

INSPECTION REPORT

DANECOURT COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Gillingham, Kent

LEA area: Medway

Unique reference number: 119035

Headteacher: Mrs A Peters

Reporting inspector: Averil R Anderson
23733

Dates of inspection: 4th – 7th November, 2002

Inspection number: 249383

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

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hotel Road Watling Street Gillingham Kent
Postcode:	ME8 8AA
Telephone number:	01634 232589
Fax number:	01634 263822
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Stevens
Date of previous inspection:	June, 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23733	Averil Anderson	Registered Inspector	Music	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further?
9545	Mr K Greatorex	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?
8810	Ms S Aldridge	Team Inspector	English, design and technology, geography	How well are pupils taught?
17530	Mrs M Cureton	Team Inspector	Information and communication technology, history, religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23412	Mr A Jeffs	Team Inspector	Mathematics, art and design, special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?
2512	Mr B Emery	Team Inspector	Science, physical education, educational Inclusion, including race equality	The school's results and pupils' achievements.
3055	Mr C Tombs	Team Inspector	Foundation Stage	

The inspection contractor was:

Bench Marque Ltd
National Westminster Bank Chambers
Victoria Street
Burnham on Sea
Somerset
TA8 1AN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	20
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	21
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	23
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	24
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Danecourt Community School is in Gillingham and has 112 places for pupils aged between four and eleven with moderate learning difficulties. There are 105 on roll, 64 boys and 41 girls. Many pupils have other or additional learning difficulties such as emotional and behavioural (28), severe learning (12), speech or communication (15) difficulties. Fifteen have autistic spectrum disorders. Danecourt is the only special school catering for primary age pupils within the Medway unitary authority and the majority of pupils have to travel from across the Medway towns. This involves long journeys to and from school each day for many of the pupils. Pupils often arrive and leave during the school year. Last year 20 per cent of pupils joined or left the school other than at the usual time of admission or transfer. Thirty per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is about average for schools of this type. There are no pupils with English as a second language. Seventy-nine pupils are white, with three from ethnic groups. One parent preferred not to give information about ethnicity and information was not obtained from 22 parents. The attainment of pupils on entry is significantly below national age-related expectations. Danecourt is a part of the local Education Action Zone group of schools. It is participating in the Healthy Schools Project and has recently been awarded Investor in People, Heart Beat and the Basic Skills Quality Mark awards.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Danecourt is a highly effective school with many strengths. All pupils achieve well. This is because of good and often very good teaching and very good leadership and management. The school is very successful in meeting all the pupils' needs, whatever their particular learning difficulty so that they develop very positive attitudes to school and their own learning. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Relationships between all members of the school.
- Teaching and learning particularly in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) and music.
- The use of assessment to track progress and the staff's knowledge of their pupils needs and abilities.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior management team.
- Training of all staff, their teamwork and the expertise of the learning support staff.
- The enthusing of pupils, particularly in singing and dramatic performances.
- Support for pupils' health, safety and welfare.
- The provision for the pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Provision of a very good curriculum, including the use of a topic-based approach, especially in Key Stage 1.

What could be improved

The inspection team found no major issues for improvement but found two minor issues. Both are already in the school's future plans:

- Behaviour management techniques with a very small minority of pupils.
- Ensure that reports to parents include what pupils know, understand and can do in all subjects.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997. All the key issues have been successfully addressed. The school now has very clear and very appropriate aims. Leadership and management have improved greatly and are now very good. Links with parents are closer and they are much happier with the school than they were in 1997. The school now caters for more challenging pupils, including those with autistic spectrum disorders and the provision for the less able is much improved. Planning for development is much more focused and this now has clear aims. Good financial planning is one example of this improvement. The use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has strengthened. The curriculum is now very good and there are schemes of work in place for all areas of the National Curriculum. The provision for children under five has improved from being unsatisfactory to very good. The quality of teaching has improved considerably with consequent improvements in pupils' learning.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets.

Progress in:	by Year R	by Year 6	Key	
Speaking and listening	B	B	very good	A
Reading	B	B	good	B
Writing	B	B	satisfactory	C
Mathematics	B	B	unsatisfactory	D
Personal, social and health education	A	A	poor	E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A		

* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

Pupils achieve very well and make good progress in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology and history. They make very good progress in religious education and music and in the Foundation Stage. Satisfactory progress is made in geography and physical education. Pupils who have additional learning difficulties also achieve very well. The pupils' gains in personal, social and health education are very good and provide a firm foundation for their learning in other subjects. Targets in pupils' individual education plans are very good, they are reviewed regularly and very relevant to pupils' needs and abilities.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very happy at school and they are enthusiastic in lessons and at other times.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. In half of lessons observed behaviour was very good or better.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils make very significant gains in their self-confidence and self-esteem. They form positive relationships with each other and the staff.
Attendance	Good. Lessons start punctually.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Reception	Years 1 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good

Sixty-eight lessons were observed and the quality of teaching and learning was always satisfactory or better. In three per cent it was excellent, 33 per cent very good, 41 per cent good and 23 per cent satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. This is much better than in 1997 when 17 per cent was unsatisfactory and only four per cent was very good or better as opposed to 36 per cent in 2002. Teaching in English, mathematics and science is good and in personal, social and health education is very good. Good teaching was seen in every class across the school and very good teaching in almost every class. Literacy and numeracy are planned and taught very well across the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. It provides a broad range of worthwhile opportunities which meets the interests, aptitudes and the special educational needs of pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school makes very good provision for all aspects of the pupils' personal development. This is seen in all aspects of the school's work and is fundamental to the considerable progress that the pupils' make.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school cares for pupils very well, keeping them safe and happy and closely monitoring how well they do.

The school works well in partnership with parents. This provides a significant contribution to pupils' academic and personal progress. An unusually large proportion of parents are highly supportive of the school and confirm that it has many strengths. All areas of the curriculum meet statutory requirements. Child protection and health and safety procedures are handled very effectively.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher and senior management team provide very good leadership and very good management of the work of the school.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. The governors bring a range of practical and professional skills to the school and very ably support the headteacher.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school is fully aware of its strengths and weaknesses. It makes very good use of available information and carefully measures progress towards its own targets.
The strategic use of resources	Good. A good range of high quality resources are available and there are no subject areas where resources are inadequate.

The school is well staffed, the number and variety of staff are appropriate for the school. A particular strength of the school training programme is the way it identifies and meets the changing needs of the staff. Accommodation is satisfactory overall; it is used to best advantage. Resources suitable for both pupils' and staff use are of high quality. The leadership of the school has a clear vision which informs every aspect of the school's work. This is supported by very good procedures for day-to-day and long-term management. The school applies the principle of best value very well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school expects pupils to work hard• Good teaching• The school works closely with parents• Leadership and management• Their children like school• The quality and level of information from school• Parents are happy to approach the school• Their children are making good progress• The good behaviour in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The level of homework

The inspection team shares the parents' very positive views of the school and does not have any concerns about the provision of homework. They feel that pupils are given an appropriate amount of homework.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' achievements throughout the school are good. Because of their special educational needs, the standards pupils achieve are below those achieved by pupils in mainstream schools. Judgements in the pupils' report are based on what the pupils know, understand and can do. The progress they make is measured against their own performance.
2. Achievement and progress are good in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) and in all other subjects except history, geography and physical education where achievement and progress are satisfactory. Pupils make very good progress against the targets set for them in their individual education plans.
3. The standards achieved by pupils and the progress they make are a very good improvement since the previous inspection. At that time, pupils' achievement and progress were generally satisfactory except for the youngest pupils whose achievements were unsatisfactory.
4. The improvement in standards is mainly due to the high quality of teaching, good curriculum planning linked to the National Curriculum, the production of schemes of work, a clearer focus on the targets set in pupils' individual education plans and the maintaining of pupils' progress using performance P-levels.
5. In English, pupils are making good progress and by the time they are seven, the higher attaining pupils in Year 2 recognise most letters of the alphabet, understand that print is read left to right and can predict words when following a story being read to them. In writing, they use pictures, symbols and familiar words to convey meaning and have some understanding that writing can be used for different purposes. When speaking they use an increasing vocabulary to convey meaning and can follow instructions from the teacher or other adult. The lower attaining pupils in Year 2 recognise print, for example their name and familiar spoken words. They are interested in books, understand a narrative sequence and can link it to pictures and events. In writing they produce some recognisable letters and are able to write their first name. When speaking, they use words, signs and symbols to communicate simple ideas or events in a story they have heard. They answer simple questions and follow simple instructions. By the time they are eleven, the higher attaining pupils are reading text fluently and accurately, both fiction and non-fiction. They can use a dictionary and find information in reference books. Their writing is well organised and beginning to show imagination. Punctuation rules are understood and used and their writing is legible. Pupils speaking and listening skills are developing well. They talk and listen confidently in different contexts and their vocabulary is maturing. The lower attaining pupils in Year 6 are able to select words on request, recognise their own name and can read a simple passage and identify missing words. Their writing includes recognisable letters and words and contains words to indicate meaning. In speaking and listening they are using simple extended sentences, can respond to simple questions and follow simple instructions.
6. In mathematics, pupils are making good progress and by the time they are seven the higher attaining pupils in Year 2 count and point to 100 and join in number rhymes. By the time they are all eleven the higher attaining pupils in Year 6 use number in a

variety of practical settings, they understand simple place value and their mental recall up to 20 is good. They solve simple addition and subtraction problems and know some of the multiplication tables. Their understanding of time is developing so that they use time practically and they undertake simple measurements and know two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. The lower attaining pupils in Year 6 rote count up to ten, count five objects and reorganise numbers up to five. Their mathematical language is developing so that they use and understand such terms as greater and smaller. They recognise some basic shapes and match small sets of objects.

