged that the school offered 'a reasonably balanced and broadly based curriculum that promotes pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development'. Appropriate policies are now in place but several are under review, supported mostly by published schemes of work adapted to meet the needs of the school and the pupils. Each subject receives an appropriate amount of teaching time but, in practice, these times are not always adhered to. The time allowed for science was mentioned as a cause for concern in the last report and this has now been successfully addressed. Conversational French continues to enhance the curriculum.
27. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are now well established. These have been well resourced and are having an impact on raising standards throughout the school. The National Literacy Strategy is being implemented satisfactorily and literacy skills are applied soundly across other curriculum areas. Some opportunities are provided for speaking and listening skills, for example, in 'circle' and 'fruit' time. This is where pupils in each class sit together and eat fruit

which has been provided and talk informally. Some teachers also organise paired discussions. However, there is no whole-school programme to develop these skills progressively. Pupils are given opportunities to write and record, for example, in science as they write up their evaporation experiment and in design and technology as they evaluate their puppets. However, sometimes, the use of photocopiable worksheets limits the reinforcement and development of pupils' writing and presentation skills.

28. Teachers are confident with the National Numeracy Strategy and implement it well. This supports the good progress pupils make by Year 6. Numeracy skills are used satisfactorily across the curriculum. In design and technology, pupils measure before they cut out, or while they are preparing for their cooking. They weigh flour and sugar when they make biscuits. In geography, they use surveys and the data they collect to make charts and graphs. There are simple time lines in history.
29. Yearly and termly planning is good and provides for the coverage of all National Curriculum subjects and personal, social and health education. Teachers' lesson plans are detailed and focus clearly on key objectives that groups of pupils are to learn. The headteacher and subject co-ordinators monitor the planning of the curriculum carefully. However, there is no framework to guide teachers in planning activities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills.
30. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. Health and sex education and the use and misuse of medicines and drugs are taught as part of personal, social and health education, and through the religious education and science curriculum, in ways appropriate for the age of the pupils in the school. Other lessons are devoted to a consideration of particular issues. For example, in a good Reception lesson about problem solving, children were able to express their thoughts about what to do if a problem occurred. The use of puppets enabled the children to talk without necessarily having the spotlight placed directly onto them.
31. The aims of the school show a strong commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils and this is reflected well in all aspects of school life. The school monitors how well boys and girls perform in different subjects, and pays good attention to the learning needs of all pupils. The good provision for those with special educational needs and those from Traveller backgrounds ensures that they have appropriate access to all aspects of the curriculum and other activities and events arranged by the school. Teaching assistants are trained to support all pupils throughout the school. The school's commitment to the inclusion of all pupils is reinforced by policies on equal opportunities and racial equality. Access to pupils in wheelchairs is difficult in some areas of the school.
32. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage are good. The school combines opportunities for children to learn independently through enquiry and play with more structured activities that prepare them well for the next stage of their education. All areas of learning are planned for effectively and activities devised that match the children's different interests, aptitudes and capabilities.
33. The range of activities provided to enrich the learning experience of pupils is very limited and unsatisfactory. An enthusiastic parent successfully manages the football club and the football team. There are limited opportunities to take part in other sports such as rugby and sometimes pupils meet to prepare for musical performances. However, a wider range of activities for pupils of all ages is not available. A significant number of parents would like to see more activities of this nature. The school is aware of this lack, and plans have been drawn up to amend the situation. Details of visits to places such as Dover Museum and Wingham Wildlife Park are mentioned in the planning documents but it is not possible to judge, either how useful these are or how well they support the curriculum.

34. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning was not mentioned in the last report but is now good. Successful efforts have been made to encourage the participation of wider community groups in school activities. For example, there are important inputs from Arsenal and Charlton Athletic Football Clubs, a scientist from Pfizer who works periodically with Year 6, an artist in residence for Year 5 and various performing companies who support particular curricular initiatives. A local sculptor is producing a sculpture for Aylesham to celebrate the town's heritage, and visits have been made to the studio by groups of pupils to monitor progress and find out more about the project. Pupils have also been welcomed into their premises by the Fire Service and local Post Office and a joint Carol Service is held with their partner school at Christmas. Collections of food are made for the sheltered housing scheme in the town at Harvest Festival.
35. Relationships with partner institutions are satisfactory. The school maintains close links with the pre-school nurseries and playgroups which children attend before coming to the school. Good procedures exist to enable pupils to make a smooth transfer from St. Joseph's to the secondary schools. Subject specialists from these establishments visit the school in the summer term and the pupils make return visits to ease any anxieties which they might have. Full documentation accompanies the pupils on transfer.
36. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There are good arrangements to support pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy in classes, where teaching assistants work with individual pupils or with small groups. Individual education plans are well organised and targets are clear and achievable. These targets focus on both literacy and numeracy, and most education plans also include targets for behavioural and social development. The needs of the pupils with statements of special educational need are well met.
37. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. At the last inspection, it was good. Overall, provision for pupils' social and moral development is good, and that for their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Since the last inspection, standards in most areas of development have been maintained, but in spiritual provision they have dropped. Currently, there is no overall policy, although spiritual and moral development form part of the religious education policy.
38. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted satisfactorily. Acts of collective worship and prayers at the beginning and end of the day provide pupils with opportunities to reflect on their experiences and those of others. Pupils are encouraged to show respect for others and they respond satisfactorily. However, there are few opportunities for them to develop spiritual awareness in lessons.
39. The school makes good provision for pupils' social and moral development and is successful in promoting good attitudes and behaviour. The school's strategies for managing behaviour are consistently applied and, as a result, pupils show respect for their teachers and for school property. In an assembly during the inspection, pupils were encouraged to show tolerance and friendship in the playground. In lessons and other school activities, the school makes good provision for pupils' social development. The House system makes a good contribution. There are many opportunities for them to work in pairs and small groups. They respond well and most are co-operative and friendly. Pupils are given the opportunity in Year 6 to act as captains in the playground, putting out equipment and helping to resolve disputes. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 act as 'buddies' to younger ones. All pupils have responsibilities within classes and have the chance to help in the office. The personal, social and health education and the anger management programmes make a good contribution to personal development.
40. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. The school provides an adequate range of visits and visitors to enhance pupils' cultural experience. A good range of music is available to pupils in lessons, including some from other cultures. French is taught to older pupils.

The local area is not used sufficiently to enrich pupils' knowledge of their own culture. There is little opportunity for pupils to learn about the richness and diversity of life in modern Britain. This was also a shortcoming identified at the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The school is a caring community, as it was at the time of the last inspection. It has effective procedures for ensuring the health, safety and security of its pupils. Arrangements for child protection are effective. The headteacher is the designated person and has recently been trained. The senior teacher is to be trained shortly and all staff receive informal training and have concern sheets which are regularly monitored. County guidelines have been adopted. Links with social services are good. The headteacher is also responsible for looked-after children, who have personal education plans.
42. The school has effective health and safety procedures, with all statutory procedures in place. Three members of staff have been fully trained in first aid. Year 6 pupils receive first aid training as part of their Junior Citizens day. Arrangements for dealing with pupils' medical conditions and for pupils who become ill during the day are good. Accident books are properly kept. Risk assessments take place regularly and for trips and visits. Fire and electrical equipment is checked annually and fire drills take place each term. Rail safety is taught to pupils by visitors as part of a team-building exercise. Teachers follow good practice in design and technology, science and physical education. An Internet safety policy is in place. Supervision at play and lunchtime is good. Security is good.
43. Comprehensive policies underline the good procedures for promoting good behaviour and eliminating bullying. School rules are clear. Good behaviour and hard work are rewarded through a variety of stickers and cards and are celebrated in weekly assemblies. The time when pupils eat fruit together has provided a useful time for informal discussion and sharing concerns and anxieties. Sanctions are appropriate and parents are closely involved in any behavioural difficulties. The family liaison officer runs a useful programme weekly with pupils referred by the headteacher and special educational needs co-ordinator for behavioural difficulties. She has also run bereavement counselling sessions and is involved in the local area regeneration project. The school provides good personal support for pupils and gives them good opportunities for taking responsibility. These are monitored through teachers' informal records and reports. The class councils and the personal, social and health education programme have a good input. Attendance is monitored effectively.
44. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. The last inspection report recorded a key issue about assessment. This was to 'improve assessment practice and level it against the National Curriculum'. The school has made good improvement in this key issue by assessing the core subjects of English and mathematics very well. Assessment is good in science and in physical education. It is satisfactory in design and technology, geography and information and communication technology. However, the full impact of this improvement is tempered by unsatisfactory assessment in history, art and design and music. Appropriate procedures have been adopted in these subjects, but they have not been fully implemented.
45. In the Reception class, pupils are assessed using procedures designed for this age range of children. These tests are in addition to the required profiles compiled for individual pupils. All these data are used to set targets and to forecast what levels pupils are likely to achieve in the national tests at the end of Year 2. The school uses optional tests in English and mathematics, modelled on the national ones, at the end of Years 3, 4, and 5. The results of all the national tests are analysed well and any topics that need addressing are noted. For example, in 2002, many pupils did not answer all the questions, or had difficulty in reading them. As a result, teachers are addressing these points, and the organisation of the tests will spread seating out and have adults available to help, if they are allowed to do so by the regulations.

