

# INSPECTION REPORT

**STONE ST MARY'S C OF E VOLUNTARY  
CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Greenhithe

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118596

Headteacher: Ms S Goatman

Reporting inspector: Kathryn Taylor  
22424

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> July 2002

Inspection number: 250270

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	5 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hayes Road Horns Cross Greenhithe Kent
Postcode:	DA9 9EF
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Jarvis
Date of previous inspection:	February 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22424	Kathryn Taylor	Registered inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Equal opportunities	Standards How well are pupils taught? How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
9537	Caroline Marden	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Pupils' attitudes and values Accommodation and resources Efficiency
20063	Gerry Slamon	Team inspector	Science Physical education Music The provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage of Learning	Assessment
28320	Bob Willey	Team inspector	Information and communication technology History Geography Religious education	The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
20534	Nichola Perry	Team inspector	English Art The provision for pupils with special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Stone St Mary's' is a voluntary controlled Church of England Primary School that is about the same size as other primary schools. However, there are plans to increase the size of the school to accommodate a projected rise in the local population. There are currently 275 pupils on roll, aged between five and eleven and a similar number of boys and girls. As from September last year, children have joined the Reception classes in the September following their fourth birthday. Previously, there were two separate admission times. The admission number is 42, which represents approximately one-and-a-half forms of entry. Pupils are currently arranged into 11 classes. Seven classes are single-aged classes and four classes are mixed-aged classes. A small proportion of pupils, 25 in all, are from ethnic minority backgrounds. This includes some Traveller pupils and some pupils who are newly arrived in this country. Four pupils speak English as an additional language, three of whom joined the school very recently. All four pupils can converse in English. The proportion of pupils on the special needs register, around a third, is above the national average. A fairly high proportion of these pupils have a high level of need. Six pupils have a statement of special educational need. Around one in seven pupils are known to be entitled to free school meals, a figure that is broadly in line with the national average. The socio-economic circumstances of pupils attending the school are very mixed. Attainment on entry to school, although below average, has improved recently.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is an improving school. The quality of teaching has improved and, although overall standards are still below national expectations in a number of subjects at ages seven and 11, they are gradually improving. The school is very inclusive; pupils are welcomed, accepted and valued and staff work very hard to support all pupils, some of whom have high levels of need. Pupils have good attitudes to school and behave well. The school has some good and effective systems to ensure that it operates smoothly and efficiently. The governors, headteacher, teachers and the support staff work well together and they have a strong commitment to the pupils. This should support them in continuing to improve. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage of Learning is good and the children there make good progress.
- There are strengths in the teaching and in six out of every ten lessons seen during the inspection the teaching was good or better.
- The school's provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good and for their spiritual and cultural development is good.
- Pupils develop good attitudes and behaviour and form very good relationships.
- Pupils are very well cared for and there are good procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development and academic progress.
- The school keeps parents very well informed and works hard to involve them in their children's education.
- The school is well managed.

### What could be improved

- The overall standards that pupils' achieve, especially in English, mathematics, science, information communication technology, history and geography.
- Some aspects of the teaching and learning need to be strengthened, namely mental mathematics and investigative science, the use that teachers make of formal assessments to target specific groups of pupils, the marking of pupils' work and the way in which the school teaches pupils the skills of independent learning.
- The time given to some subjects needs to be extended and better links between subjects created. Resources in some subjects also limit provision.
- The roles of subject co-ordinators and members of the senior management team need to be extended so that they play an even greater role in leading on school improvements.
- The headteacher, governors, senior managers and staff all need to be more involved in critically analysing and evaluating what works well in the school and what needs to improve. This would improve the school development plan to give clear direction and priorities for improving standards at a faster rate.

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

### HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has worked hard to address the serious weakness identified in the last full inspection report of February 1998 and the follow up visit by Her Majesty's Inspectors in 1999. The last report noted a number of important weaknesses in the curriculum and a high level of unsatisfactory teaching. There were also weaknesses in the leadership and management in relation to the monitoring of teaching and learning and the co-ordinators' role in supporting and developing work in their subjects. The assessment of pupils' attainment and progress was also unsatisfactory. These areas have been given good attention and have improved, although there is still much to do to raise standards further. In addition there have been other improvements since the last inspection. For example, the school's links with parents and the community have been strengthened considerably, the provision for pupils' personal development and pupils' response to school have improved well. The school has a strong commitment to improve.

### STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	E	E	E
mathematics	E	D	E	E
science	E	E	E	E

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

*Similar schools refers to schools nationally that have a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. Such comparisons take no account of pupil mobility or the proportion of pupils on the special needs register.*

The table above shows that in the tests in 2001 at age 11 the school achieved overall standards that were well below the national average and the average for similar schools in English, mathematics and science. Comparison of pupils' results here with the same pupils' results when they took the tests at age seven, shows that pupils have made satisfactory progress between Year 2 and 6. The school did not meet its targets for the proportion of pupils expected to achieve Level 4 in the test in 2001. However, several new pupils joined the school after the targets had been set. In the English, mathematics and science tests at age seven in 2001 overall standards were similar to those achieved at age 11. The school's results at ages seven and 11 are depressed by a relatively high proportion of pupils who have



special educational needs, a significant proportion of whom have fairly complex needs. Since the last inspection, the school's results at age 11 have been rising at the same rate as those nationally. Test results in 2002 indicate a good improvement to standards in writing at age seven and 11.

Inspection evidence shows that children currently in Reception are making good progress so that by the time they join Year 1, most children achieve the expected standards in each area of learning. By age eleven, about two thirds of pupils currently in Year 6 attain the expected standards in English. Too few pupils, about half of all pupils, however, achieve the expected level in mathematics. In science pupils' knowledge and understanding is satisfactory. Throughout the school, pupils' standards in mental mathematics and in experimental and investigative science are weaker aspects of their attainments. In information and communication technology, better provision is helping to raise standards, which are now broadly in line with those expected, in many, if not all aspects of the subject. Standards in history and geography are in line with those expected at age seven, but below national expectations by age 11. In all other subjects, pupils' attainment is in line with that expected at ages seven and 11. All pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in most subjects during their time at the school.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to learning and they enjoy coming to school. In almost all lessons, pupils are fully engaged and try hard. Pupils respond very well when they are given responsibility for performing jobs and tasks around the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils respect and adhere to the school rules. Pupils are friendly, polite and helpful. They play together happily at break times and lunchtimes. A minority have special needs in relation to their behaviour. The school's very positive ethos supports these pupils very well and many go on to achieve good standards of behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils are very good. Pupils care for and treat one another very well. High levels of mutual respect are evident amongst boys and girls and pupils from diverse backgrounds. Pupils are kind to one another and support each other very well. There is very good racial harmony.
Attendance	Attendance levels are well below the national average. A minority of pupils miss a lot of time from school which for some is due to significant medical problems. Most pupils arrive at school on time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching has improved well since the time of the last inspection and is now satisfactory overall. Teaching in Reception classes is good. Some good or better teaching was also seen in most subjects and classes throughout the school. Teachers are well prepared, organised and conscientious. Most teachers manage their pupils very effectively. The teaching of English is good. In mathematics, although there is some good teaching, there are weaknesses in the teaching of mental mathematics.

Teachers keep a good overview of pupils' progress, but could make even better use of assessments to target specific groups of pupils, particularly the lowest attaining pupils.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. All subjects are taught. The time given to some of the foundation subjects needs to be extended, by making better use of the relevant links that exist between subjects. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Good use is made of visits to places of interest, links with the community and visitors to the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are well supported in lessons and are fully included in all aspects of school life.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Only a very small minority of pupils learn English as an additional language although the number has recently risen.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very Good. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good and this encourages pupils to reflect and to develop self-esteem. Pupils' social and moral development is promoted very well, so that they have a very clear idea of the difference between right and wrong and forge very good relationships with one another. Pupils' cultural development is promoted well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very Good. Pupils are very well cared for and the school ensures the health, safety and wellbeing of all of its pupils. Very effective personal support is given to pupils. Very clear procedures are in place for checking pupils' behaviour and promoting good behaviour. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are monitored well. Pupils' academic progress is assessed regularly, although better use could still be made of this information to target specific groups of pupils.

The school has established a good relationship with parents. The headteacher and staff work extremely hard to involve parents and keep them informed. Some parents could do more to support the school by hearing their children read and ensuring that homework is completed. Most parents have positive views of the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has worked well with staff and has been instrumental in addressing the serious weaknesses identified in the last inspection report. She has established good systems to support all aspects of the school's work and forged good links with parents and the community. There is good teamwork and a strong commitment to improvement. The deputy headteacher makes a good contribution to leadership and management. The senior managers and staff with subject responsibilities also make a positive contribution. However, their roles and responsibilities now need to be extended.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very committed, involved and very supportive of the school. They bring a range of expertise to the task and fulfil their statutory responsibilities. Their role has developed and improved well since the last inspection. Governors, however, need to ask more questions of the school, particularly about what it is doing to raise standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall, with improvements needed. There are some effective systems for monitoring the school's work and pupils' attainments and progress. More in-depth analysis and critical evaluation of the results of these activities would help the school to improve its school development planning.
The strategic use of	Satisfactory. The staff and financial resources are satisfactorily deployed