7. In science, pupils are making good progress and by the time they are seven, the higher attaining pupils know that plants and animals need food and light for growth. They know how humans and animals use their senses and they know that materials can be changed, for example by heating or cooking. They know that certain materials float whilst others sink and are familiar with words such as forces, friction and propulsion. The lower attaining pupils name the main parts of the human body and they understand the importance of food. They have some understanding of changes to materials, for example in cooking. By the time they are eleven, the higher attaining pupils have a good knowledge of growth and development and they know about nutrition and healthy living. They know what happens to materials when they are heated, frozen or diluted and they construct an electrical circuit using switches and other connections. Their scientific vocabulary is good; they use terms such as 'force', 'nutrition', 'dissolve' and 'circuit' with understanding. The lower attaining pupils' knowledge of the human body increases as they become more aware of the importance of food and health. They know that changes can be made in certain materials, for example by heating bread to make toast and they know what the essential components are of an electrical circuit.
8. In ICT, pupils make good progress and by the time they are seven, almost all pupils are enthusiastic computer users, although lower attaining pupils need a good deal of help to use a drawing and colouring program, for example. By the time they are eleven, pupils are familiar with computer simulations, which they explore. They record the decisions they make and the effects these have on the program. Higher attaining pupils use a wordprocessor to make lists and change the style and size of the letters they use. All pupils, with varying degrees of help, cut and paste their surname.
9. In music and religious education, pupils are making very good progress. In art and design, design and technology and history, progress is good. It is satisfactory in geography and physical education.
10. Pupils with additional special educational needs make good progress in terms both of their development in basic skills and also with regard to their individual education plan targets. Those with autistic spectrum disorder make significant progress in terms of their ability to work within a classroom situation, their increased willingness to interact with other pupils and adults and their ability to communicate effectively. Pupils with severe and complex behavioural difficulties make very significant progress as a result of consistent and well-planned strategies for all staff.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. The pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development have improved since the last inspection and now have a very positive effect on their approach to learning in classrooms. In half of the lessons the pupils' response was very good or better.
12. Virtually all pupils have very positive attitudes to the school and their work. They show good levels of interest and enthusiasm in what they are asked to do and apply themselves very well as shown during their whole-school involvement in singing in assemblies throughout the inspection. Pupils sustain high levels of concentration because teachers plan tasks that challenge and motivate them as demonstrated well in Year 6 numeracy and design and technology lessons. They take great pride and enjoyment in producing good work and are keen to share their results with others.
13. Behaviour, overall, is now good at school and at home. This is confirmed by the views of parents. When they come to school, in assemblies, at lunchtimes and at playtimes, virtually all pupils show good standards of behaviour. Most pupils move around the school in an orderly manner and clearly understand what is expected of them. In lessons, behaviour is almost always good and pupils conform to the high expectations even when not closely supervised. Very good behaviour is a feature in many lessons including some mathematics, science, history, design and technology and physical education lessons. In the very small minority of cases where there are incidents of disruptive behaviour, they are often unchallenged or ignored. In these cases pupils decide for themselves how they want to behave rather than comply with the planned classroom activities. There have been two recent exclusions where the sanction was applied in the very last resort. During the inspection there was no evidence of bullying or lack of respect for school property.
14. Relationships in the school are very good. Pupils form very constructive relationships with each other and with adults. They work co-operatively together, demonstrating that they will listen with interest to each other and will try to understand the other person's point of view. Pupils show genuine pleasure in the achievements of others as shown in the prize giving and celebration of achievement in Thursday's assembly. Virtually all pupils act in a mature and responsible way. They consistently demonstrate patience, tolerance and courtesy, illustrated when queuing for lunch in the dining hall. Many pupils show respect for others when, without being instructed, they move chairs and open doors, particularly for adults and visitors.
15. Pupils' personal development continues to be good. The school provides a range of opportunities for the pupils to show initiative and take responsibility and they demonstrate that the trust is well placed. Pupils confirm that they value the opportunity to represent their class on the school council. Pupils make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development as they perform jobs within the classroom. As they progress through the school greater degrees of independence are encouraged. Older pupils frequently help the younger ones, often leading them by the hand. A number of opportunities were noted where a lack of intervention enabled pupils to make independent progress because staff stood aside and let them hold a conversation and make decisions between themselves.
16. Pupils at Danecourt show a high level of respect for each other's feelings and needs. This is apparent in the way that they accept and often ignore, for example, volatile behaviour and attention seeking by a few pupils. This is a direct result of the very positive approach that the school has to inclusion within its classes, together with the emphasis placed upon celebrating and valuing differences in people. Pupils with

additional special educational needs also develop well in their ability to recognise and accept the needs of others. This is an important part of their education.

17. Attendance and punctuality continue to be consistently good. There is little unauthorised absence. Virtually all pupils are punctual as they arrive by bus. They come happily to school, eager and ready to learn, enabling the school to make a prompt and efficient start to the school day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. Teaching is good, with some very good features; no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. There has been a considerable improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, when teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall, and more than half the lessons for children under five were unsatisfactory.
19. In music, teaching is very good. In English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, ICT, physical education and religious education, teaching is good. In Years 3 to 6, teaching of history is good and teaching of geography is satisfactory. Neither history nor geography was seen being taught in Years 1 and 2, because of the school's rolling programme for these subjects. However, an examination of pupils' work suggests that teaching of both subjects is at least satisfactory in Years 1 and 2.
20. The teaching of children at the Foundation Stage is always good and mostly very good.
21. In Years 1 to 6, the planning for teaching literacy and numeracy skills is very good. Teachers set specific, measurable targets for these two important areas, and progress towards the targets is carefully assessed and recorded. Good account is taken of pupils' progress when planning the next steps in learning, and teachers are mindful of pupils' individual targets when they plan their lessons in subjects other than English and mathematics. As a result, pupils achieve a high percentage of the targets set.
22. In literacy and numeracy lessons, teachers plan well for the range of pupils' abilities. Whole-class sessions are often followed by pupils working in groups of similar ability. Tasks are varied so that each group is challenged at a suitable level. A very good example of this was seen in a Year 6 literacy lesson, where a group of higher attainers worked independently to complete reading work from their books, and two further groups were well supported by the teacher and a learning support assistant.
23. In other subjects, occasionally teachers do not always plan different tasks, or set different learning outcomes for pupils of different abilities. In this respect, the school has yet to fully take account of the most recent guidance on planning the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) in March 2001. This weakness is reflected in pupils' reports, where the achievements of lower attaining pupils are often described in terms of what they can do *with support*, rather than a clear account of what they actually know, understand and can do.
24. Teachers use ICT very well to support pupils' learning, and pupils learn and consolidate skills in this way. In every subject there is good evidence of the use of ICT. For example, it is used very well in English to help pupils write; a Year 6 group has written a draft contribution for a PowerPoint presentation. Software associated

with a reading scheme is also used well. Pupils enjoy using ICT; it motivates them and enables them to produce well presented work.

25. Across the school, teachers use a very good range of methods to help pupils learn. Practical activities are well received; pupils enjoy getting involved in doing practical tasks, which they tackle enthusiastically. For example, in history, pupils have learned about the Wars of the Roses through drama and role-play. By taking parts, and acting out sequences of events, with props, pupils have become well involved, and remember events and some details of these. Real objects, such as puppets, are used well to bring stories to life and support pupils' understanding. Some skilled use of methods in which pupils used their senses to explore objects was seen in a literacy session. Here, a group of pupils learned about the letter 's' by rolling out and twisting plasticine in the shape of the letter, making the noise 'sssss', sorting objects into those beginning with the sound 'sssss' and those beginning with different sounds, and finally drawing the letter's shape in their books. They thoroughly enjoyed this activity, which held their attention throughout. By the end of the session, they all recognised the letter and could give its sound. Following practice, most could write the letter, forming it correctly.
26. Planning is good. Teachers draw their lessons from recommended plans, which are the same as those used in all mainstream schools for pupils of this age range. This supports inclusion well. There are clear learning intentions, which are shared with pupils at the start of the lesson. Learning intentions are framed in a way that pupils understand, by using two characters Walt, an owl, and Wilf, a sniffing dog. WALT stands for 'we are learning to . . .', and this is discussed with pupils at the start. They are also introduced to WILF, or 'What I'm looking for', which means that pupils know what is expected of them. At the end of each lesson, both of these are reviewed, so pupils are involved very well in their learning and assessment.
27. Staff assess pupils well. Some probing questioning was used in a religious education lesson; this enabled the teacher to gauge pupils' knowledge and understanding and clear up misconceptions. In several other lessons, support staff were used well to record pupils' responses during discussions led by the teacher.
28. Throughout the school teachers know pupils well, and they are skilled in teaching the range of subjects. Since the last inspection, the school has admitted pupils with a wider range of special educational needs, and staff are in the process of being trained to increase their competence in teaching pupils across this range.
29. Staff have good relationships with pupils, who are generally managed well, and there is clear mutual respect. Some pupils have challenging behaviour, and they are managed well, and in accordance with strategies set out in their behaviour management plans. In Years 1 and 2, teachers have very high expectations of pupils' work, behaviour and participation. Pupils rise to these expectations, and follow classroom conventions well, such as putting up their hands when they have something to say, or holding a card saying 'WAIT'. However, in a few classes for older pupils, teachers are not always assertive enough, and do not intervene quickly enough when there are small incidents of misbehaviour, such as bickering over resources. Occasionally a pupil was allowed to distance himself from the group for a significant part of the lesson, and there was no apparent strategy for eliminating this behaviour. As a result learning was reduced.
30. Teaching of pupils with autism is good. Several staff have become very skilled in this, and good routines have been established in the class for pupils with autism who cannot yet cope in classes with their peers. Suitable methods, such as signing, the

use of communication books, and clear signalling of a change of activity are used effectively. As a result, pupils understand what is expected of them, they are engaged well in activities, so they make good progress in lessons. There is a calm, purposeful atmosphere much of the time, very good behaviour management plans are implemented faithfully, and well-deserved positive feedback is given to pupils.

31. Learning support assistants make a strong contribution to direct teaching; very good examples of this were seen in literacy, numeracy and the class for pupils with autism. When teachers involve support staff in planning and reviewing the day's work, teamwork is most effective. In a design and technology lesson, good intervention by learning support assistants helped pupils tackle the difficult task of threading a needle and over-sewing a purse. Some sensitive handling of one pupil, who had pricked himself with a needle, successfully brought him back to continue the task, this time with greater concentration.
32. The use of homework is satisfactory. Pupils regularly take reading books home, pupils in Year 6 are set regular homework, in preparation for secondary schooling, and a few pupils complete work voluntarily. For example, one pupil had completed the design of a purse at home, following a design and technology lesson. Pupils' individual targets are sent home to parents, who may support pupils in achieving these if they wish.
33. Pupils with additional special educational needs always receive good, sometimes very good, teaching. This is characterised by very detailed planning that takes into account individual education plan targets and sensitive consideration of their learning styles, whether group work or individual work, for example, is best at different times. For those pupils with individual behaviour plans, there is very good consistency of reaction by staff and this assists in reducing the problem behaviours over a period of time. Work carried out by teaching and non-teaching staff working with pupils who have autistic spectrum disorder is of a high standard and some of the learning support assistants' work seen during the inspection could not have been improved. The school works very successfully with all pupils with additional special educational needs to ensure that they are fully included in all school activities and that their needs are fully met. It is a very good example of educational inclusion in practice.