46. In order to monitor pupils' progress, an individual record is kept for each pupil, and this procedure is good. It enables teachers to see quickly and clearly if any pupil is not achieving as they should. Teachers agree their standards for the National Curriculum levels, and collections of pupils' work are assembled, labelled, and easy to use when judging pupils' progress. Target setting in English and mathematics is good, and pupils are involved in this process and discuss their targets with their teachers. Parents are informed about these targets, and have the opportunity to discuss them at consultation evenings.
47. The care and support of pupils with special educational needs are good. Teachers and learning support assistants know the pupils they work with very well. The supportive, caring ethos of the school, and its respect for the value of all individuals ensure that pupils with special educational needs have good opportunities to take part in all school activities. The very few children with Traveller backgrounds are well cared for, and their various needs, including social and educational needs, are addressed well. Their contributions are recognised and fully appreciated. There are good procedures for the identification of pupils with special educational needs, and they are quickly recognized when they enter the school. Through the school's good procedures for tracking pupils' progress and well organised individual education plans, effective arrangements are made for the regular review of their progress. Pupils' records are well maintained and organised and provide a clear picture of pupils' progress. The school has productive and regular liaison with outside agencies, which are involved, as appropriate, in pupils' reviews.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. Only a small number of parents responded to the questionnaire and attended the pre-inspection meeting. Those who did respond were very supportive of the school and all that it does for their children. They all felt that they could approach the school with problems and that the school was well led and managed. They all felt that the school had high expectations of their children, and nearly all that the teaching was good and that the school was helping their children to become mature and responsible. Parents felt strongly that teaching and behaviour were good. The only areas in which they were not satisfied were in the amount of homework and the range of activities outside lessons. The findings of the inspection generally support parents' positive views. Inspectors felt that homework supported classroom learning satisfactorily but the number and range of extracurricular activities were found to be unsatisfactory.
49. The school has satisfactory links with parents, as it did at the time of the last inspection. The information it supplies for them is also satisfactory. The governors' Annual Report to parents and the prospectus are attractively presented, easy to read and comply with statutory requirements. The Foundation Stage teacher makes home visits to new pupils and provides a good introductory booklet on preparing children for school. Parents were invited to come to school to read to their children in Years 1 and 2, but this has been discontinued because of a poor response by parents. Newsletters are regular and friendly in tone. Parents are provided with advance information each term on what their children are to learn. Reading diaries and homework books are given to children but are not used consistently by parents. Most parents have signed the home/school agreement.
50. Parents are kept satisfactorily informed about their children's progress. Reports are satisfactory, although much space is taken up by an account of what pupils have learned and not enough about the progress they have made. There is little space for parents or children to comment. An appropriate number of consultation meetings are held each year and parents feel free to consult teachers informally at any time. The school is trying hard to improve attendance by parents at meetings and this has had some success: pupils issued invitations to an open day last term and good numbers of parents attended. The school has run curriculum afternoons. A small number of parents help in school on a regular basis and more help on trips and visits. Other parents help with after-school clubs. Overall, parents are involved satisfactorily in pupils'

learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection when this aspect was unsatisfactory. In 1998, there was no formal parent/teacher association. Now a small but enthusiastic number of parents runs the Friends' Association, which provides a range of social and fund-raising events to help the school to buy equipment to enhance pupils' learning.

51. The school keeps the parents of pupils who have special educational needs well informed, and they appreciate what is done for their children. They are involved as soon as the school has any cause for concern, and there are opportunities for discussion with the staff involved in their children's education. There are positive links between the school and the parents of children in the Foundation Stage. Teachers give good guidance to ensure that parents know how to help children learn and, by adopting an open-door policy, they are always available to give advice and help. Parental support for reading is satisfactory.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The headteacher provides the school with good leadership. In the relatively short time she has been in post, and despite some significant and challenging difficulties, she has provided the school with a clear sense of direction and purpose and a period of stability after a time of change and uncertainty. There were several important factors which limited the effectiveness of the school's leadership within the last few years. The school has had three changes of headteacher in the last three years, including a time of acting headship when an experienced colleague at a neighbouring school was seconded to St Joseph's. This was in response to difficulties in recruiting a suitable candidate for a permanent appointment. During the current headteacher's first year in post, the governing body was without a permanent Chair. There were also significant recruitment and retention problems which involved appointing an overseas trained teacher who required considerable support in adapting to the English education system and then suddenly returned home without giving adequate notice. This then involved the headteacher in a substantial class teaching commitment.
53. The main strength in the headteacher's leadership is the way in which she has applied her own vision for the school and has ensured that the school's spiritual, academic and social aims are promoted well. She has introduced several new initiatives to ensure the continuing development of the school and has worked hard to provide both challenge and stability. She leads well by example, and through her previous substantial teaching commitment she was able to demonstrate good practice. A further strength in the headteacher's leadership is the way in which she has secured the confidence and commitment of the whole staff team to continued improvement. The openness, professional commitment and enthusiasm of the staff are a reflection of the importance the headteacher places on the professional development of the whole team.
54. The headteacher's management of the school is also good. She communicates effectively with the governing body and the staff. The time without a Chair of governors, and the continuing lack of a clerk of governors, has meant that the successful management of both of those roles has put an extra responsibility on the headteacher and the school office. She has responded well. The headteacher has ensured that governors' meetings are well planned and reported, and that appropriate issues are discussed. Staff are well informed about, and involved in, decisions about the school. The co-operation between the headteacher and the senior teacher is effective, and possible issues are discussed well. The minutes of staff meetings indicate that staff are involved well in school activities and this helps to build the cohesiveness and commitment of the whole staff team. The roles and responsibilities of the co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science have been developed well but are less well established in several of the other subjects.
55. School development planning is sound. The current plan has several strengths. The senior teacher and other teachers were involved well in the process of reviewing the achievements of the previous plan and devising new priorities. The plan is clearly set out with appropriate reference to costing and evaluation criteria. Several important priorities have been identified including the

development of a teaching and learning policy, the further development of governors' role and curriculum work, especially in literacy and numeracy. The weaknesses are that governors are insufficiently involved in the process of devising and rigorously monitoring progress through the plan. Also the impact of the main priority in the school, to raise the standards achieved, is not sufficiently emphasised. Overall, the school has made a sound response to the key issue from the last inspection which required the school to ensure that strategic planning was more central to its work.

56. A strength in the management of the headteacher has been the way in which she has quickly identified priorities and then worked decisively to meet them. For example, after her appointment, she quickly recognised the need to support teachers in their management of some pupils' behaviour. Other initial priorities for development were the need to introduce revised assessment and tracking procedures and to revise the school's approach to teaching and learning. These aspects have been managed well. Procedures for the monitoring and development of teaching are now good. Useful work is done informally and formally through the Performance Management process and through regular monitoring of literacy and numeracy by the headteacher and co-ordinators. The whole school emphasis placed on the importance of lesson planning and of defining clear learning objectives for each lesson has been met well. These initiatives have led to an improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
57. The governing body now gives satisfactory support to the leadership and management of the school. However, the lack of a Chair of governors in the first year of a new headteacher was unsatisfactory. This shortcoming is still influencing the school's work because the governing body does not have sufficiently rigorous procedures to evaluate the school's work and governors are not sufficiently proactive in their support of the school. For example, governors do not have sufficiently robust procedures for monitoring the progress made in addressing the priorities identified in the school development plan, or in carefully monitoring the standards pupils achieve and the progress that the school is making in raising them. Individual governors continue to use their own interests and expertise well for the school. They have been particularly active and successful in helping the school to improve its accommodation. For example, the new library and computer suite, the recent re-fencing around part of the school and the acquisition of an adjacent football field and grassed area, were all secured with the successful support of the governors'. However, since the election of the new parish priest to the position of Chair of governors, there is now a determination to revitalise governors' work and to increase their effectiveness.
58. The management of the school's finances is satisfactory. The operation of the annual budget is substantially managed by the headteacher, with monthly support provided by a local education authority finance officer. The administration in the school office ensures that the welcoming, secretarial and pastoral responsibilities are conducted well. There was some uncertainty at the beginning of the current financial year over payments to be made to meet the salary of the seconded headteacher and these were not resolved until after the beginning of the current financial year. They resulted in the school having to pay further sums which were only just covered by the planned contingency. The headteacher's initial priority was on improving the level of non-teaching support across the school. This has been achieved well. The priorities identified in the school improvement plan are appropriately costed. There are sound processes to ensure that governors are involved in and monitor the progress through the spending of the school's budget. The school has a sound appreciation of best value, particularly as estimates are sought for building improvements. The rigorous comparison of spending and achievement in all and similar schools is less secure. The specific grants provided for pupils with special educational needs and for staff training are used well.
59. The quality of leadership in the Foundation Stage is good. The co-ordinator is experienced, keen and enthusiastic and is developing a sound vision of the way forward. She is well supported by committed teaching assistants and helpers. She has developed a sound policy for the Foundation Stage and pays due regard to needs of very young children. This is a further

improvement since the last inspection. The programme of work is coherent and stimulating and assessment techniques are very good. The teaching space is arranged very well to meet most of the needs of the children. An important shortcoming is the lack of access to a separate outside play and activity area. Appropriate resources are provided except for the outside area where they are unsatisfactory.