resources	to have a positive impact on pupils' attainment, progress and personal development.
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There are enough teachers. The level of support staff has improved, but, in view of the pupils' needs and the mixed-age classes, the number needs to be extended as funds become available. The accommodation is satisfactory, is cleaned to a high standard and is well maintained. Resources are adequate, but are not extensive and need to be extended.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils' standards and progress.</li> <li>• The way in which good behaviour is promoted.</li> <li>• The way in which school helps pupils to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• That their children enjoy school.</li> <li>• The quality of teaching.</li> <li>• The way the school is led and managed.</li> <li>• That the staff have high expectations of their children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside of lessons.</li> <li>• The amount of information about their children's progress.</li> <li>• The way that the school works with parents.</li> <li>• That the school is approachable.</li> </ul>

The inspection findings largely support parents' positive views, but not some parents' views about the areas that need improvement. Inspectors judged that teachers use homework appropriately and there is a good range of extra-curricular activities. The school works very hard to involve parents in it and in the education of their children. Information provided about pupils' progress is judged to be very good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Children join the Foundation Stage of Learning, (Reception classes), with a wide range of prior attainment. While some have good speaking skills and a sound general knowledge, others have quite limited skills in communication and not much experience beyond their home environment. This year, for the first time, all of the children started school in September and have spent a full year in relatively small, dedicated Reception classes. Therefore, the children have had access to the type of experiences and a curriculum that is recommended nationally. This has provided them with a good start to school. They are making good progress so that, by the time they join Year 1, most will have achieved the recommended Early Learning Goals in all six areas of learning. In the longer term, this improved provision should enable the school to improve the standards that pupils attain by age seven.
2. It has not always been the case that pupils start Reception with broadly average attainment levels. Attainment on entry to school has been improving, which is confirmed by an analysis of baseline assessments over time. The improvement is in part because of recent improvements to the pre-school playgroup provision locally and, because the school is becoming more socially mixed. Since the last inspection, some of the housing in the immediate locality has been refurbished and some new houses built. This has led to more pupil mobility and changes the socio-economic composition of the area from which pupils are drawn. The school's very inclusive admission policy also means that some pupils attending this school have been excluded, or were at risk of exclusion, from other schools. These factors mean that overall attainment levels within each year group can and do vary quite considerably. In general attainment levels are better in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. In contrast the overall attainment in Year 4 is particularly weak. This is confirmed by analyses of pupils' test results in English, mathematics and science. Within all year groups, there are some pupils whose attainment levels are very low and some of these pupils have special educational needs. This wide range of pupil attainment is also reflected in statutory test results at age seven and eleven and in optional test results in other years.
3. The standards achieved in the National Curriculum tests and assessments at age seven have been improving steadily each year. In 2001, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science was well below the national figure. The percentage attaining the higher Level 3 was below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics and well below it in science. What mainly depressed the school's overall results was that a minority of pupils' attainments were low and for some pupils very low both in the tests and on entry to school.
4. The overall standards that pupils achieve in the tests at age eleven have been improving at a rate that is in line with the national trend. However, the proportion of pupils attaining at least the expected Level 4 in English and mathematics fell last year and was well below the national figure in English, mathematics and science. Four new pupils had joined the school during Year 6 and only one of these pupils attained Level 4. In addition, two other pupils who the school had predicted would attain Level 4 in the tests, left the school before sitting the tests. The proportion of pupils' attaining the higher Level 5 at age 11 was in line with the national average in science and fairly close to it in English and mathematics. Results at age eleven are depressed by the proportion of lower attaining pupils, some of whom attain standards well below the national expectation. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 has increased steadily each year.
5. Test results at age seven and eleven over the past three years indicate some variations in boys' and girls' attainments. Inspection findings, however, did not highlight any differences in attainment or progress based solely on pupils' gender or on ethnicity. Since the last inspection, the school, and the deputy headteacher in particular, have worked very hard to implement and continually improve systems to analyse results and track pupils' progress as they move up

through the school. These are now well established and support the school in explaining any differences in trends. Such analyses also provide a good starting point for setting targets for individual pupils and groups of pupils within each class and, for determining the composition of classes and mathematics sets. The key curriculum co-ordinators and senior managers, however, need to be involved in thorough, rigorous and critical analysis of existing data so as to identify and address any curricular and teaching implications arising from test results and assessment data that can then highlight the priorities for school improvement.