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

34. The curriculum is very good. It provides a broad range of worthwhile opportunities which meet the interests, aptitudes and the special educational needs of pupils. It is sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of children of different ages and different stages of ability while at the same time setting challenging standards for all. Statutory requirements, including good programmes covering citizenship, drugs and health education, are fully met. The curricular provision set out in statements is very well met. The curriculum is very well managed in the time it allocates to the programmes of study of the national curriculum and the early learning goals.
35. A successful feature of the school's use of staff training to fulfil curricular objectives is the high level of training undertaken by teachers and learning support assistants in order to teach and assist in the teaching of ICT. The school also makes very good use of teachers' skills in the level of specialist teaching it provides particularly in music, art and design and French. The school is successful in meeting its stated aim of organising the school day to provide a wide range of learning experiences within a strong framework. This is designed to enable pupils to develop a degree of

independence and assists their personal development. Due to transport constraints, extra-curricular clubs take place at lunchtime, but there are lunchtime clubs and a strong programme of educational visits takes place in school hours. A wide range of interesting people visit the school. A trade delegation of 27 Japanese businessmen have recently visited, to the delight of the pupils.

36. The school has a clear policy for equality of opportunity. It aims to promote access to every curriculum activity for all pupils regardless of race, creed, gender or disability, and in this it is successful. The school provides specialist equipment, very good individual support, and specially adapted levels of work to make sure that all pupils have the same very good opportunities to learn and make progress.
37. Speech and occupational therapies are offered to pupils when it is a requirement of their statements of special educational needs, or seen to be a necessity. The successful school behaviour management programme seeks to systematically modify the behaviour of difficult pupils in a therapeutic way.
38. The curriculum is very well adapted to the needs of the pupils it serves. Provision for children under five gives them many rich experiences and prepares them well for compulsory education at age five. The curriculum for the small group of pupils on the autistic continuum incorporates well-tried and effective specialist methods and approaches to enhance their learning and capacity to communicate. Integration into the main body of the school for these pupils is handled sensitively and successfully.
39. The school uses a highly effective curriculum framework for the younger pupils which gives them very good opportunities to be active and independent learners through play. This meets their needs, ensures full coverage of the national curriculum and allows for increasing formality as pupils progress through the school. Strong and appropriate emphasis is given to learning through practical tasks.
40. The curricular aims of the school include a strong emphasis on personal independence. A high proportion of curriculum time is devoted to personal and social education. This highly effective provision underpins the curriculum and promotes pupils' skills of independence very well. Appropriate attention is given to sex education and the misuse of drugs.
41. Almost every pupil has very good opportunities to be included in the activities of a local mainstream school. A group of pupils visit weekly to use ICT resources. Pupils work with mainstream pupils in physical education and play football with them. There are joint concerts, lessons and events; all of which give pupils very good opportunities to meet and interact. From time to time, a Danecourt pupil transfers successfully to mainstream education with a high level of support from the school.
42. The school has very good and constructive relationships with partner institutions. Links with the community are very good, and include constructive relationships with the local vicar and her congregation. The school invites elderly people to such events as Harvest Festival, and delivers harvest gifts. Pupils sing at the local old people's home. The school takes part in a range of school and community projects including recycling, care of the environment and charity support. The curriculum is very well structured to include good strategies for teaching literacy and very good strategies for numeracy and ICT, all of which are very well promoted across curricular subjects.
43. Provision for pupils' personal development is very good. The school makes very good planned provision for pupils' spiritual development. There is a daily assembly which provides a period of reflection and an opportunity to join in a prayer. It is a fundamental

tenet of the school that each pupil is greatly valued and supported. Displays of pupils' work are beautifully presented and show the great emphasis which the school places on individual achievement. Progress is celebrated in plenary sessions of all lessons, which give very real support and encouragement to pupils who find learning particularly difficult. In art and design lessons, pupils show sensitivity and understanding of nature in the colours and textures they use to portray the natural world around them. There are very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual development in drama. All music lessons contain a spiritual dimension characterised by pupils' high level of concentration and the intensity of their enjoyment. In a lesson with the speech and language therapist, pupils showed joy at their own excellent achievement. Pupils are encouraged to explore the natural environment as part of God's creation, and there are many outings where they are given opportunities to experience awe and wonder. The school further celebrates success in work, play and behaviour. The younger pupils celebrate 'star of the day'. Older pupils have a weekly 'golden book' celebration. They look forward to attending a tea party with the headteacher when they have achieved three entries in this book. The weekly religious education assembly provides opportunities for discussions about feelings and appropriate behaviour in a spiritual context, and older pupils have circle time when similar subjects are discussed.

44. There are very good and well planned opportunities for pupils' moral development. Pupils have strong views on right and wrong and stories from a variety of cultures are used to illustrate issues. School rules are positive and help pupils to live ordered lives and to be aware of the rights of others. Adults provide good role models and pupils are shown respect and respect others in their turn. Adults are polite and prepared to take time to listen. In lessons such as art and design and mathematics, teachers set clear boundaries of behaviour both in a formal context and when pupils engage in collaborative work.
45. Social development is very well promoted. There is a strong and highly effective emphasis on the development of language, spoken, written or signed, which enables pupils to communicate with others for necessity or sociability. Pair and small-group work is a positive feature of lessons. This promotes pupils' skills of oral collaboration and oral communication. Appropriate signing and additional communication techniques aid this process. In art and design, pupils collaborate with others in using the materials. In these lessons, they are happy to comment on others' work. Sensible conversation between pupils and between pupils and the teacher is a notable feature of these lessons. In physical education, pupils work together well and support each other in dance and gymnastics. Socialisation with mainstream pupils in collaborative projects such as biscuit making and packaging is a strong feature of their development. Pupils show their very good social skills when visiting mainstream schools for lessons, or welcoming mainstream pupils who visit the school. They behave well on visits out, and respond to a wide range of visitors courteously and appropriately. Behaviour in the dining room is well promoted. Pupils are well mannered and self controlled. A young pupil showed high standards of behaviour by remarking during the inspection that Henry VIII rejected Anne of Cleves because 'She didn't do good eating', which is probably true.
46. Opportunities for pupils' cultural development are very good. They learn about British culture in history, for example when they study the Tudors and Victorians. They enjoy a range of classic children's stories from all over the world. A wide range of music is a strong feature of their learning. They celebrate Christian festivities such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest and other festivals such as Diwali, when pupils makes sweets, cards and diva lamps. Older pupils learn of another foreign culture

nearer home in French lessons. Visitors from different religious traditions take assembly and talk to pupils. The school has welcomed professional acting troupes, African drummers and English guitarists. A highlight of the school year is the annual nativity play performed in the local church. Almost every pupil has a part. Last year the school joined with other local schools in a service at Rochester Cathedral.

47. Since the last inspection, there has been a good level of improvement. The curriculum is now broad and well balanced. All attainment targets are satisfactorily addressed. The quality and quantity of resources for subjects have improved very significantly. The curriculum followed by the under-fives and in the reception year is now very well organised and properly balanced. Particularly good use is now made of ICT across the curriculum. The needs of all pupils, including those with additional learning needs, are now very well met. Provision made for personal social education has improved and is now very good. The school now provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Schemes of work of a high quality have now been prepared for the foundation subjects, which contain good guidance for all teachers. Planning for curriculum continuity as pupils progress through the school is now clear and well organised. Residential experience for some pupils has now been reinstated and it is planned to develop this further. The provision for the cultural and multicultural education of pupils now joins the very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development as significant strengths of the school.
48. The school has recently gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark. Investor in People status was assessed and awarded in October 2002. The good quality work undertaken in preparation for these awards is very evident in the impact it has had within the curriculum and teaching as a whole.
49. The curriculum followed by pupils experiencing additional special educational needs is always appropriate and much effort goes into ensuring that all pupils have the same opportunities to experience the broad and balanced curriculum, together with other school clubs and extra-curricular activities. Whatever a pupil's level of difficulty, there are always opportunities for inclusion within the main school and, sometimes, at other local schools. At Key Stage 1 the 'High Scope' work ensures that pupils with autistic spectrum disorder participate fully in the rich and varied curriculum offered. The opportunities presented to work on Diwali during the inspection were impressive and included everyone in each activity. Good work has been undertaken to introduce the TEACCH approach for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. This has, very sensibly, been adapted to ensure that the best elements of good primary practice are also included.
50. Additional support for pupils with speech and language difficulties is limited but of a very high standard. Teachers, teaching assistants and therapist work very closely to ensure that those pupils with the severest needs receive the most intense work. Other pupils receive structured language support through teaching assistants working on well-designed programmes. There are currently no social use of language sessions. These have been successful in the past and should be considered again.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

51. The school continues to provide good support and guidance and very effectively promotes the welfare, health and safety of the pupils in a warm, caring and secure environment. All staff show great concern for the wellbeing of pupils and a range of measures exists to promote their development. All staff know the pupils well and have a clear picture of their personal strengths and weaknesses enabling them to provide effective counselling and support. The level of support continues to be supplemented

well by the range of external agencies. Good levels of co-operation and consultation ensure that the best use is made of their time to support the particular needs of the pupils. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of the pupils and consistently monitor well their personal development and their ability to cope on a day-to-day basis.

52. Procedures for assessment are excellent in English, very good in ICT and music and good in mathematics and history. 'P' scales and National Curriculum levels are used well to chart pupils' progress and plan future lessons in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Assessment is not recorded as formally in other subjects, however, teachers have a clear knowledge of their pupils' ability and what they know, understand and can do. Notes are made on lesson plans after each lesson and evidence transferred to pupils' reports. Very good use of 'post it' notes is also made, particularly in the reception class. The assessment policy outlines the school's aims which are that assessment should be thorough but does not need to be complicated. The school successfully follows the principles of the QCA document 'Keeping Track' (1999) which argues that there is no need for teachers to use complex systems of assessing their pupils, nor for schools to keep extensive records to support end-of-key-stage judgements teachers have made. It is more important that teachers have consistent and shared understanding of standards and that the assessments they make of their pupils' achievements arise naturally from, and feed effectively into, planning, teaching and learning. This the school does well.
53. Assessment for pupils with additional and complex special educational needs is very good. The individual education plans are good working documents which inform classroom planning and the work of all adults in the school. The statements of many pupils identify a range of facilities that are required. The school does very well in meeting these requirements. Good work is developing with regard to involving pupils in their own plans. Reviews of all plans and statements are efficient and very practical. The inspection team was particularly impressed by the individual behaviour plans for a small group of pupils demonstrating the severest behaviour difficulties. It was felt that the consistency and early intervention within these plans could usefully be employed with other pupils.
54. The school has improved the systems to monitor and promote attendance and they are now very good. Registers are marked speedily, correctly and efficiently at the start of the school day and after lunch. All absences are properly noted and contact made with parents to explain the absence. Attendance figures are properly aggregated and emerging patterns of absence are noted for follow up.
55. Very effective procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are in place and consistently applied by most staff, but there are a few occasions when inappropriate behaviour is not challenged. Occasionally, pupils do not always follow the instructions of the teacher and choose their own different activities. The school rules and the code of conduct are prominent around the school and are well understood by the pupils. Members of staff were seen to pre-empt incidents of possible misbehaviour around the site with firm, calm intervention maintaining good control.
56. Child protection issues are now handled effectively. The headteacher is the designated person to handle such issues and is properly trained. All members of staff are aware of the designated person to approach if suspicions are aroused. They are also alert to the need for vigilance and the steps to take if suspicions are aroused.
57. Health and safety issues raised during the last inspection have been improved and this is now promoted effectively. A full risk assessment policy has been produced and

a comprehensive survey that covers the whole site and personnel has been completed. Potential hazards are identified and remedial action taken as necessary. All staff members are safety conscious as shown during a Year 6 design and technology lesson when the use of sharp implements was very well supervised with clear direction and monitoring a strong feature. All members of staff work hard to create a secure environment in which the wellbeing of pupils is promoted effectively.