60. The co-ordination of provision for special educational needs is good, and organisation of the provision is carried out effectively and efficiently. The co-ordinator tracks pupils' progress carefully and maintains well organised records of all liaison with agencies outside the school. The school has good arrangements for liaison with local schools, and fully meets the requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs. There is a designated governor, who has a good involvement in the life of the school. Funds allocated for pupils with special educational needs are used to good effect and the school makes a significant contribution from its own resources.
61. The level of staffing in the school is good. There are a good number of teachers for the number of pupils on roll and the pupil/teacher ratio is lower than in many schools. Teachers represent a good range of experience and expertise. Two are currently undertaking major professional development courses leading to further degrees. A good number of support staff are also effectively deployed. They work well with the respective class teachers to provide good support for individual pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. The family liaison officer who attends the school for one day a week makes a positive contribution to the school's social and personal provision through her group work, including the anger management group. A strength of the school is the way that outside agencies and their expertise are contacted and used when appropriate.
62. Overall, the school's accommodation is sound. Governors have worked hard in recent years to secure some improvements. Since the last inspection, a new library and computer suite have been built, an additional grassed area adjacent to the school has been acquired and improvements have been made to the entrance and administrative areas of the school. The outside playground is small and lacks interesting and challenging activities for pupils during their breaktimes. Limitations in the school's accommodation are that classrooms are small and the small size of the school hall makes it difficult for aspects of the physical education curriculum to be addressed effectively. The library and the computer suite are both too small to be used other than for small groups. The library itself, although it is attractively resourced with appropriate furniture, it is not an area where pupils might want to sit and read or discover facts from books or to learn about library and research skills. Children in the Foundation Stage have insufficient easy access to an outside play and activity area, but plans for building redevelopment are well established. Overall, learning resources are satisfactory. Resources for mathematics are good and those in history are unsatisfactory. The level of resourcing of computers is below that in most schools.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

63. In order to continue to improve the quality of education provided by the school the governors, headteacher and staff should:
1. **Continue to raise literacy standards across the school by fully implementing the priorities identified in the school improvement plan and by:***
 - i) devising and implementing a programme for the progressive development of pupils' speaking and listening skills;
 - ii) improving the presentation of pupils' written work by applying the agreed handwriting policy more consistently across the school and ensuring that skills acquired are used across all curriculum areas;
 - iii) improving the library accommodation and developing pupils' full use of it.See paragraphs 2-6, 27, 62, 81-92
 2. **Improve the effectiveness of school improvement planning by ensuring that:**
 - i) the priority of raising the standards that pupils achieve is made clearer and more explicit;
 - ii) governors have a clearer view of the school's targets for improvement and for raising the standards pupils achieve and that they evaluate progress being made in meeting them with more rigour. See paragraphs 55, 57
 3. **Raise the standards achieved across the school in art and design and history by ensuring that:**
 - i) co-ordinators monitor the quality of teaching and learning and the quality of pupils' work more rigorously;
 - ii) in art and design, appropriate concepts, skills and techniques are taught progressively across the school and pupils' work and the work of other artists are more prominently displayed;
 - iii) in history, topics are taught to a sufficient depth to enable pupils to acquire the knowledge, skills and concepts appropriate to their age and ability.See paragraphs 4-6, 20, 22, 26, 27, 106-109, 120-124
 4. **Raise the standards achieved across the school in information and communication technology by ensuring that:**
 - i) the level of resourcing continues to improve enabling pupils to have more effective access to computers;
 - ii) concepts and skills are taught progressively across the school;
 - iii) information and communication technology skills are used more widely to support work done in other curriculum areas;
 - iv) the co-ordinator monitors the quality of teaching and learning and the quality of pupils' work more rigorously.See paragraphs 4-6, 20, 22, 26, 62, 99, 105, 109, 113, 124, 125-128, 132.

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Improve the provision for the physical development of children in the Foundation Stage by fully implementing the school's plan to create a separate, suitably resourced, outside play and activity area with easy access from the classroom.* See paragraphs 2, 59, 62, 64, 77
- Improve the provision of extracurricular clubs and activities. See paragraphs 10, 33, 48, 136
- Make pupils more aware of the culture and lifestyles of the other ethnic groups that make up our own multicultural society. See paragraph 40.

* Priorities already identified in the school improvement plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

28

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

25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	23	2	0	0	0
Percentage	0	11	82	7	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	118
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	32

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	59

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	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

		Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year		2002	6
National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*	
	Girls	*	*	*	
	Total	10	11	11	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (86)	79 (86)	79 (86)	
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)	
Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*	
	Girls	*	*	*	
	Total	10	11	12	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (86)	79 (86)	86 (86)	
	National	85 (85)	[89 (89)]	89 (89)	

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

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

		Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year		2002	9
National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*	
	Girls	*	*	*	
	Total	11	12	18	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	52 (67)	57 (78)	86 (83)	
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)	
Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*	
	Girls	*	*	*	
	Total	18	16	19	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (67)	73 (67)	86 (78)	
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)	

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

- *Data omitted because of small year group numbers.*

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	118	4	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	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– Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.6
Average class size	23.6

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	129

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Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	311707
Total expenditure	309126
Expenditure per pupil	2534
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	2581

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	118
Number of questionnaires returned	22

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	41	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	68	23	9	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	50	0	5	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	45	27	14	0
The teaching is good.	59	36	5	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	45	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	82	18	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	41	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	45	45	9	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	55	45	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	41	5	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	45	27	5	5

Other issues raised by parents

- Provision for special educational needs is good.
- Pupils show good behaviour and good manners.
- The headteacher is approachable and listens to parents' concerns.
- School has improved since the current headteacher has been in post.

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

64. Children are admitted to the Reception class in September each year. Those born in the autumn become full-time straight away, children born in the spring are part-time until half term and those born in the summer become full-time in January. During the inspection, there were 19 children in the Foundation Stage and they were taught together in a single Reception class. When they enter the school, most are achieving standards that are well below average. At the time of the last inspection, this was judged to be below average. From this starting point, children make good progress in most areas of learning. In the Reception year, children achieve standards in all areas of learning that are below average. In their physical development, standards achieved are well below average. This is because they do not have regular access to a suitably resourced outside play and activity area.
65. Overall, provision for children in the Foundation Stage has made good improvement since the last inspection. In 1998, children aged under five were taught in a class with Reception and Year 1 children and there was no separate policy for these children and no teaching assistant supported the class teacher. Most children were then working within National Curriculum work rather than to learning outcomes more suitable to their age. There were no clear judgements on the standards which children achieved.

Personal, social and emotional development

66. On entry to school, the children's personal and social skills are often poor. However, most make good progress to achieve below average standards by the time they are five years old. Personal and social development is promoted strongly and this has a positive impact on learning. Well established procedures help the children to grow in confidence and take care of their own needs. They work sensibly in groups and know that, at times, they are expected to work by themselves. All adults use praise and encouragement and each child is valued. Systems are in place to allow children to choose activities and use their own initiative. This was well illustrated when the teacher described a number of tasks from which the children could choose, each one marking his or her choice with a named peg on a chart. The children were aware that group sizes were limited during these activities and they moved round from one to another very sensibly. By the time the children are five, they are able to work and play as part of a group and most behave well. They develop happy and constructive relationships with each other and the adults they work with and have a positive attitude towards school. 'Circle' time plays an important part in this process. During the inspection, the children were thinking about the importance of the individual and the power of friendship. Using puppets, the teacher explored the notion of problem solving, with one puppet explaining to the children that it had a problem with the second puppet which the children could help with. Taking the opportunity to talk in turn, the children were able to contribute their ideas and offer possible solutions. This activity was taken very seriously. Throughout the inspection, the children were eager to explore new learning and were able to concentrate for suitable periods of time.
67. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good in this area. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Opportunities are exploited to promote personal and social development and the children respond positively. As part of the 'Growth' topic, the role-play area was arranged as a greengrocer's shop which children visited, either buying or selling a variety of mostly real vegetables. In addition to practising appropriate language and mathematical skills, the children interacted with each other very well. Good routines and encouragement help children to manage their own personal hygiene to a good standard. A high priority is given to social and personal development and the teacher and her assistant are skilled in knowing how and when to intervene in situations. Children learn how to play and work together, developing the skills of co-operation and negotiation.