6. The school's targets for the proportion of pupils in Year 6 expected to achieve at least Level 4 in the test in 2002 were 52 per cent in English and 63 per cent in mathematics. The school exceeded its target in English. In mathematics, the targets were not met and fell short of them by 17 per cent. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in the tests once again improved. Evidence from lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work shows that current overall standards in English have improved well, as a result of reading and writing being recent whole school priorities. The attainment levels of about four fifths of pupils meet national expectations at age seven and about two thirds of pupils attain the expected level by age 11. In speaking and listening, however, standards are below national expectations by age seven. In mathematics and science, pupils' attainment is below national expectations at age seven and 11. Pupils' skills in mental mathematics are a particularly weak element of their overall attainment. A number of children in each class lack confidence in explaining how to calculate answers and solve problems, although, when supported to work through the process, they often can do so successfully. In addition, a minority of pupils' understanding of basic mathematical vocabulary is poor. Pupils' skills in scientific enquiry are also a weaker element of their attainment and pupils do not have enough opportunities to set up their own experiments. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are below national expectations by age seven, but are in line with national expectations by age eleven.
7. Since the last inspection, the staff have been working to raise the standards that pupils achieve by age seven and 11 in the foundation subjects. Standards in information communication technology (ICT) and design and technology were below national expectations at that time. Attainment in both subjects has improved and that in design and technology is now in line with national expectations. Attainment in the control aspect of ICT is still below national expectations, although overall standards are in line with national expectations. The last inspection report also identified that standards in science, music and geography were below those expected. There has been an improvement to standards in science and good improvements in music, but the standards in geography remain below national expectations at age eleven, although they are in line with national expectations at age seven. A similar picture exists in history. In religious education, pupils' attainments at age seven and eleven have improved well and are in line with the expectations outlined in the locally agreed syllabus. In all other subjects, pupils' attainment meets national expectations by age seven and eleven.
8. Despite the work that has gone into trying to raise standards and improve pupils' progress, the school will need to continue to work to improve pupils' attainment further. Strengthening the use made of assessment to inform teaching and the curriculum, providing more opportunities for scientific enquiry and improving some aspect of the mathematics teaching have an important part to play. The school also needs to continue with its good work on improving standards in English and to place more emphasis on teaching some pupils the basic learning skills that they lack and which sometimes it may be taken for granted that they have already acquired. Nevertheless standards have continued to rise since the last inspection and the follow up visit by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) in 1999.
9. The school has also worked hard since the last inspection to improve parental involvement in their children's learning and has provided very useful information about how parents can support their children's learning at home. This has had a positive impact in some cases. It was noted, for example, during the inspection period, that some parents read with their children every day and this was having a very positive impact both on pupils' confidence and skills. The school will need to continue to work with parents in this regard because some pupils who are poor readers are not heard to read regularly at home.

10. Pupils with special educational needs, including those pupils who have a statement of special educational need, have full access to the National Curriculum, are well supported and make appropriate progress in line with their capabilities. The standards that they achieve are dependent on their individual needs. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties make good progress in relation to their needs because they are well supported by the school's very positive ethos. The very small minority of pupils who learn English as an additional language are making satisfactory progress in acquiring English.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

11. Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour contribute well to the progress they make. This represents an improvement since the last inspection and the follow up HMI visit. Pupils have good attitudes to school. They come in happily in the mornings and quickly settle to their work. In lessons in most classes pupils concentrate well and show enthusiasm and interest in their work. However, some pupils in all classes and especially those in Years 3 and 4, find it more difficult to concentrate for long periods. Pupils are proud of the work they do at home and want to show it to their teacher as soon as they come in.
12. Behaviour in all aspects of school life is good. Pupils move sensibly round the school and behave very well in assemblies. In lessons, pupils quickly respond to instructions from teachers and move quietly round the classroom when necessary. During playtimes, pupils play happily together and take part in games of football and volleyball with enjoyment. The number of exclusions has fallen dramatically this year. There have been no permanent exclusions and fixed-term exclusions have been halved. Inspectors judged this to be a result of the very good management of pupils and because pupils' self esteem and personal development are promoted very well. Last year, there were three permanent exclusions and 15 fixed-term exclusions. Most pupils with special educational needs demonstrate very positive attitudes to their learning and want to do well. They respond well to interventions and pay full attention to their teachers. Relationships with each other, teachers and support staff are also good. The school effectively inducts new pupils into the school, some with significant difficulties.
13. The very good relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are strengths of the school. Pupils and staff respect each other and this makes a very positive contribution to pupils' personal development. It builds their self-confidence and self-esteem. Pupils co-operate well, listening attentively to each other's views and taking them in to account; as for example, when pupils in Year 5 were designing biscuits, a group decided to make the basic mixture and then divide it up so they could each add different ingredients. Pupils show respect for different cultural traditions and faiths. In a religious education lesson, for example pupils were very interested to learn about rituals of the Jewish Passover. The degree of racial harmony in the school is commendable.
14. The personal development of pupils is good. Pupils are very good at taking responsibility within the school community; for example the older children are buddies to the younger children, look after the gerbil and help the caretaker clear the hall after lunch. Pupils have also taken the initiative in asking if they could teach younger pupils the recorder, which they are now doing. In lessons there are some opportunities for pupils to take the initiative in their learning and develop independent learning skills, although this aspect of their personal development needs to be built on. In a number of instances this will require specifically focused teaching.
15. The attendance level last year was well below the national average, although unauthorised absence was in line with the national average for primary schools. The level of attendance was depressed by the poor attendance of a very few pupils, some of whom missed school because of chronic medical problems. Most pupils attend school regularly and punctually.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