58. The school successfully achieves its aims in its work with pupils with additional special educational needs. There is the highest standard of physical care taken and all staff are very knowledgeable about the requirements of individual pupils. Thus, in lessons involving pupils with visual impairment and with severe behavioural problems, for example, care is always taken to ensure that the best environment is available and learning support assistants clearly briefed about individual needs. The use of soft play and, for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder, the use of the 'Monkey Bizz' facility, are good examples of the imagination and commitment that staff bring to this aspect of their work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

59. At over 50 per cent the response of parents to the questionnaire is high. A very high proportion of them is highly supportive of the school and confirms that it has many strong features. All those responding to the questionnaire believe that the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. Virtually all those responding agree that their children like school. They believe that the teaching is good and the school works closely with them. They would feel comfortable about approaching the school with a problem. A very high proportion of parents feel that the school is well led and managed and behaviour is good. They also feel that their children are making good progress and they are well informed about that progress. Inspection evidence confirms these very positive views of parents.
60. A very few parents expressed reservations about the amount of work to be done at home. Inspection evidence does not support these views as the amount of work to be completed at home is considered to be entirely appropriate for these pupils.
61. The contribution of parents to their children's learning is good. They, and other adults, are encouraged to involve themselves in the life of the school and many respond very positively. They help in the classroom and around the school as well as on trips and visits. There is a very active FADS (Friends at Danecourt Society) association, which is now effective as a social group as well as raising substantial amounts of finance to support the school. Many parents are supportive of the work that their children are expected to do at home. The school values highly the contributions made by parents which enhance their children's learning and personal development.
62. Information to parents is good overall. The school prospectus is clear and comprehensive. It gives parents a good overview of the school's values and its curriculum. This information is well supplemented by regular newsletters. Reports to parents provide clear, relevant and detailed information particularly in English and mathematics. However, in the foundation subjects the information relates more to coverage, giving little information about what the pupils have learned. Geography is not reported as a discrete subject in Years 1 and 2, but as part of an overall comment within the general topic being studied.
63. The school works very closely with the parents and families of those pupils who have additional special educational needs. It keeps parents well informed and involves them fully in reviews and day-to-day concerns. As a result, those parents who take

advantage of this partnership see good, often very good, progress in their children. Parents rate highly the work carried out with pupils who have autistic spectrum disorder. They, rightly, are concerned over the level of speech and language therapy available through the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

64. The headteacher and senior management team provide very good leadership and very good management of the work of the school. In consequence, Danecourt has developed dramatically since the last inspection. Standards and achievements are improved and there is now a clear direction for every aspect of the school's work. This is supported by very good procedures for day-to-day management, longer-term planning and curriculum development. The headteacher has vision and is a very good leader and organiser. The senior management team is highly qualified and experienced. Their practical approach to developments such as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has been impressive, but not surprising, as all are good classroom teachers themselves. There is very good teamwork and a common sense of purpose among all the staff. The governing body is effective in supporting the school in its work and asks the appropriate questions as well as providing wholehearted support for school staff. Discussions with governors during the inspection indicated a group of people who bring a range of practical and professional skills, thus providing very good support for the headteacher.
65. Leadership in the subjects of the curriculum is good overall and often very good. There are good arrangements for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and the curriculum throughout the school. Performance management has been used very well to assist managers in coming to terms with new roles and ensuring that all staff are able to develop within the school's vision. There has been a very sensible approach to the monitoring of teaching. The headteacher and deputy headteacher observe teaching formally and colleagues work in a focused way with regard to their own particular subjects. Subject co-ordinators generally have enough time to develop their subjects and good use is made, both of outside expertise from the Education Action Zone and local education authority, and from the governing body through its involvement in classrooms. This has had a positive effect on pupils' achievements. The support for the work of co-ordinators, the better management of the curriculum and the greater clarity of aims are all very good responses to what were key issues raised in the previous report.
66. The school improvement plan is a highly detailed and comprehensive document. It includes separate action plans for all subjects in both Key Stage 2 and in Key Stage 1 & Early Years. It identifies appropriate priorities for development and is closely tied in with the school budget. It is an effective tool for the management of change. This has provided a sharp focus for staff and the most efficient use of training time and financial resources in moving the school on. Once again, the work of the governors responsible for finance, premises and curriculum has been focused and, as a result, significant and relevant progress has been made. This has had a positive impact on achievements throughout the school.
67. The school finance officer and the administrative staff form an effective and efficient team. They are responsible for a wide range of duties including finance, staffing and attendance. They contribute very well to the efficient running of the school and are full and effective members of the school team. There are strong, regular and effective links between the senior management team, governors and the finance officer. This ensures that future planning is taken into account, but that, as far as possible, the

pupils presently in the school benefit from the current budget. Financial procedures and the regular monitoring by both local education authority and the chair of the finance committee are very effective in assisting the school to develop. The way in which those responsible for finance have created effective checks and balances, together with a very impressive use of new technology, is a strength of the school. The ease with which the inspection team was able to analyse the budget is a tribute to very effective and efficient routines. Specific grants are always used for the appropriate purpose and this aspect of the financial management is a model of its kind.

68. The school is well staffed. The number of teachers, support staff and administrative staff are appropriate for the school and the growing complexity of needs. This will need to be reviewed on a regular basis, particularly as the number of pupils with complex difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder increases. Many of the staff are highly qualified and very experienced in working with pupils with additional special educational needs. A particular strength of the school is the way in which the training programme identifies and meets the changing needs of all staff. Thus, one member of the administrative staff is about to undergo a course on desktop publishing and a number of learning support assistants have had good training in work connected with autistic spectrum disorder pupils. Serious attention is now being given to ensure an appropriately skilled staff over the coming years, particularly with regard to developments with Key Stage 2 for autistic spectrum disorder pupils. Much work has been carried out to train learning support assistants to support speech and language programmes. However, there are still not enough fully trained teaching assistants within this field to ensure a staff member in every class.
69. The school has done well to develop its provision for pupils within the autistic spectrum. It has developed a team of highly skilled teachers and teaching assistants. This area of work is very well managed and consideration is already being given to how the school will cope when the number of these pupils is higher in Key Stage 2. The overall increase in learning support assistants has improved the level of support since the last inspection. The professional training, particularly with regard to picture exchange techniques (PECS) has been very effective. Resources are good for pupils with additional special educational needs. The current accommodation for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder is not adequate, but this should be rectified by the new building.
70. The school's strategic use of resources is good. A good range of high quality resources are available to staff and pupils. There is now no subject area where resources are inadequate and in some areas, for example physical education, they are particularly good.
71. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. Whilst some areas of the school, for example most classrooms and the sports hall, are of good quality, other areas, for example the autistic spectrum disorder classroom, the school hall and main entrance are unsatisfactory, as is the lack of specialist rooms and storage space. However, the school makes good use of the accommodation available and there are plans in place for considerable alteration and improvements, work on some of which is to start immediately.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

72. The Inspection team found no major issues for improvement but found two minor issues. Both are already in the school's future plans.

- Behaviour management techniques with a very small minority of pupils.
- Ensure that reports to parents include what pupils know, understand and can do in all subjects.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	68
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	48

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	22	28	16	0	0	0
Percentage	3	33	41	23	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 percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	105
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	32

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.76

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.77

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded
Parent/pupil preferred not to say
Information not obtained

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
79	3	2
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
22	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7.5:1
Average class size	9.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	28
Total aggregate hours worked per week	621

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	974,927
Total expenditure	970,349
Expenditure per pupil	8,985
Balance brought forward from previous year	88,380
Balance carried forward to next year	92,958

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
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	105
Number of questionnaires returned	57

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	30	2	0	4
My child is making good progress in school.	60	32	2	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	42	4	2	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	34	25	4	13
The teaching is good.	75	21	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	68	25	0	0	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	25	6	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	85	15	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	62	34	2	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	77	17	0	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	25	2	0	13
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	53	34	2	0	11

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

73. In the previous inspection the school's early years provision was judged to be unsatisfactory. Since then there have been significant improvements in teaching and learning, and in curriculum planning and assessment. Opportunities for inclusion into and from the main school, and resources, including those for ICT, have also improved. The provision is now very good.
74. The seven children in the Foundation Stage are all in the reception class. Appropriate strategies are in place for inducting new children to the school. These include observation visits to the nursery prior to admission and home visits by staff. Partnership with parents is taken very seriously. Parents are made to feel welcomed. A home/school book, involvement in children's targets and half-termly visits ensure that communication between home and school is always secure. Assessments on entry show the majority of children enter the reception class with very poorly developed personal, social, speech, language and communication skills. Effective teaching supports children in making good progress across the six areas of learning of the Foundation Stage. Because each child's personal targets in his or her individual education plan are appropriate to their needs and are planned for in lessons, children make good progress towards their targets. All children, including those with additional special educational needs, make good progress, and there are no significant differences between the progress of any groups of children. As it is unlikely, because of the significant learning needs of the children, that they will reach the expected learning goals by the end of the reception class, the school appropriately plans for the early years curriculum to be continued into the primary department through the school curriculum.
75. Teaching is always good and mostly very good in the Foundation Stage across all areas of the curriculum. Both the teacher and learning support assistants have a good understanding of the needs of young children and provide them with an appropriate range of learning experiences. Staff have high expectations and are particularly skilled, patient and astute at managing children's idiosyncratic behaviour. As a result, behaviour in all the lessons seen was very good, and the children focused well on the activities provided for them. There is a quiet, purposeful atmosphere in the classroom, with children busy and fully involved. This is conducive to good learning. The curriculum is effectively planned to promote the stepping stones towards the early learning goals, and short, medium and long-term planning is good. Experienced and well-trained learning support assistants provide effective individual and small group support. Lessons are well prepared and structured so that learning is continuous. The regular monitoring of children's responses to activities is a notable feature with staff using 'post-it' labels to record progress as it occurs. This supports the teacher in planning appropriate work. Very good relationships between children and staff help create a secure learning environment.
76. The accommodation is good and consists of one large, attractively displayed classroom base which encourages children to investigate and learn. The room is well arranged with a 'home corner', small library, computer area and a 'finding out table'. Outside there is a level hard core area which children share with pupils in Year 1 for mobile equipment, a sensory garden, a small grass area for picnics and a small adventure playground with a safety surface. Resources are very good and are well stored and easily accessible. There is currently no outdoor covered area. Children in

the Foundation Stage have access to all the facilities in the main school including the soft play/sensory area, ICT suite and sports hall.