Communication, language and literacy

68. On entry to school, standards in this area are well below average and, although good progress is made during the year, they remain below average for most of the children by the age of five. The majority of children do not achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. The quality of teaching and children's learning in this area is good. The teacher and her assistant spend a great deal of time and effort teaching basic language and a broader vocabulary to enable children to access the curriculum.
69. Overall, when children enter the Reception class, most have poorly developed speaking and listening skills. By the end of the year, standards remain below average and it is this deficiency which is the main reason why children do not reach higher standards in the other areas of learning. Most children find difficulty communicating with each other and with adults. The teacher's concentration on spoken English is very evident in the classroom and is always emphasised in the detailed planning. The teacher and her assistants are constantly asking good and challenging questions and putting children in situations to encourage the use of spoken language. 'Circle' time provides good speaking and listening opportunities. A small minority of children were able to express themselves in a confident, assured way whilst, at the other extreme, there were children who found great difficulty saying anything at all.
70. Few children start school with much experience of books, and the lack of spoken language skills is an impediment to the process of learning to read. By first of all concentrating on the development of these skills, good teaching and learning encourages children to begin the process of learning to read. A range of reading material is available in the classroom for children to dip into, either to enjoy or to read as part of the scheme material which is available. Children are introduced to books as soon as possible and quickly become familiar with a range of well-known stories and rhymes. During the inspection, the more able children demonstrated growing confidence in using picture clues to tell stories. Reading books are introduced as and when children are judged to be ready and these are taken home, together with other material chosen specifically by the children. Teachers make good use of big books, the story of *The Enormous Turnip* being the text during the week of the inspection. The children had good recall of this story and were able to follow the text as the teacher read it. Information and communication technology is evident and in use as a support to the reading programme. Stories linked to a published scheme are available for children to access during their periods of choice.
71. On entry to school, fine physical movements are poorly developed. Hence, the process towards learning to write is difficult for most of the children during the Reception year. Standards are below average at the end of the Foundation stage and the Early Learning Goals are not reached, although good progress is made. During the inspection, several children were observed practising the writing of letters in sand which was a good way of reinforcing recognition and developing hand control. Other children were learning to sequence a story by sticking pictures in a book and copying simple text underneath. Good encouragement is given to children who want to write their own stories and, during the inspection, the more able children were writing about the enormous turnip in their zigzag books. The evidence suggests, however, that most are at a very early stage in their writing development. The teaching and learning of writing is progressive, consistent and good. Opportunities are provided across all areas of the curriculum for children to improve their dexterity and confidence.

Mathematical development

72. Children enter Reception with a well below average understanding of, and experience with number. Their mathematical vocabulary is very limited, as is their knowledge of shape and measurement. Progress and achievement are good during the year but standards are still below average at the end of the Foundation Stage with few children reaching the Early Learning Goals.

The teacher sensibly adopts a practical approach to teaching the subject and correct mathematical vocabulary is carefully and systematically introduced. This approach was evident in the analysis of planning documents and through lesson observations. Children were generally confident adding and taking away numbers up to five verbally but only a small percentage of the class had translated this work into their books. Recognition of numbers up to ten, and sometimes beyond, was secure with most of the children.

73. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Whenever suitable opportunities occur, the teacher counts out things or individuals to reinforce understanding and recognition. For example, at registration, the children counted the number of children present and the number who were taking sandwiches. A child built a truck with four carriages which he was able to count with confidence and a few children were able to count the dots on a domino. Topic work always has a planned mathematical element, as confirmed by photographic evidence of number stories written about insects. The teacher carefully maintains assessments of progress made by each individual child.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74. When starting school, children demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the world that is well below that expected for their age. They make good progress in Reception due to the breadth and variety of their experiences but their knowledge is generally still below average even though this represents a good improvement.
75. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Planning is thorough and assessment procedures helpful and informative. Taking themes such as the current one 'Growth', activities are carefully planned to enable children to explore aspects of their own environment and to relate the work to their own experiences. Beans had been planted to observe growth, as had individual pots of seeds for each child. The seeds had been examined and the teacher had brought together comments about their size, colour, shape and smell. An early opportunity to devise a simple experiment was evident. Two plants were in pots, one being watered, and the other not. This was a good example of encouraging investigation. Good use is made of the immediate area and the class makes frequent visits to the school grounds to look for signs of growth. The class pet, Bella the rabbit, was not only a popular and much loved animal, but looking after her and her various needs provided excellent training, especially for children without an animal or pet at home. To further enhance this work, the teacher had arranged for a lamb to be brought into the school. Also, the school organised its own event for National Pets Week, with children bringing a number of pets from home, including a budgerigar, hamster, guinea pig and even a pony.
76. Opportunities are taken to introduce the children to occupations and businesses in the local area. Visits to the fire station and the post office were good examples and the photographic evidence confirmed that the experiences were successfully brought back into the classroom role-play area where children could re-enact the occupations and further develop language and social skills. Information and communication technology is available in the classroom and evidence from displays confirms that children have accessed the Colour Magic program to draw flowers and to write simple labels. Otherwise, during observations, the computer was used infrequently.

Physical development

77. When starting school, children's physical skills are well below average. Most do not possess a varied range of linguistic skills to understand directions. The progress that most make during the year is hindered by the lack of easy access to a separate outside play and activity area. Plans to improve this situation were discussed during the inspection, but, at present, this lack of provision denies children a degree of independent choice and they are not able to use large play equipment as frequently as they should to develop their physical skills. There are a limited number of bicycles and scooters to use outside, mainly on loan from the local education authority. This

provision is unsatisfactory. As a result of these limitations, very few children make sufficient progress to reach the Early Learning Goals.

78. The teacher provides some other opportunities to develop children's physical skills. During physical education lessons in the hall, the teacher encouraged the children to imagine they were changing from egg to caterpillar, to cocoon and finally to a butterfly. Instructions were followed very well and the more mature children tried very hard. The less mature in the class did not use space very well and tended to group together. The content of this lesson fitted in well with the 'Growth' theme for the term. Construction kits are well used. Photographic evidence confirms this and, during the inspection, it was a popular activity. Children concentrated well for a sustained period to build a motor vehicle, complete with lights and bumpers. Opportunities are provided for children to practise drawing, cutting and sticking. Pencil control is also at an early stage of development for most children. However, the effect of the lack of access to the suitably resourced outdoor play and activity area limits the effectiveness of provision in this area and makes the overall quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning unsatisfactory.

Creative development

79. When starting school, children have creative skills that are well below those expected for their age. By the end of the year, good progress has been made but most children are still achieving standards that are below average. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The teacher promotes creative development well and she understands how important it is for the overall development of the child.

80. Planning for the 'Growth' theme included many activities which had a creative dimension. For example, children cut out the shape of a butterfly and stick coloured paper and pasta on to produce a collage. Using pastels on black sugar paper, they also create their impressions of a daffodil. Painting is of a varied standard but children are able to mix colours and select paintbrushes for themselves. Children are given opportunities to experience different media and the teacher maintains a good balance between directed and free choice activities. Photographic evidence contained pictures illustrating children's work which included drawing of the veins in leaves, painting clay plates and designing beakers. Musical opportunities include singing and playing instruments and role-play is well organised to develop language and social skills.

ENGLISH

81. Pupils in Year 2 achieve standards that are below average in their reading and writing. This represents a decline since the last inspection when standards were judged to have been average. This change is a reflection of the changing intake of the school. At the last inspection, attainment on entry was judged to be below average; now it is well below. The current inspection judgement is in line with the results achieved in the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2002 and is slightly above the school's own prediction of the likely attainment of the present Year 2 group.

82. Pupils in Year 6 achieve standards that are well below average. This represents a significant decline in standards since the last inspection when standards were judged to have been average. This is similar to the results of the 2002 national test for eleven-year-olds and is also in line with the school's own assessment of the current Year 6 group. The drop in standards is explained by the fact that the present Year 6 group has a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs where pupils have either specific language difficulties or behavioural difficulties which influence their progress negatively.

83. Despite the low and very low standards reached, pupils across the school achieve satisfactorily and make sound progress. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Many of them have appropriately small learning targets, for example, younger pupils have key words to learn to read. These pupils are supported well in class and the activities that teachers

provide are well matched to their ability. Also the effective support, guidance and encouragement provided by the learning assistants promote this good progress. Effective use is made of small group teaching, through work done in the Early Literacy Support, Additional Literacy Support and Phonographix groups. The carefully devised planning by teachers ensures that the needs of all pupils, including the relatively few who are higher attainers, are met well.

84. Across the school, most pupils are achieving standards in their speaking and listening skills that are below average. When they enter Year 1, most pupils' speaking and listening skills are also below average. It was evident, across the school, that some pupils had difficulty in constructing the simplest sentences in response to teachers' questions. Some consistently answered in short phrases or single word replies. Several pupils' speech was very indistinct. Across the school, teachers make sound and sometimes good opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. For example, while Year 1 pupils were discussing how to look after a cat, they were given good opportunity in pairs to share their ideas. Most used this opportunity well and discussed sensibly with their partner before sharing their findings with the rest of the class. In Year 6, pupils talked clearly and convincingly as they debated the effects of tourism on areas of Wales. Good opportunities are provided for speaking and listening in the small group programmes that are organised. An effective Early Literacy Support activity organised well by a learning support assistant provided good opportunity for pupils to speak and listen in a small group. A time of informal talk and discussion is provided during the 'fruit break'. During the inspection, older pupils talked sensibly about the possible outcomes of the war in Iraq. However, an important weakness in the school's approach in this area is that there is no overall programme to show teachers how to build up progressively pupils' vocabulary and confidence in using it. There is too much reliance on teachers' intuitive skill in devising opportunities rather than using a planned programme.
85. Most pupils in Year 2 are achieving standards in reading that are below average. This represents an overall improvement since the 2002 tests except that, currently, there are fewer pupils who are achieving the higher Level 3 standard. Higher attaining pupils read fluently and with expression. They talk confidently about books they have read and take pleasure in their reading. They understand features of the plot and characters from different stories and express preferences in their reading. Most pupils are aware of alphabetical order and how it might be useful, for example, in dictionaries or encyclopaedias. Lower attaining pupils enjoy reading but need to make reference to picture clues and require the help of adults in order for them to appreciate fully what they read.
86. Most pupils in Year 6 are achieving standards in reading that are well below average. Higher attaining pupils read fluently and expressively, but few read a sufficiently wide range of styles and genre. One competent reader claimed, 'I only read horror stories.' Most classes have a good supply of reading scheme books but there are insufficient books, particularly in the school library, to encourage pupils to extend their range of reading. Few pupils were able to name a favourite author and explain why they liked that person's work. Several took school books home regularly to read but few read at home as a matter of choice. Research and referencing skills are not sufficiently developed. Most pupils are unsure how to access information books in a library or the use of classification systems. Pupils across the school are not given sufficient instruction and guidance in developing their library skills. The small size of the library is a limiting factor in this respect.
87. Pupils in Year 2 achieve below average standards in their writing. Pupils have opportunities to write for a variety of purposes, for example, as they write their own myth or fable, write an ordered sequence of instructions to make coconut-ice and write descriptions of birds that they have seen. However, their work shows generally insufficient use of more ambitious vocabulary and often lacks a clear overall structure. Most pupils do not use a sufficiently wide range of more interesting sentence connectives. Many of the lower attaining pupils are just beginning to communicate meaning through their written work and are learning to write their names and key

words. Other pupils write longer texts with simple words spelt correctly. Teachers over use photocopiable worksheets. While these provide a good framework for some pupils' early writing development, they soon limit the scope and imagination of more competent writers. Pupils are developing appropriate handwriting skills. Handwriting is taught successfully as a separate element of the subject. More able pupils are developing an appropriate style where letters are joined and are formed accurately and mostly consistent in size and orientation. Evidence from the sample of pupils' work showed that several had made good progress in this aspect during the current year.

88. Pupils in Year 6 achieve standards in writing that are well below average. Pupils are made aware of several different styles and purposes of writing. For example, they write their own diaries, re-write the story of the three pigs from the pigs' point of view and write scripts for their own play on the subject of 'The Ring'. They discuss why writing a letter of complaint needs to be formal and persuasive, before writing their own. However, in their writing, most pupils use simple vocabulary and ideas. Their work lacks the imaginative use of adverbs and adjectives to enliven and add interest. There is a lack of use of more complex sentences and sentence connectives and other literary features such as alliteration and figurative language. Evidence from the sample of pupils' work indicated that even the work of more able pupils showed the inconsistent use of basic grammar features such as capital letters and full stops, and several pieces of work had not been completed. Handwriting and presentation skills are sometimes poorly developed. Several pupils have not yet developed consistently joined handwriting styles, and, too often, the lack of attention to good presentation limits the overall quality of their work. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write extended pieces of work.
89. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 and 2, and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Across the school, a strength in teaching is in the quality of teachers' lesson planning. Lesson plans are full, detailed, and helpful. The specific learning intended in the lesson is clearly defined and shared with the pupils at the beginning and the end of the lesson. This strength ensures that teachers and their assistants are well prepared, are able to assess pupils' learning regularly and that pupils are involved in their own learning. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. Learning support assistants re-interpret teachers' explanations and instructions in whole class situations and support the individuals and groups well as they work. Marking is satisfactory. Where it is good, pupils are given clear information about how work can be improved. Some marking is over celebratory.
90. In Years 1 and 2, teachers manage the pupils well and quickly establish effective learning environments in their class. They treat pupils firmly but fairly and, through questioning and the organisation of activities, they ensure that all pupils are fully involved. Teachers ensure that lessons are taught at a brisk pace and that activities are carefully timed. This ensures that pupils' attention and interest are maintained and improves their learning. In a lesson to younger pupils who were writing instructions for looking after a cat, the teacher led the discussion well and asked probing questions to individual pupils and gave them appropriate time to consider and phrase their answers. In Years 3 to 6, teachers generally introduce lessons carefully, ensure that pupils understand what is expected of them and devise appropriate activities for them to follow. An effective lesson to pupils in Year 4/5 where they were exploring instructional writing, illustrated several features of good management of the pupils. The teacher introduced the lesson very promptly after a 'fruit-break' ensuring that lesson time was used to the full. The teacher spoke clearly and decisively so that all pupils knew what they had to do, and the class teacher and the support assistants circulated around the groups well as they worked giving support and encouragement.
91. Work in the subject is based satisfactorily on the National Literacy Strategy format. There has recently been significant development of the subject through staff meetings and external support. The decision to teach some of the elements of the subject separately is sound. Most classes have separate curriculum times for extended writing, phonics, guided reading and extra language

support. Support provided in the Early Literacy and Phonographix programmes is effective. The substantial curriculum time being devoted to literacy is not yet leading to significantly raised standards especially in Year 6. However, indications are that standards in the Foundation Stage, in Years 1 and 2, and in Years 3 and 4 are rising, but the result of the initiatives introduced are not influencing Years 5 and 6. Some opportunities are provided in other subjects for the application of pupils' literacy skills, for example in Year 6's project on mountains, but often pupils' limited writing skills are also a handicap in other subjects. The use of information and communication technology skills is underdeveloped. Homework supports the subject satisfactorily.

92. The current co-ordinator has been managing the subject for one year. She is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and she has a realistic view of the subject's strengths and weaknesses. The subject has had a high profile in the school recently and literacy standards have been the focus of several staff and in-service training meetings. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking the progress they make are very good. Good use is made of data from the analysis of the responses in the previous national tests, and careful records are kept of the progress pupils make in reading and phonic development. These data are used well. The careful assessment of pupils' early writing skills through the match made with significant growth points is used well to provide specific targets for pupils to achieve. Other test data are used well to provide individual targets based on likely National Curriculum levels which are amalgamated to provide clear year group targets. Teachers also maintain useful collections of pupils' writing which have been assessed according to National Curriculum criteria. These show that teachers have a good appreciation of the different levels achieved by pupils. Overall, resources are satisfactory, but there is insufficiently challenging reading material for higher attaining pupils in Year 6. The library is soundly resourced with new, attractive books, but it is not big enough to provide an area where library and research skills can be taught or where pupils can enjoy reading and finding out from books. Interest in the subject is promoted well through activities such as the National Poetry Day competition.