77. Provision for children with additional special needs is very good. Children benefit from the expertise of visiting professionals such as the speech and language therapist, the physiotherapist and occupational therapist and the local education authority teachers for hearing and visual impairment. There are continuing and close working links with the portage service. In addition, the teacher and learning support assistants in the reception class adapt their approaches to match children's needs, for example using signing, symbols and pictures for children who have very little speech and language. This ensures that everyone is included, has full access to the curriculum and is successful. Some children have detailed behaviour and toilet training plans.

Personal, social and emotional development

78. Teaching in the area of personal and social development is very good and as a result children make very good progress. Children's personal, social and emotional development is given a high priority and underpins the whole curriculum. Over time children improve in their dressing, feeding and toileting skills. They understand what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour as a result of consistent management and because staff provide positive role models. They learn to wait their turn at snack or lunchtimes and to play well alongside each other and sometimes together. In this way they learn the importance of friendships. They quickly adapt to the routines of the classroom and respond well to the encouragement of staff in such activities as the morning or afternoon greeting. Because the timetable for the day, in pictures and words, is shared with the children at the start of each morning and afternoon session, they become used to the routines of their day and look forward to particular activities. The teacher provides a stimulating and interesting range of activities, which enable children to be active in their learning, for example through exploring a range of toys, construction apparatus and wet and dry play. The teacher and support staff use these opportunities well to introduce an appropriate vocabulary and to talk to children about what they are doing so their play becomes more purposeful. Although the majority of play is alongside their peers, children increasingly play co-operatively, sharing their toys and communicating with each other.

Communication, language and literacy

79. All staff use play, language, pictures, symbols and signing really well to support children's listening and communication skills. Good teamwork and the expertise of the speech therapist help the teacher to plan more effectively for individual communication needs. However, the speaking skills of most children are very limited. Children learn to listen well through activities such as action songs, where they watch the teacher and try to imitate the actions. Positive and encouraging comments, for example 'good listening' and 'good looking' maintain children's attention. Higher attaining children remember the actions and participate independently. They re-tell a familiar story in their own words while looking at pictures. In writing, they are able to trace over an adult's writing of their own name with attempts at correct letter formation. Lower attaining children need verbal or physical prompts. They enjoy finding their own photograph from a choice of two, and say or point to the other child whose photograph is being held. In an excellent lesson taken by the speech therapist, a hedgehog, teddy bear and duck are used well to capture children's interest and to encourage them to respond. Everyone takes part and patiently waits their turn to speak to the hedgehog. The timing of each activity ensures that children's concentration is sustained. Through the use of pictures, sounds, signs and symbols

children begin to associate the written word with meaning. All children enjoy looking at a range of attractive books and do so with very little prompting. Through all activities staff encourage children to talk, through gesture, signing and language, and provide good role models for children to copy.

Mathematical development

80. Children's knowledge and understanding of number, colour and shape is very poor on entry to school. They make good progress in their early mathematical development because activities are planned to use the language of number which is reinforced whenever possible during the day – at registration, in lessons, snack time, and in the playground. Children begin to show an interest in numbers and counting through activities such as counting the children in the class, joining in counting stories and rhymes and through play. Through a good range of activities and mathematical displays, children begin to match colours and shapes, to identify 'more' and 'less', 'big' and 'little' and to use and respond to an increasing mathematical vocabulary. Higher attaining children make a set of objects up to five. Lower attaining pupils recognise their form and learn some number lines. They match and place the correct shape in a shape sorter from a choice of four. All children develop an awareness of numbers as labels in their trips into the community, such as the number of addresses, roads and on motor cars.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

81. Children make very good progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding that help them make sense of the world because the teacher provides a range of first hand experiences that encourage observation and exploration. On trips out in the minibus, such as visiting a local shopping centre, allotment and park, children find out about, people, creatures, plants and objects. They begin to learn about special occasions such as Harvest Festival and Christmas because these are celebrated in school. A parent visits the school and shows them how Hindus celebrate Diwali, what food is eaten and what garments are worn by Indian women. Computer programs that require them to dress a teddy bear or make patterns by tracking, pressing buttons or using a small mouse stimulate their interest in ICT. Children show curiosity and interest in joining and dismantling a range of construction kits of different size, shape and colour, or when exploring magnets and horseshoes on the 'finding out table'. The teacher plans well to help children learn about cause and effect, and off and on, in exploring switches and buttons in the sensory room. As a result children begin to show an interest in why things happen and how things work. Through play children are introduced to a range of materials, such as sand and water trays and capacity equipment. One girl fills the bucket with sand using a spade and then has great fun pouring the sand through a sieve. The teacher uses activities and objects that are fun and interesting, for example when the children enjoy using a feely bag, reaching in and taking out an object and then trying to communicate what they have chosen.

Physical development

82. Many children have limited physical co-ordination and control on entry to the reception class. Through a planned range of indoor and outdoor activities, children make good progress in their physical development. Outside, children enjoy using the range of small and large equipment and develop physical control, from sitting on bikes and pushing themselves around to pedalling bikes and steering them with good control. They learn to improve their balance and co-ordination and move spontaneously within available space when scrambling and climbing in the soft play area. They learn the safety rules of 'No bumping' and 'No one near you when you jump'. They become aware of the passage of time with notice of finish – two minutes and then count down '5, 4, 3, 2, 1'. Children's physical development is enhanced by the good teamwork and planning between the teacher and the physiotherapist. Through playing with a range of construction toys children improve their dexterity and control, joining and fixing pieces together. Children's fine motor skills are improved as they are encouraged to hold a pencil and paint brush correctly, and use paints, crayons, glue and sponges in a range of play and planned activities.

Creative development

83. Pupils make good progress in working towards the early learning goals of creative development. This helps them to make connections between one area of learning and another and so extends their understanding. This good progress is as a result of well-organised activities that allow children time to explore and respond, and use their many senses and talents. In art for example, children explore colour, shape and form. With support they produce marbling patterns, repeat patterns, Diwali cards, and collages with different textures. In music, they sing songs from memory, and recognise how sounds can be made through blowing, beating and shaking certain instruments. In free play they take up adult roles in the dolls' house and prepare a cup of tea or do the cleaning. In all these activities, the teacher and support staff, extend children's thinking and learning through well-timed and well-considered comments and questions. When necessary, they demonstrate skills and techniques to improve children's performance, for example showing them how to apply glue or how to best use a musical instrument. The provision overall prepares children well for the next phase of education.

ENGLISH

84. The provision for English is good, with some very good and even excellent features. Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 to 6. As a result, all pupils achieve well in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Pupils belonging to different groups, and with different special educational needs make equally good progress; this is because teachers plan well for pupils of different abilities, and use methods that are suited well to pupils with particular difficulties resulting from their special educational needs. This is an improvement since the last inspection when pupils made good progress in Years 3 to 6, and satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well since then, and most teachers successfully use the recommended structure for literacy sessions. Fairly challenging targets have been set for raising achievement and these have been reached and exceeded. Leadership of the subject is good.
85. In subjects other than English, literacy skills are consolidated and taught well. For example, vocabulary associated with each subject is carefully introduced, explained and used frequently so that pupils become familiar with its use; they soon begin to use it too. There are good opportunities for discussion, reading and writing.

86. The school's assessment procedures for English are excellent. Learning is promoted very well by the setting of specific, measurable, individual literacy targets for all pupils. Progress against these is recorded well, and in an efficient way. This enables the school to demonstrate and track the progress that pupils make in the short term. In addition, the school assesses the levels that pupils reach each year, and results of these assessments, over a four-year period, are analysed and charted to show gains over time. Older and more able readers are tested using a standardised reading test, and spelling is tested in the same way. As a result, the school has a wealth of information about pupils' abilities, and it uses this very effectively to plan the next steps in learning, and to set challenging targets for improving achievement even further. When pupils in Year 6 move on to secondary education, useful summary records and detailed reports accompany them.
87. Pupils achieve well in speaking and listening. Those who have speech and language difficulties receive effective support from speech and language therapists. The support that is available is used efficiently to ensure that it is targeted at those most in need, and programmes are planned by therapists and implemented by school staff. In addition, staff use a good range of strategies for encouraging speaking and listening. In subjects other than English, staff emphasise and explain well the vocabulary associated with the subject, so pupils understand and begin to use this too. The conventions of turn taking, and putting up your hand when you wish to speak are taught early on, and teachers in Years 1 and 2 insist on their consistent use. There is good use of signing to support pupils' understanding, and teachers encourage pupils to answer questions fully. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 2, all follow requests and simple instructions; they take turns and co-operate in groups, and use facial expressions and intonation to add meaning. Higher attainers use a growing vocabulary to convey meaning to the listener, and can link up four key words to give a message such as, 'The hairy giant shouted at Finn.'
88. Across all subjects there are very good opportunities for pupils to speak and listen, and informal exchanges between staff and pupils during practical activities, for instance, encourage pupils to make observations, make predictions and express their opinions. Good use is made of registration sessions to encourage speaking and listening. In a Year 6 class for instance, pupils were asked to describe what they had been doing during the half-term holiday. By the end of Year 6, all pupils have increased their confidence when speaking to familiar and unfamiliar adults. Higher attainers talk and listen well in different contexts and can explore and communicate ideas. They begin to adapt what they say to their audience and are aware of standard English and when it should be used.
89. All pupils achieve well in reading. The school's literacy strategy takes good account of national guidance; letter sounds are carefully taught, and this helps pupils to read and spell unfamiliar words. Pupils' reading records are completed well; useful comments give pointers about how to support continued skill development. Teachers regularly draw pupils' attention to features of books, so pupils become familiar with associated terms, such as 'author', 'illustrator' and 'publisher'. The school is well supplied with reading materials; there are good stocks of books in classrooms, as well as a small reference library, and a good supply of reading books associated with two commercial schemes. Books form an integral part of the many eye-catching displays around the school, all of which have simple, well-presented text to accompany photographs and even artefacts. There is also a growing range of story-sacks, in which books are accompanied by real objects, such as finger-puppets that represent the characters in the book. These are well used to support pupils' understanding, and pupils are pleased to use them to participate in story telling.