MATHEMATICS

93. In Year 2, pupils achieve below average standards in numeracy and the other areas of the mathematics curriculum. This represents a fall in standards since the last inspection but an improvement when compared with the results of the 2002 National Curriculum tests. In 2002, standards were well below average when compared with all schools nationally and below average when compared with similar schools. In Year 6, pupils' attainment is average. This is a good improvement when compared both to the last inspection report, and the results of the 2002 National Curriculum tests. Standards were reported as 'unsatisfactory' at the last report. Results in 2002 showed that pupils were well below average compared with all schools and with similar schools.
94. Across the school, the trend in standards is an improving one, but with a dip in 2002. All-round standards are improving and pupils who have special educational needs are making good progress towards their own learning targets. These trends are the result of the good teaching across the school, which has improved since the last inspection.
95. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve satisfactorily. In Year 1, pupils recognise coins, count to 20 and use non-standard units for measuring. They used their hand spans or their feet to measure objects round the classroom such as the desks, the window or the gap for the door. Year 2 pupils cover the required topics satisfactorily and shop and find totals of the objects they buy. They write numbers as well as spell them, and can give change. Most understand the terms 'heavier' or 'lighter' and they recognise shapes such as cones, pyramids and cylinders. They are beginning to solve simple word problems.
96. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' achievement is good. Pupils make good progress in all elements of the subject. For example, in number, younger pupils know the value of numbers with three digits

while older pupils understand prime numbers, factors and square numbers and work in all four operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Younger pupils work on frequency tables and work out chance and simple probability and older pupils conduct surveys, such as one about types of bread where they make tables and charts to show their findings about granary, poppy seed, and wholemeal breads. Younger pupils describe shapes in terms of sides and corners, and they understand fractions, weights and graphs. Older pupils read and plot co-ordinates and use calculators and interpret graphs. They understand world time zones and work out problems involving time in places such as Sydney and London.

97. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is good, with some very good elements. A strong feature is teachers' planning, which is always very full, and provides good learning experiences for their pupils. Lesson plans show clearly the work for pupils of different abilities in each class. Many of the activities planned focus on learning that involves pupils in action rather than always sitting down and writing. For example, in a good Year 1 lesson, pupils were learning to tally as they were given tubes of sweets to sort into colours, count, and classify. The interesting activity and the good pace and challenge of the lesson kept them focused well on their work. As a result, they were all fully active throughout the lesson and learnt well. A further strength is the way that teachers manage the pupils and encourage a very good response from them. In the lessons seen during the inspection, pupils were consistently well behaved. This is because teachers have established good routines in their classrooms and their expectations for good behaviour and application to work are always high. Teaching assistants work very well with pupils and there is good liaison and planning between assistants and teachers on a daily basis. This good support from teachers and assistants is enabling all pupils to make good progress, but especially those who have special educational needs. Teachers now have a good understanding of the subject and this represent good improvement in this area of weakness identified at the last inspection.
98. Other strengths in teaching across the school which promote good learning are the way in which teachers share the learning expectations in the lesson well with the pupils. They check, sometimes during the lesson, to see if they are meeting them, and always go through them at the end. Generally, teachers insist on pupils setting their work out neatly, and in columns. For example, pupils in Year 6 were seen learning about long division. They were working on examples that required them to divide a three-digit number by a two-digit number. The teacher was careful to show them how to set this out so that their numbers did not become confused. They learnt well and after working together with the teacher on two examples were able to do some on their own. All lessons begin with a brisk mental starter session. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils began by adding figures, using a number line and jumping along it. They discovered the sequence that the teacher was using to be jumping by twos to the odd numbers on the line. Year 4/5 began their lesson by counting rapidly in fives and they understood that it is useful when they are telling the time.
99. The co-ordinator's leadership of the subject is good and she has a clear understanding of what is required for continued improvement in the subject. There is a good scheme of work, well supported by the use of several commercial books from which teachers draw appropriate material. This has ensured that work in the subject now meets National Curriculum requirements. Assessment of pupils' work is very good, and the analysis of tests and assessment data is used well to provide a good focus for identifying areas for development. Numeracy is used satisfactorily across the curriculum. For example, pupils weigh and measure the ingredients used in food technology and they use simple time lines in history. The use of information and communication technology, although appropriate in some lessons, is unsatisfactory overall, and is not used enough across the subject. Resources are now good. They were unsatisfactory at the last inspection. There has been also been good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in standards of pupils' attainment in Year 6, and in the overall standard of teaching.

SCIENCE

100. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain average standards. This is in line with the findings of the last inspection. This represents good improvement on the results achieved in the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2002 when standards were below those expected in similar schools and in the national teachers assessment tests for seven-year-olds which also indicated below average attainment. Over the past four years, standards show a gradual improvement. The current inspection findings are broadly in line with the school's own predictions of the likely results of the present Year 2 group but are above those predicted for Year 6. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve standards that are satisfactory compared with their previous attainment. This inspection finds no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls, both of whom achieve average standards.
101. Across the school, pupils achieve well in the elements of the subject which they have studied. For example, in Years 1 and 2, younger pupils know the main parts of the body and some of the changes which take place as people grow older. Older pupils investigate the strength of different types of paper and are able to construct simple electrical circuits. In Years 3 to 6, pupils know how some mixtures can be separated by dissolving and sieving and that increasing air resistance makes parachutes fall more slowly. The investigational approach is well established across the school. In Years 1 and 2, pupils investigate different pushing and pulling forces and the effects of magnetism on different solids. In Years 3 to 6, they investigate how materials change as ice cubes melt, and how light travels in straight lines.
102. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is satisfactory with several good elements. In the previous inspection, teaching was judged to have been sound or better in three-quarters of the observed lessons in both key stages. Lesson planning is now good across the school, and the activities provided indicate that pupils' learning is well organised. Most teachers are confident in their knowledge of the subject. Throughout the school, a strong emphasis is given to the teaching of experimental and investigative science. Teachers' planning shows a good balance between investigations, factual learning and recording. All pupils enjoy science and are inspired by the enthusiasm of their teachers. This was well illustrated in a good lesson in Year 1 on magnetism. The teacher captured and maintained the interest of all pupils by making good use of resources to make learning both relevant and enjoyable. There was ample opportunity for pupils to find out for themselves and record the results in an appropriate way. For those who acquired the concept quickly, there were opportunities to explore the classroom, finding other objects with magnetic properties. By careful preparation and detailed planning, the teacher was able to motivate and interest the pupils who remained well on task throughout the lesson.
103. In all the lessons observed in Years 3 to 6, the management of pupils was good and the content of the lesson pitched at an appropriately challenging level. Planning was very clear and explicit and the learning expectations shared with pupils at the beginning of each lesson. Assessments of individual progress were maintained, enabling teachers to plan more efficiently for future lessons. These strengths were evident in a good Year 4/5 lesson in which pupils were given the task of finding out how quickly water would evaporate from a damp cloth exposed to differing air flows. Mathematical knowledge was reinforced well as the cloth was weighed before and after the experiment and a fair degree of co-operation was necessary between individuals and groups. The cloth was not left for long enough to provide a clear-cut outcome but the pupils nevertheless realised that evaporation took place more readily when the cloth was placed in a strong airflow.
104. A shortcoming in teaching across the school is the reliance on photocopiable worksheets which limits opportunity for the development of pupils' writing and presentational skills.
105. Teachers are well supported by a policy which is under review. The scheme of work is based on published material which provides good coverage of all aspects of the subject and gives clear guidance for teachers. Assessment procedures are good and include an end of unit assessment for

each pupil that is related to the National Curriculum requirements. The subject is well led by the headteacher who is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Appropriate links with numeracy and literacy were evident during the inspection. In a lesson to pupils in Year 6 investigating the motion of paper spinners, pupils talked about how to devise their own fair test and they had to use their mathematical knowledge to measure and record their findings. Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently and it has been identified as an area for development. Learning resources are satisfactory. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning have improved, curricular planning provides good progression and there is a well-qualified science co-ordinator in place.

ART AND DESIGN

106. In Years 2 and 6, pupils achieve standards that are below those expected for their age. This was also the judgement of the previous inspection. Therefore insufficient improvement has been made in addressing this weakness. Pupils with special educational needs attain similar standards to their peers.
107. Across the school, pupils are introduced to an appropriate range of media and techniques. A strength is the way in which the subject is used to support work done in other curriculum areas. For example, in Year 1 pupils design and colour patterns for their work in mathematics and other pupils paint pictures of Barnaby Bear using thick brushes and bright, ready mixed paint to support work in geography. Pupils in Year 2/3 draw and colour costumes and weapons used by Anglo-Saxon people in history, and pupils in Year 4/5 produce effective wax crayon and felt-tip pictures of monsters to go with their literacy project. However, in none of these areas are pupils' skills developed thoroughly and insufficient emphasis is placed on developing the discrete aspects of the subject in each area. As a result, pupils do not make sufficient overall progress in this subject.
108. Because of the way in which the subject is organised, no lessons were being taught during the time of the inspection. However, from the scrutiny of pupils' work around the school, it is clear that the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. This was also the finding of the previous inspection. Teachers use some art and design techniques to support work in other curriculum areas but do not sufficiently ensure that all elements of the subject are taught progressively and to a sufficient depth for higher standards to be reached.
109. The co-ordinator is well qualified but has an insufficiently detailed view of the standards achieved in the subject across the school. Work is based on an appropriate policy which has been recently updated, but there are insufficient guidelines to help teachers plan for work in the different elements of the subject. Planning follows an agreed curriculum plan which shows how elements of the subject are to be taught on a two-year rolling programme. Work in art and design alternates with that of design and technology. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning and scrutiny of pupils' work on display have not been sufficiently rigorous to identify important weaknesses in pupils' achievement. The school has usefully introduced sketchbooks across the school but these are of limited value without a clear progression in pupils' observation and drawing skills. Links with information and communication technology and assessment procedures are insufficiently developed. Opportunities to promote and celebrate pupils' work and the work of other artists in class and school displays are not sufficiently taken. Art work does not figure prominently within the school's overall displays. Interest in the subject is promoted well through several competitions and visitors to the school. Younger pupils have been involved with the design of a local sculpture project and older pupils took part in a workshop, organised by a local artist, to design and make a series of colourful wall hangings which were then displayed in the local library. There have been no recent visits to art galleries. The subject now meets National Curriculum requirements which is an improvement since the last inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

110. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 achieve average standards. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to have been below average. As it was possible to see only one lesson during the inspection, judgements are based on that lesson, pupils' work on display, lesson planning and discussion with teachers. Pupils with special educational needs attain similar standards to their peers.
111. Across the school, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. A strength in their achievement is the way in which their learning in this subject is linked with work in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 1 make stick puppets in preparation for the story of the three little pigs. Having seen the teacher's mouse finger puppet, some pupils made similar ones to represent the wolf in the story. Other pupils made wheeled vehicles to carry Barnaby Bear for their work in geography. They successfully used cotton reels as wheels and held them onto the axles with rubber bands. Pupils in Year 4/5 use their literacy and numeracy skills as they make their biscuits. They measured the ingredients of eggs, butter, sugar, and flour, carefully read the recipes and following the instructions set out for them. A further strength is the thorough way in which the design opportunity is researched. For example, in their slipper project, pupils in Year 5/6 researched various designs of slippers from their own experience, and from pictures, and then designed their own. Through their research, they understand terms such as 'welt' and 'upper', and they know that a double layer with foam material will keep the feet warm. They understand the need for hardwearing soles and they are using a template to cut out their designs. The designs are good and they cover a wide range of styles and colours.
112. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning across the school is satisfactory. This judgement is made from evidence from the single lesson seen and the displays of pupils' work around the school. Indications are that teachers ensure that pupils develop appropriate skills in their designs. For example, Year 2/3 pupils design and make moving toys with pivot joints at the arms and legs of the figures, and, at other times, they make papier-mâché figures in their project about monsters. They use tape and glue for fixing, and paint and feathers for decoration. Pupils in Year 4/5 draw designs for their musical instruments, list the tools they will need and use plastic boxes, tissue paper, tape and glue in their work. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work well. They evaluated the taste of their biscuits enthusiastically and described the taste using words such as 'chewy', 'powdery' and 'moist' to describe them. The evaluations of the carts made by Year 1 pupils to carry Barnaby Bear concluded that most were too small to carry him!
113. The co-ordinator has only been in the post since January of this year. She has made a very good start, and produced a good policy document that demonstrates her strong commitment to improving the subject. An analysis of resources has been carried out, and although they are adequate for the present schemes of work, the co-ordinator has identified the need to improve them considerably for her new plans. There are insufficient opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor work in the subject. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use computers for their designs, or to take photographs of their work with the digital camera and this is unsatisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, with a more detailed scheme of work, better standards achieved by pupils and better teaching. These have ensured that the subject now fully meets National Curriculum requirements and that good progress has been made since the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

114. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain average standards, which was also the judgement of the last report. Pupils with special educational needs attain standards that are similar to their peers. There are no differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

115. Across the school, pupils achieve well and make good progress. A strength in the achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is their appreciation of several features of the local environment. Pupils in Year 1 identify and record local features such as bridges, a petrol station and woodland. They understand some of the different land-uses locally such as for farming, houses, parks and factories. They plan a route from Class 2 to Class 1 and suggest improvements for the school playground, such as a climbing frame. Year 2 pupils conduct a noise survey to find out which were the noisiest parts of the school, and at what times such as playtime or lunchtime.
116. In Years 3 to 6, younger pupils know about the water cycle and how rivers, rain, and the sea all play a part in our water supply. They have made good surveys of the amount of water we use in various activities. They know, for example that a bath takes about 75 – 90 litres of water and that using a dishwasher may take 35 litres. They understand that many children across the world do not have a regular water supply. Older pupils, working on a mountain project, have made some good booklets with photographs and facts about mountain ranges such as the Andes and the Alps.
117. The quality of teaching and learning is good across the school, with some that is very good. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. Teachers plan very well and give pupils many good opportunities to investigate and discover for themselves, enabling them to learn well. For example, in a very good Year 2/3 lesson, pupils were challenged to undertake a survey of the ground in front of the school to identify aspects of the school's environment that might be improved. One group, which was equipped with a digital camera, discovered a broken drain cover, or the edging round the garden. Others found litter, such as orange peel and old chewing gum. Pupils were all completely absorbed in their work and behaved very well. The whole lesson taught pupils how to observe, record, and later use information from seeing it firsthand. They learnt a lot about their own environment and were busy making suggestions about improving the piece of ground.
118. Teachers provide activities and resources which interest and challenge pupils. For example, in a Year 4/5 topic on water, pupils thought about where water comes from, who 'owns' it and what part the sea and the rain play in our water supply. They analysed samples of water from the tap, and from puddles. One very good feature that the teacher provided for research evidence was the set of water bills from the school office. Pupils found the quarterly costs, and discovered that the school has two water companies that supply services. In a Year 6 lesson exploring aspects of tourism, pupils were preparing for a class debate about its benefits and disadvantages. The level of challenge was very high and the fact sheets were full of information of a complex nature. Nevertheless, pupils were able to extract information such as the slow destruction of the landscape in Snowdonia by the many tourists, or the pollution caused by their vehicles. To balance this, others discovered that tourism provides income for many people in an area that would otherwise have no work to offer.
119. The subject is led effectively by a teacher who is part time. The curriculum is satisfactory, and there are adequate resources, which can be supplemented by borrowing from the local library. However, there are insufficient opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning or the standard of pupils' work. Information and communication technology is used well whenever possible. For example, during the inspection, a teaching assistant supervising a group used a digital camera effectively to take pictures of different aspects of the school's environment. With her help, pupils loaded their pictures onto the computer, adjusted them for size, and later printed them.

HISTORY

120. In Years 2 and 6, pupils attain below average standards. This represents a decline in standards since the last inspection when they were judged to be in line with national expectations. These judgements are based on discussions with pupils and teachers, analysis of past work, displays and

planning documents. Just one lesson was observed due to timetabling arrangements. Pupils with special educational needs also attain below average standards.

121. Overall, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory and pupils make insufficient progress. The main reasons for this are that insufficient curriculum time has been allowed for history, and there is insufficient written work in the samples analysed. This scrutiny confirms the lack of time and focus given to the subject.
122. In Year 2, pupils have a sound understanding of aspects of the life of Anglo-Saxon peoples, although the work sample analysis revealed only a small amount of recorded work. The analysis of work in Years 3 to 6 showed that two studies had been made since September, one in Year 6 which took the Victorians as its theme, and one in Years 4 and 5 which dealt with the Tudors. Year 6 researched information about Victorian times, concentrating on the lives of children and the occupations of people living in Canterbury. The influence of Queen Victoria and of institutions such as the Dr. Barnardo homes were taught and pupils were encouraged to compare their lives with those of children born during the period. The presentation of the work was reasonable but the depth and content unsatisfactory. The Tudor topic was similarly brief and lacking in depth, concentrating mainly on the wives of Henry VIII and the break with Rome, together with examples of buildings created at that time and still here today.
123. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning across the school is unsatisfactory, but some good teaching was seen in individual lessons. The good lesson in Year 1 combined the history of the Great Fire of London with art and English. Using a big book of the story, the teacher encouraged pupils to empathise with the inhabitants of the city and imagine what it must have been like to experience such a major conflagration. The pupils listened very well indeed, making pertinent comments when questioned about the event. The subsequent art work was bold and imaginative as the pupils produced vivid pictures using either paint or pastels. However, across the school, there are too few opportunities for pupils to acquire the skills and knowledge needed for satisfactory progress in the subject, such as the study of particular events in detail and depth, communicating ideas and recording conclusions. Practical, first-hand information about the locality is lacking and there is, therefore, no real sense of place. Opportunities for investigative work and the use of primary and secondary sources are few, and pupils have not been able to develop a broad historical vocabulary.
124. The experienced co-ordinator has only recently assumed responsibility for the subject but has clear ideas for development when the subject becomes a focus for improvement. These include buying more resources and artefacts and making far greater use of the immediate locality. The use of information and communication technology, although unsatisfactory at present, is planned as part of the development process in the future. The policy for history is under review but published scheme material, modified to meet the needs of the pupils, is available and in use. Procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are unsatisfactory but the school is well aware of these shortcomings and history will be a priority for development in the next school year. A very new assessment procedure has very recently been introduced. The previous system was unsatisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

125. In Years 2 and 6, pupils achieve standards that are below those expected for their age. This was also the judgement at the last inspection. Although progress has been made since the last inspection in ensuring that the subject now meets National Curriculum requirements, nevertheless, there has not been sufficient improvement in standards achieved. Improvements have been made in the level of resourcing but these have not been able to keep up with the improvements made in most other schools. Pupils with special educational needs achieve similar standards to their peers.

126. In Years 1 and 2, younger pupils talk about the uses of computers at home and in school. They write and print their names using the computer and draw pictures of themselves. Others draw graphs showing the most common colour of sweets in a tube. The main strength of pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 that was observed during the inspection was in their understanding and appreciation of the processes involved in devising simple programs for a robotic toy. They were able to make accurate predictions about how far the toy would move and then to devise a programme for moving the toy over a required distance with a turn. In Years 3 to 6, pupils access the Internet to find out information about the geography project on mountains, write and print their poems, and collect data and draw graphs to show that tea is the favourite drink of pupils in Year 3. However, across the school, pupils' overall achievement is unsatisfactory. Despite these examples of appropriate attainment, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities of systematically developing the knowledge, concepts and skills for them to reach higher standards. For example, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use word processing techniques to support and improve the presentation of their writing. They use data handling and spreadsheets insufficiently and older pupils have not consistently used e-mail and Internet facilities.

127. The overall quality of teaching and learning across the school is unsatisfactory. This was also the judgement of the previous inspection. The weakness in teachers' subject knowledge that was identified at the last inspection has been improved. All staff have undertaken New Opportunities Fund training and evidence from the inspection indicates that this had been successful in improving teachers' subject knowledge. In the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching ranged from satisfactory to good. A lesson to pupils in Years 4/5 illustrated some of the strengths, and also the basic weaknesses, in the school's approach to the subject. The class was investigating Internet database sites with a view to finding information on their own topic. All the class gathered in the small computer suite and the adjacent library. The teacher showed good subject knowledge as she demonstrated how to access an Internet search engine and how to narrow down the scope of the search by adding the word 'and' to the command. The lesson was introduced well, the pupils were interested and expectant and concentrated well on the paper activity that followed. The weakness of the lesson was that the pupils did not have the opportunity to use computers to try out their skills immediately and this limited the effectiveness of the lesson.

128. The co-ordinator, who has recently returned to school following maternity leave, is enthusiastic and competent. Topics which are related to the units in the nationally recommended scheme of work are arranged on a two-year cycle and are matched, wherever possible, to other topic work which classes are undertaking. Although planning is monitored by the co-ordinator, she has not been involved sufficiently in monitoring teaching and learning or checking the quality of pupils' work. As a result, some of the planned topics have not been taught to a sufficient depth for higher standards to be met. Some examples of pupils' work are beginning to be collected but these have not been matched to National Curriculum criteria. Assessment processes are very new. They were introduced from the beginning of the current term and have not yet been completed. Despite recent significant spending on resources, the ratio of computers to pupils is still some way above the national average. The school has not devised an effective way of utilising the resources in the small computer suite. The other weakness identified at the last inspection was that the subject was not fully integrated into the school's wider curriculum. This is still the case. Opportunities to use information and communication technology skills across mathematics, history, art and design, design and technology and music are still not sufficiently developed.

MUSIC

129. In Years 2 and 6, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve above average standards. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were reported as average.

130. Across the school, pupils achieve well and they make good progress. An important strength in their achievement is the quality of their singing. Singing in the school Mass was good, and pupils

were able to hold their own part when they were divided into groups. They match the dynamics to suit the requirements of the hymns or songs. They sang robustly and with obvious enjoyment in the hymns, but were able to sing more quietly in the responses during the Mass. Pupils' skill in composing is developing well. This was observed in a Year 5/6 lesson where pupils were composing, creating and performing in response to music and pictures from the film, 'The Gladiator'. They expressed their ideas about how the gladiator might feel, and they suggested it was sad or emotional when the music was quieter and more reflective. After they had had time to prepare their own composition, groups performed for the class. One group performed well as they used their feet to stamp out a strong rhythm and brought in instruments and movement in a tight circle together. Older pupils know that an open note has two beats, a closed note has one beat, and if two closed notes are joined together they are worth half a beat each. Most show good appreciation of levels of pitch and rhythm.

131. Across the school, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers create an atmosphere of enthusiasm and co-operation in their classes and so pupils enjoy music and join in well. They show enjoyment and enthusiasm for the subject and this encourages pupils and improves their learning. Teachers show good subject knowledge as they introduce and reinforce specific musical terms. For example, in a lesson to Year 2 pupils, the teacher explained the term 'pitch' and how pupils should sit up straight and breathe properly when they sang. They also learned simple notation. Teachers' planning is detailed and shows a good range of topics and skills to be taught. These include responding to various types of music, following pulse, and sequencing rhythmic phrases. They learn to sing in parts and work on layers of sound, building these up as they progress. There is plenty of provision for pupils to create their own musical ideas and to perform on percussion instruments.

132. The schemes of work are based on national guidelines and are good. There are adequate resources for the curriculum to be taught and pupils have the opportunity to join the choir and to learn to play recorders and other instruments. They perform in school and at a local home for the elderly. Music was not a high priority in the assemblies observed during the inspection, but all pupils sung well in the school Mass. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and organises the subject well. She leads by example with very well planned lessons that convey her own enthusiasm and knowledge well. There has been good improvement since the last inspection when standards were average and teaching was satisfactory. Pupils have opportunities to listen to and appraise a range of musical styles. Older pupils had drawn their own illustrations to fit in with their interpretations of music they have heard from composers such as Beethoven, and Elgar, and also Robbie Williams. Information and communication technology is used insufficiently in this subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. In Years 2 and 6, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, attain average standards. The school's own records show that, by the time they leave the school, most pupils attain the expected standard in swimming. There are no differences in the standards achieved by boys and girls. These judgements show that, since the last inspection, standards in Years 1 and 2 have been maintained but they have improved in Years 3 to 6 as standards were below average.

134. Across the school, pupils achieve satisfactorily and make sound progress. Younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 demonstrate sound ball catching, throwing and handling skills. Others use small balls and beanbags and throw them into hoops with appropriate accuracy and control. Pupils in Year 6 achieve well in swimming. In addition to practising their front and back crawl with appropriate arm and leg actions and correct breathing rhythms, pupils were also developing their personal survival skills. Good use is made of the qualified professional support with pupils receiving almost individual attention. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 show sound skills in trapping and passing a football. They then move into the correct position to accept a pass and possibly shoot at goal and develop the notion of team play. Both boys and girls thoroughly enjoyed a lesson which

encouraged the development of skills and a spirit of fair play. Good use of demonstration enabled both genders to display the progress made.

135. Across the school, the quality of teaching and learning, including that for pupils with special educational needs, is satisfactory. Teachers plan their lessons well and deliver them at a brisk pace which ensures that pupils are constantly engaged in physical activity and sustain their efforts. Teachers ensure that pupils of all abilities are appropriately challenged. A Year 4/5 lesson, where pupils were developing their ball skills and games tactics, exemplified several strengths of teaching. The teacher organised a well paced warm up activity and used the support assistant's skills well. A varied range of activities then retained pupils' interest and application. Good relationships were fostered by a relaxed but firm manner. Skills were well taught. The pupils fully understood that they were required to work hard and did so with enthusiasm and enjoyment which led to their making good progress.
136. The management of the subject is sound and has improved significantly since the school's last inspection, when there was no management in place. The policy is under review but is supported by a published scheme adapted to meet the needs of the school and the pupils. It includes a unit entitled 'Outdoors and Adventures' which addresses, specifically, a significant area of concern raised by the last inspection. The development of assessment strategies has also been improved. Teachers maintain good, straightforward records of progress, supported by pupils' own assessments, a new initiative which the pupils take very seriously. The school provides opportunities for extracurricular involvement in football and occasionally in rugby and netball.
137. Physical resources for the subject are limited, particularly the hall which is small and narrow and makes it more difficult for the school to meet fully the needs particularly of older pupils. There is an adequate hard surfaced area and an adjacent field suitable for games. The school has access to the swimming pool in Canterbury which is within reasonable travelling distance by coach. The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development by providing opportunities for them to develop team spirit and compete fairly within the understood rules of the games.