90. Pupils have positive attitudes to reading, and are pleased to be asked to read out loud in class. They thoroughly enjoy hearing stories read to them; this was particularly evident in an Indian story-telling session as part of Years 1 and 2 pupils' Diwali celebrations. Teachers make good use of ICT to help pupils develop their reading skills; software associated with commercial schemes enables pupils to work independently on occasions, and words written on cards and recorded onto magnetic tape at the base of the card can be replayed by pupils using a language master. By the end of Year 2, all pupils recognise print, signs and symbols associated with own name; they anticipate what is to come in well-known narratives and know when a word is omitted from a familiar story. All are interested in books and stories. Higher attaining pupils know that print is read from left to right, top to bottom and from page to page. They recognise some letters of the alphabet. By Year 6, higher attainers read texts fluently and accurately, understand the main points and express preferences. They use dictionaries and an index to find information.
91. All pupils achieve well in writing. Writing skills, such as correct letter formation, spelling and punctuation are carefully taught and assessed. Good use is made of software that generates symbols with text, to help pupils both read and write. By the end of Year 2, all pupils can distinguish between letters and symbols, they produce some recognisable hand-written letters, or use a computer to generate symbols. Higher attaining pupils write their name, using upper and lower case letters correctly. They show an awareness of the different purposes of writing.
92. Pupils are very well supported in developing their writing skills by a good number of wordprocessors available for their use. These enable them to produce professional looking 'publications' of their own. Older pupils extend the range of things they write about, and the types of audience for their work. By the end of Year 6, lower attaining pupils produce recognisable letters and words, using a computer or writing by hand. Higher attainers' writing is organised, imaginative and clear; punctuation, such as full stops, capital letters, question marks and punctuation marks, is used correctly and writing is joined and legible. Pupils write for a range of audiences.

MATHEMATICS

93. Achievements in mathematics are good throughout the school. There has been good improvement in teaching, provision and progress since the previous inspection. Pupils of all abilities make good progress and their full inclusion in lessons is a real strength.
94. Numeracy skills are developing well and have improved significantly since the previous inspection. This is due to the good implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy at both key stages. As a result, daily numeracy time is helping pupils to practise and consolidate basic number skills. Good staff training has ensured that lessons are planned and taught well, with pace and a good matching of group work tasks to individual abilities. Pupil progress is measured regularly and the overall assessment procedures, both in terms of year-on-year recording and day-to-day observations, are very good. Many pupils use their numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, a Year 2 registration involved discussion of the date together with number songs linked to work on patterns. Similarly, at the end of a very good Year 4 art and design lesson on line patterns, the class 'relaxed' with a mathematics dance. This involved a 'Hokey Cokey' dance based on counting from 0 to 20 in ones, in twos and in reverse. This was an excellent, and very relaxed, use of mathematics in a cross-curricular way.

95. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress. They develop their number skills as a result of the good quality numeracy lessons. They benefit from clear, specific targets within their individual education plans and a good range of resources. Pupils with complex learning difficulties pick up and put down objects consistently, use multiple-part equipment such as train sets and place up to three objects in a container. Higher attaining pupils complete three-piece puzzles, join in number rhymes without prompting and match two-dimensional shapes well. All pupils become more involved in the sequencing and order of the day and week. This is reinforced well by class teachers and is particularly effective for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder.
96. By Year 6, pupils of all abilities have made good progress and achieved well. Those with complex difficulties develop their fine motor skills and visual awareness through exploration of a range of resources. They rote count to ten, recognise numbers to five, develop a small vocabulary to describe two-dimensional shapes and solve very simple problems using apparatus and real-life objects, such as coins and toys. Higher attaining pupils develop an understanding of place value up to 1000, they approximate, solve problems using numbers up to, and often beyond, 20 and classify accurately a range of two and three-dimensional shapes. They begin to solve problems using a range of strategies, check their results and become adept at using simple diagrams and symbols.
97. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good, and often very good, across the school. This is a distinct improvement since the last report where teaching was satisfactory. Very good teaching is characterised by the pace, humour and rigour of lessons. The National Numeracy Strategy is used well to provide a range of opportunities for pupils to use mental mathematics, to work intensively within groups and to discuss what they have found out in plenary sessions. Teachers know their pupils well and set very specific numeracy targets in the individual education plans. Every mathematics lesson is planned in relation to these targets and this is a strength. Very effective teamwork and the high quality of the work of teaching assistants are a particular strength and every pupil receives the help that they require to learn successfully. Well-focused questions and the effective use of resources also support the good acquisition of skills. For example, in a very good Year 2 lesson, 'Buster Balloon' books were used effectively to reinforce subject-specific words such as 'big', 'large', and 'giant'. This was followed by a 'Who is taller?' game. Group work allowed the pupils to repeat this activity with dolls, building blocks and construction kits. The involvement of learning support assistants in group work, together with the very good use of language by all adults, added to the pace and success of the lesson. As a result pupils showed a high level of both enjoyment and progress within a short space of time.
98. In a similarly successful Year 6 lesson, pace, humour and challenge provided the basis for good progress related to choosing the correct use of plus and minus, together the full range of alternative words. The pupils worked in a conference-style format and showed very good turntaking skills. The lesson started with a very good mental mathematics activity using role play, the overhead projector and a high level of pupil participation. Group work, as usual, was well matched to the different groups within the class and the learning support assistants, one of whom was new to the work, showed a high level of skill in discussion with pupils emphasising the need for independent thinking. The lesson ended with a very good plenary session, which allowed pupils to discuss and celebrate what they had done.
99. Occasionally, higher attaining pupils are not challenged adequately, or they continue too long in tasks they can manage easily. The work of learning support assistants is

very good indeed, but occasionally, the introduction sees them rather passive, when they could usefully be observing individual pupils for assessment purposes.

100. Leadership is very good in mathematics. This has had a positive impact on pupils' progress. Particular strengths are in the monitoring of pupils' achievements and in the whole-school approach to improvement. Good evidence of pupils' progress is regularly collated, analysed and reported on. This is allowing the school to set challenging targets and to show good progress over time. Assessment procedures are very effective and are used well to support learning and gather information about pupils' achievement. The development of a portfolio of work is progressing well and work is increasingly assessed against National Curriculum levels. The approaches and teaching styles of the numeracy strategy ensure regular, daily practice in number skills. This is having a major impact on pupils' ability to improve. Resources purchased for the numeracy strategy are particularly good in most aspects of the mathematics curriculum. There are too few ICT resources to further support the development of numeracy and reinforce it in other subjects such as science and design and technology. Work on the use of data also requires development.

SCIENCE

101. The quality of provision in science is good. Pupils' achievements and the progress they make in science are good. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. The subject now more fully addresses the attainment targets of the National Curriculum, the quality of teaching is now more consistently good, pupils now have an appropriate amount of their curriculum time devoted to science and the new scheme of work includes opportunities for pupils to undertake investigative work.
102. By the time they are seven, pupils have a basic understanding of science as a result of the science-based topics they have studied within the programme of topics addressed during Key Stage 1. At the time of the inspection the cycle of topics being taught did not cover science, but scrutiny of pupils' previous work and teachers' records and planning documents shows that pupils address the full range of study within the National Curriculum. Topics assessed include 'myself', 'animals' and 'pets'. Pupils' work shows that they have a good understanding of how animals and plants grow, how things work; for example in work on forces they use balloons to study what happens when the air is released. They grow plants and have an understanding of the importance of light and water in growth and in their work on pets they are developing the beginning of understanding of the reproductive cycle and of life processes. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 have carried out some simple scientific enquiries to discover what happens, for example when plants have insufficient water.
103. By the time they are eleven, pupils' understanding, knowledge and skills have developed well and they have experienced a wide range of science-based activities including investigative work. Their knowledge of life processes develops through investigations they carry out concerned with senses; they reproduce sounds and investigate how different sounds are transmitted. Their understanding of the life cycle develops to the point where they can describe the essential requirements for plants and animals to thrive. In work on materials pupils carry out investigation to study how changes occur and the higher attaining pupils understand reversible change to, for example, water. In work with electricity, pupils can build an electrical circuit effectively, they know the essential components, use vocabulary well and can describe why, for example, a light in a circuit might not be working. They confidently and correctly use words such as 'flow' and 'connection' and in discussion demonstrate that they understand the concept of electrical 'flow' in a circuit. In work on senses pupils are

able to describe the five human senses and carry out investigations using, for example, the sense of taste to identify sweet/sour and touch by identifying objects by feel only.

104. Pupils' good achievements in science are the result of teaching which is never less than satisfactory and often good. Lessons are carefully planned and the scheme of work is of good quality which helps teachers plan activities which are appropriate to pupils' levels of understanding and also address the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teachers use practical work on senses, electricity and growing plants; they provide pupils with opportunities to experience at first hand some scientific processes. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally very good and this, along with their very deep knowledge of the pupils, means that science lessons are always pitched at the right level and both higher and lower attaining pupils gain useful learning. Teachers are sensitive, but challenging; for example in a Year 5 lesson in electricity, the teacher insisted that the pupils described 'how' rather than 'why' the battery illuminated the bulb in a circuit. Science lessons are conducted in a pleasant, positive atmosphere to which pupils relate. They know they are going to undertake interesting work and this ensures they are on task, behave well and develop good enquiry skills. Teachers' expectations are high and they use resources, including the learning support assistants, very effectively. During science lessons, teachers take opportunities to reinforce skills in other curriculum areas, for example literacy and numeracy. Labelling of plants and diagrams and measuring growth or movement during experiments give pupils an opportunity to use their literacy and numeracy skills in practical settings outside of mathematics and English lessons.
105. The subject is well led by a teacher who has a clear understanding of both the subject and the pupils' needs. The schemes of work are of very good quality and the practice of presenting the subject as part of an integrated topic approach at Key Stage 1 and as a subject focus in Key Stage 2 is effective. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory and the practical aspects of the standard assessment tests are addressed at the end of Year 6. Resources are very good, being carefully organised centrally to ensure that the requirements of the scheme of work can always be delivered.

ART AND DESIGN

106. The school has improved significantly in this subject since the last inspection, when progress was only satisfactory throughout the school. Now it is good. Similarly, in 1997 although pupils' responses and teaching were good at Key Stage 1 and were only satisfactory at Key Stage 2, they are now good throughout the school. Overall, art and design is a strong subject that assists in the personal and spiritual development of all pupils.
107. Younger pupils use a good range of simple media to create colourful pictures and collages. They paint to music such as 'Pie Jesu' and 'One o'clock jump' and produce intricate and exciting pictures by rolling marbles, printing and using wax-resist. There are very good links between art and design and other subjects. Thus, a Year 1 class colours its own buns for a classroom display of 'Ten buns in a baker's shop' and illustrates its class book, 'The fish who could wish'. There is some effective use of digital cameras, but this is a technique that requires more development throughout the school.

Pupils between the ages of seven and eleven paint in the style of Mark Rothko, Robert Delauney, Monet and Seurat. They produce collages in science, designs for batik

pictures in design and technology and skeleton pictures to illustrate their 'Drybones' project in music. Some of the work, such as interlocking patterns, starry night collages, inspired by Van Gogh, and 'Blitz' paintings are quite dramatic, representing the impact that imaginative teaching has had on pupils. By the end of Year 6, all pupils have had the opportunity to experiment with line drawing, multi-media collages, and the use of unusual materials such as polystyrene tiles, sandpaper and rubber matting. Some of the work, such as paper and textile weaving, collages of different textures and pattern printing are very competent and provide a colourful display within the classroom and around the school.

108. Teaching is usually good and sometimes very good in art and design. At Key Stage 1, it is very effectively integrated into the high scope work, supporting the making of, for example, cards and pottery candle holders for Diwali. Here, art and design is used as a very real celebration of the colour and richness of life. In a similar vein, pupils' work is also celebrated. This is particularly effective where pupils with more complex and autistic spectrum disorder difficulties are involved. Art and design is seen, rightly, as a very effective means of communication for pupils who have difficulty with the spoken word. In turn, the group work in art and design assists in the development of speaking and listening for all pupils. In some classes, the lack of an evaluation session at the end of a lesson, reduces the effectiveness of teaching in developing this aspect.
109. A very good Year 4 art and design lesson exemplifies the very effective teaching in the subject. The class worked on 'taking a string for a walk', a form of scribble pattern which seeks to encourage good contrasts in colour and shape. The teacher provided a good, brisk introduction, allowing little time for distractions or misbehaviour. The class split into three groups and produced their own pictures. One group worked with a learning support assistant using a painting program on the computer. They were encouraged to make their own decisions and use the 'colour' and 'fill' commands, thus enhancing their ICT skills. A second group produced wax-resist pictures with strong encouragement from the learning support assistant. They worked methodically and used very good language skills to discuss their progress. The third group produced bright and dramatic colour contrasts using poster paints. All had the opportunity to display their work at the end and say what they liked and disliked. Here there was very good development of skills. Occasionally, in other lessons, some tasks, such as printing with leaves, are repeated with older pupils without sufficiently developing the techniques and language involved.
110. Leadership in art and design is good. It is a subject that is valued by management and well resourced. The co-ordinator has developed the subject well and is about to undertake training in the use of the computer in art and design with the ICT co-ordinator to boost this aspect of the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

111. The provision for design and technology is good. Teaching and learning are good, and a broad range of learning experiences is provided. Leadership of the subject is good. Since the last inspection, and under the leadership of a different co-ordinator, teachers have improved the way they teach the subject; there is now a greater emphasis on the process of designing and evaluating before making, and less importance is attached simply to the quality of the finished product. Resources for the subject are now good, and they are well organised and stored. They have recently been added to with the acquisition of computer controlled Lego. Pupils now achieve well, whereas their progress was satisfactory at the last inspection.

112. Most teachers plan their lessons well. In Years 1 and 2, teachers plan using the areas of learning for the early years, and teach in a very cross-curricular way. This means that several subjects are taught within the context of each topic, and this helps to make pupils' learning meaningful. Teachers' plans have been audited to ensure that they are covering sufficient content for each subject. During the inspection, as part of the topic Diwali, pupils were given a talk about the festival by a parent, they saw a video in which special lamps and sweets featured, and then they had the opportunity to make cards, lamps or sweets themselves. Pupils were well supported, so each was able to participate in the making process. By the end of Year 2, pupils have all made and tasted foods from different countries, and have found out some everyday uses of technology. Higher attainers are able to plan and review their work and have built and constructed a wide range of objects. For example, they have constructed models from boxes, bricks and Lego.
113. In Years 3 to 6, teachers draw from nationally recommended plans, used in most schools for pupils of this age, and this is good inclusive practice. Learning intentions are shared with pupils at the start of each lesson, and teachers' demonstrations are used well to give them some basic ideas. By telling pupils what teachers are looking for, pupils are clear about what they have to do by the end of each lesson. At this stage, teaching varies from satisfactory to very good, and is good overall. In the most successful lessons, teaching builds well on what has gone before. For example, in a Year 4 class, pupils had previously stitched on card, around a shape, overstitched two shapes together, and practised over stitch and running stitch. This had prepared them well for stitching the purse they ultimately designed themselves. In contrast, in a Year 3 class, pupils had not had enough practice in sewing, and the task was too difficult for some; a few became frustrated and upset when they could not do this. Only sensitive intervention by a learning support assistant averted an outburst. A second learning support assistant made a good contribution by talking to pupils about the shapes they were drawing round, ensuring that they could name a hexagon correctly, for example. A further weakness was seen in a lesson when one pupil opted out of the activity. Although he read quietly on the carpet, there was no strategy to encourage him back to the design and technology task, and he made insufficient progress as a result.
114. Some very successful teaching was seen in Years 5 and 6 classes, where pupils were learning how to make model bridges from paper, by folding or rolling it, then testing their designs to see how much weight they would bear before collapsing. The lesson began well with a recall session; digital photographs of bridges that pupils had seen locally were used well to prompt recall, and the teacher drew the pupils' attention to shapes that gave bridges strength, such as triangles. Careful demonstration by the teacher, of how to make paper stronger, gave the pupils enough confidence to tackle the task, but not all the answers. As a result, pupils were able to find out themselves, and some learned from their own mistakes. Careful monitoring and intervention by one teacher enabled a lower attaining pupil to share with others a good method of rolling paper, around a metre rule. Pupils soon realised that a series of cylinders of fairly tightly rolled paper, taped together, would be a strong structure. They tested this, and found that it took a three-kilogram weight without collapsing. Digital photography was used well by the teacher to record the steps in the process. By the end of Year 6, all pupils have had opportunities to make artefacts, such as slippers and biscuits. Higher attaining pupils produce finished products with little support, and are able to evaluate and amend their designs as they go along. Lower attainers need prompting to establish how to improve on designs; they also need support when making products.

115. Assessment in design and technology is satisfactory. Teachers highlight their plans to show what has been covered, then annotate them to record pupils' achievements.

GEOGRAPHY

116. The provision for geography is satisfactory overall. There has been sound improvement since the last inspection; plans have been developed that ensure pupils continue to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding as they move up the school. Now, although different year groups may cover similar topics at the same time, a rolling programme ensures that there is no unnecessary duplication later. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory.
117. No teaching of the subject in Years 1 and 2 occurred during the inspection, but an examination of pupils' work suggests that this is at least satisfactory. Reports do not contain any information on pupils' achievements by the end of Year 2, but photographic evidence suggests that pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress. For example, they begin to explore the school environment and identify the people who work in the school, and what these people do.
118. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is at least satisfactory, with some very good teaching was seen. Plans reflect national recommendations well, and this is good inclusive practice. Learning outcomes for pupils of all abilities need to be more clearly defined. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to consolidate literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in geography.
119. Teachers use practical methods well to help pupils acquire skills in geography. A good example of this was seen in a Year 4 class where pupils were learning about grid references. The teacher had each of them stand in the squares of a large grid marked on the floor, then read off the letters and numbers to give themselves a reference made up of a number and a letter. The exercise was then repeated on a smaller scale, using a grid on paper, with objects placed in squares. In another class, the same exercise was followed up with a treasure hunt, with pupils having to find which square had treasure buried in it. These practical tasks were successful in enabling pupils to make good progress in understanding grid references. In another lesson in Year 4, pupils were making sure they knew which was their right and left hand, in preparation for giving and following instructions. Good use was made of a song with actions, based on the 'Hokey Cokey', to consolidate pupils' learning. They enjoyed this and it enabled the teacher to see who needed further work on the topic. By the end of Year 6, pupils have extended their studies beyond the school, and their home country. They have located France on a map, and found out about differences between France and the United Kingdom. Higher attainers use a variety of sources to find out about France, whereas lower attainers need support to do this.

HISTORY

120. Timetable constraints meant that only lessons in Years 5 and 6 could be seen during the inspections, but pupils' activities and school records were observed in Key Stage 1, and pupils' work was analysed in Years 3 and 4.
121. Provision for the subject is satisfactory. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 and respond well to the multi-sensory provision. As they learn the meaning of 'yesterday', 'today' and 'tomorrow', pupils develop a feeling for time past. Pupils have produced a wall chart showing how they have grown, which increases their awareness of time. A video shows them as they were when they entered the

school, and they discuss how time has changed them, and how babies are different from children. Learning is further reinforced by photographs and tape recordings. Sequencing of objects, words and events is a strong feature of provision.

122. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils have made a practical study of Rochester which they have presented visually. They have a basic knowledge of the Celts, Romans and Anglo-Saxons. In their study of Vikings, pupils have visited the longship in Pegwell Bay. Pupils have some knowledge of ancient Egyptian civilisation, and have produced work on the pyramids and mummy making. They are currently studying the Tudor period.
123. Teaching is good. Planning and preparation is conscientious and effective. There is very good use of role play. In one very good lesson, skilful questioning and clear explanation fully involved pupils at an early stage. The highly effective use of role play in this lesson allowed the teacher to 'feed in' information so that pupils could understand and remember it. As the pupils mimed the demise of each of Henry VIII's wives, the teacher repeated a rhythmic, simple commentary about Henry's character which enabled them to understand some of the reasons why they had to die. Pupils enjoy history lessons because they provide active learning experiences, and a good variety of practical activities. They delight in dressing up in period costume and enacting key activities. They enjoy looking at authentic portraits and artwork of the period. Pupils relish gruesome but accurate stories of the Great Plague and Tudor remedies.
124. Resources for the subject are now good and include topic boxes. Assessment is satisfactory. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory.
125. Since the last inspection, there has been a satisfactory level of improvement. Teaching and learning in lessons has improved and is now good. The length of the cycle of lessons, which was criticised in the last report, has been reduced to an appropriate length. The scheme of work is satisfactory and now supports both teaching and assessment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

126. Provision for the subject is very good for pupils in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory in Key Stage 1. Pupils make consistently good progress. There is good access to the subject for those able to concentrate for limited periods in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, pupils log on and log off, sometimes needing help to accomplish this. Most pupils, including those on the autistic continuum, have some skills in using the mouse and connect the number of clicks made with a desired outcome. Lower achievers sometimes accomplish this hand over hand, but higher achievers work independently or with very little support. Pupils delight in using a program which enables them to dress a teddy bear. Higher achievers and older pupils understand that they can use the mouse to move objects about the screen, and this they do in response to simple instructions. Higher achievers key their names into the computer with minimal help. They change the colour and the font of letters confidently and with a high degree of independence. Pupils enjoy using an art program for drawing and colouring. They are helped to save and print their work.
127. By the time they are eleven, pupils are adept at exploring simulations. In their study of modelling, they recognise that the situations presented to them are imaginary, and predict what may happen next. They are helped to record any decisions made and the results of their actions, so enabling them to connect cause with effect. With varying degrees of help, pupils make a list of what they have found when using the simulations. Using a wordprocessor, some pupils write up a simple menu, focusing successfully on changing the font and the size of letters. All can cut and paste their surname. Higher achievers do this independently, although the least capable require hand over hand support.
128. Teaching and learning are consistently good for all pupils. Teachers and learning support assistants have a good level of knowledge, and confidently move the pupils on. The use of learning support assistants is highly effective. They teach basic skills to the younger pupils patiently and systematically, resulting in a very positive impact on their learning. Teachers and learning support assistants work as a harmonious and effective team to provide good learning experiences for a very wide range of abilities. Several activities requiring different levels of ability are frequently promoted simultaneously in the classroom. Pupils are consistently very well managed in these activities, and this good practice ensures that all pupils are enabled to make the greatest progress of which they are capable. Pupils are usually solidly on task and show great interest. All are eager to succeed.
129. Pupils learn well because they are enthused by the technology. They are motivated by what they see on the screen and this enables them to concentrate for comparatively long periods. Learning is further supported by the very good curriculum, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Although currently satisfactory, the provision of better facilities for Years 1 and 2 awaits the building of the projected new teaching block. Currently, the provision of school clubs to promote the subject is restricted and further development of this facility is required. Plans are well advanced to further develop the provision of control technology, which is a curriculum weakness. Schemes of work are detailed and helpful to teachers. Assessment and recording is very good. Pupils' good rate of progress is achieved by the provision of well-chosen and suitable hardware and software. The ratio of computers to pupils is very favourable.
130. The curriculum is fully supported by ICT, which is used well in a very high proportion of lessons. Provision is very well monitored and properly evaluated. Planning for ICT use is very good in a range of subjects. There are textbooks to help teachers and support staff in each curriculum area. In mathematics there is very good use of

motivating software to reinforce sequencing. Back-up software for basic numeracy processes is used as part of group work in most classes. Planning is at an advanced stage for 'Easy Teach' software to be introduced in Key Stage 1 numeracy classes next term; it is already in use in Key Stage 2. Pupils use an effective arithmetic program to manipulate chosen shapes to illustrate the concept of simple addition. In literacy, progress has been achieved through the use of the Internet, visualisers and digital cameras. Dream writers and software have been used as the basis of projects such as the production of personal booklets. In science, data projectors have been effectively used in class teaching. This has enabled pupils to observe Internet stations and videos with more ease.

131. Interactive whiteboards have been widely introduced and digital cameras and a digital video camera are strong features of provision. These enable pupils to present their work to others in highly sophisticated ways. Pupils' work has been entered on the Education Action Zone website. A school website is currently being prepared.
132. Since the last inspection, there has been a very good level of improvement. Resources for the subject have been very greatly improved. The school has undertaken an ambitious and highly effective training programme for teachers and learning support assistants. Further training for individuals is planned. As a result, teaching and learning have improved and are now consistently good. There is now a very good and detailed scheme of work that promotes ICT as an integral part of the curriculum. Co-ordination of the subject and its use across the curriculum is now very good with management which is well informed and efficient.

MUSIC

133. Since the last inspection there has been a very good improvement in all aspects of music, particularly in the use of tuned and untuned instruments. Throughout the school, pupils achieve very well and make very good progress in music. They enjoy their music making with a capital 'E'! When singing they often attain standards expected for their age. Pupils sing confidently and with real enjoyment and enthusiasm in assembly and in the weekly whole-school singing session. Those pupils with additional special educational needs also make very good progress because they are very well supported in all musical sessions by all adults. Signing is used particularly well in the whole-school singing session. The very enjoyable atmosphere within these sessions has a very beneficial effect on pupils' behaviour and self-esteem.
134. By the age of seven pupils are beginning to play tuned and untuned instruments with some understanding and they sing in tune and in time to the music. They have learnt, for example, a Diwali song, they compose simple tunes and are fully prepared to sing alone and unaccompanied. They sing rounds and two part songs well. By the age of eleven pupils have increased their skills, they sing in tune and with considerable feeling. Their singing is equally as good, if not better, than their mainstream peers. Their use of instruments to play and compose more complex tunes is commensurate with their learning difficulties. Pupils frequently participate in concerts with other schools at music festivals, in Rochester Cathedral and the Brook Theatre. The choir performs in its own right having sung for Radio Kent and performed for local pensioners. They thoroughly enjoy, and fully participate in, the work of the many artistes who visit the school. These include African and Indian drummers and English guitarists. The whole school successfully took part in the musical of 'The Owl and the Pussycat'.

135. Three lessons were observed during the inspection and teaching and learning was very good in all three. Evidence supplied shows that this is a true indication of the quality of teaching throughout the school. Teaching is effectively supported by the co-ordinator who checks the planning and suggests additional activities and resources. Music is often a feature of cross-curricular work throughout the school. For example counting rhymes and songs such as the pattern game in Year 2, the visit of an Indian drummer during Diwali and painting to 'Pie Jesu' and 'One O'clock Jump'. It plays a valuable part in the growth of pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
136. Leadership in music is very good. The co-ordinator bubbles with enthusiasm and has an accurate understanding of what needs to be done. She has a very good music action plan and there has been a useful review of progress carried out with the headteacher. There is a policy and a scheme of work, which provide help with the planning of lessons. The curriculum for pupils of seven and under is an integral part of the department's very successful themed approach to learning. The scheme of work for Years 5 and 6 is now based on advice from QCA. The range of musical instruments has improved considerably since the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

137. Provision for the subject is satisfactory. Pupils' achievements and the progress they make are satisfactory in both key stages and this is good improvement since the last inspection when progress was unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2.
138. By the time they are seven, pupils have developed a range of physical skills. They repeat movements and make shapes; for example in a Year 2 dance lesson, as a result of very good teaching, pupils were successful in forming crouch, tuck and curl shapes using their imagination and their previous learning in gymnastics and dance lessons. Pupils are developing a good understanding of health and fitness, for example pupils in Years 1 and 2 were able to describe why warming up was important. Scrutiny of teachers' planning shows that pupils undertake a range of activities in games, gymnastics and swimming which were not seen during the course of the inspection.
139. By the time they are eleven, pupils have built on and developed their awareness and ability in physical education. Their skills in dance, gymnastics and games, along with their work in science on life processes has consolidated and extended their understanding of the importance of physical fitness. Pupils' skills in a range of games are developing well and new experiences and activities are welcomed by pupils, for example volleyball is currently being introduced and most pupils are accepting the challenge of learning new techniques and rules very well. Pupils' ability to throw and catch is variable, but improving with maturity. Their movement skills show more imagination, for example in a good Year 6 dance lesson, pupils were able to use their imagination to develop extensive routines which fit well with the music. Good teaching emphasised the need to be creative and the pupils responded well. Although no gymnastics or swimming were observed during the course of the inspection, pupils' records and teachers' planning show that pupils make satisfactory progress in these areas.
140. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in physical education lessons and this is an improvement since the last inspection when teaching in Key Stage 2 was deemed to be unsatisfactory. Lessons are well planned in line with National Curriculum requirements and teachers' knowledge of pupils' needs. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound and although their pupil management skills are generally good, on occasion

the large sports hall presents them (and the pupils) with considerable challenge in terms of using the space appropriately, ensuring pupils remain on task and general effective supervision and behaviour management. In the best lesson seen all pupils remained within the group, performed tasks set and produced work of good quality. In all lessons pupils showed enjoyment and enthusiasm, and teachers used the resources including learning support assistants effectively. In less successful lessons, the pupils used the large space available poorly and some inappropriate behaviour resulted. Not all teachers confronted inappropriate behaviour with sufficient assertiveness and promptness and this caused it to escalate.

141. The subject is led satisfactorily by the deputy headteacher in the absence of a subject leader. Although not a physical education subject specialist the current subject leader is very enthusiastic and is ensuring broad and balanced subject coverage and maintaining the improvement there has been in the subject since the last inspection. The school has developed from being non-competitive to one that now successfully joins in many competitive events, such as inter-special-school cross-country running events and sports days, tag rugby with Kent Rugby Club and five a-side football. Swimming results include an Amateur Swimming Association Level 9 award and pupils enjoy outdoor pursuit activities and an after-school physical education club
142. Resources and accommodation for the subject are very good. The accommodation includes a large sports hall which provides excellent opportunities for a range of physical education activity. The school has a sports field and equipment is of high quality and sufficient quantity.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

143. Provision for the subject is good. Pupils make very good progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2.
144. By the end of Year 2, pupils are well prepared to make an informed choice of activity in their experience and study of the Festival of Diwali. Pupils make greeting cards, lamps and sweets and some understand simple aspects of their symbolism. All, in some measure, understand the tale of Ravana, Ram and Sita, and realise that these are Indian deities. All know that Diwali is a festival akin to Christmas, from a culture other than their own.
145. In their study of Christian traditions, older pupils know that Jesus often spoke in parables. They look for the hidden meaning with interest. In an assembly which was part of the religious education curriculum, the parable of 'The Good Samaritan' was performed by and for pupils. In subsequent lessons on the subject, pupils showed they understood, in varying measure, the hypocrisy of the professional 'do-gooders' who refused to help the man who was robbed and injured. Pupils showed great indignation at the plight of the Samaritan, and vigorous approval of the actions of his rescuer. Pupils know that the local church is for Christian worship and that weddings and christenings take place there. They have some knowledge of the world's major religions.
146. Pupils make very good progress in Years 1 and 2 because they are very well taught and the curriculum is very well adapted to their needs. All pupils are able to participate in exciting, real activities, such as those connected with Diwali and these experiences allow pupils to learn very well. Lessons are planned to provide a very well-balanced variety of activities. Visiting parents and others add interest and authenticity. There is good use of video clips. Teachers make good, well planned, multi-sensory provision for pupils' learning which interests and motivates them and helps them to learn.

Praise and encouragement build pupils' confidence. Older pupils make generally good progress in lessons which are based on religious education assemblies to which pupils respond very well. Teachers question skilfully, use resources well and provide appropriate tasks. In the best lessons there are carefully planned opportunities for review. Subject-specific language is well promoted in these lessons, and a well-planned plenary session serves to consolidate learning. In some lessons, however, there is lack of structure, pace and expectation.

147. Effective integration with the school's planned opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development allows all pupils to learn equally well from religion as about religion. This is a significant strength. The school follows an appropriate adaptation of the locally agreed syllabus.
148. Since the last inspection, there has been a satisfactory level of improvement. Teaching is now good at Key Stage 2, and at Key Stage 1 it is very good. Resources for the subject have improved and are now good. Co-ordination is thoughtful, well informed and helpful to teachers and pupils alike. The subject is not formally assessed.