16. The quality of teaching has improved well since the last full inspection and since the follow up visit by HMI, when there was a high level of unsatisfactory teaching and some poor teaching. Teaching seen during this inspection was at least satisfactory in all but two lessons in which it was unsatisfactory. Some good teaching was seen across the school and in most subjects. The proportion of good and better teaching has improved well.
17. In the Foundation Stage of Learning, the quality of teaching and learning is good overall and, in a number of lessons seen here during the inspection, the teaching was very good. Basic skills, such as phonics, reading and handwriting are taught well. Detailed planning, closely linked to the Early Learning Goals, ensures that all activities have a clear learning focus and are successful in motivating the children. Staff regularly assess the children's progress and use this information when planning the next steps in learning. The children are managed very well and the staff work well as a team to support and extend pupils' learning. Staff have high expectations of children's work and behaviour, which ensures that children apply considerable effort in their work and quickly develop concentration and independence. An area for development in the teaching here is that staff need to determine a clear rationale and systems for gradually building up the length of time that pupils work as a class or large group for their literacy and numeracy activities, particularly during their final term in Reception.
18. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall with some good and, on a few occasions, even better teaching seen. The proportion of satisfactory, good or better teaching is similar in both parts of the school. There are strengths within the teaching here. Teachers work hard and conscientiously and they are well organised and well prepared, often presenting interesting activities for pupils.
19. Teachers' planning is good and outlines clear learning objectives that are frequently shared with and explained to pupils. At the end of each week, teachers in each planning group evaluate their teaching and pupils' learning and determine what may need to be revisited and what pupils will need to learn next. This ensures effective sharing of skills and, importantly in some instances has provided consistency when there have been changes to teachers and some who are starting teaching for the first time. In most subjects teachers plan appropriately for groups of pupils of different prior attainment levels within their class. However, teachers are not always using the school's assessment data in a more focused way. For example, senior managers and teachers know what National Curriculum levels pupils attained in English and mathematics in the previous year, but they do not always plan explicitly towards moving groups of pupils' learning forward to the next level. In this respect there is not a clear enough link between assessment, the taught curriculum and the deployment of additional staff.
20. Teachers manage their pupils very well. Even when some pupils occasionally test their patience, teachers and support staff are unfailingly positive: firm, but supportive, of their pupils. They, therefore, develop and maintain very good relationships with pupils and provide very good role models. This is an important strength in the teaching, particularly when taking into account the school's context and pupil intake. Some pupils lack confidence and the teachers promote their self-esteem very well. Similarly, teachers know their pupils very well and they are particularly mindful to ensure that all pupils are included and involved. This is evident, for example, when children are upset or finding it hard to concentrate and another child or adult may then be directed to help them. Teachers also ensure that boys and girls and pupils from different backgrounds, including Travellers, take part in activities and are always included. Good attention is given to selecting resources that would interest pupils of different ages and abilities and both boys and girls.
21. Most teachers have at least a satisfactory knowledge of the subjects they teach and across the subjects there are teachers with good expertise. This is an improvement since the last inspection. All teachers have a number of good teaching skills. The support staff frequently make a very good contribution to pupils' learning, especially those who are experienced and have received training. Marking of pupils' work is regular and there are some examples of evaluative marking, although, in general, marking does not do enough to provide feedback to pupils about how to improve their



work. The use of homework is satisfactory, but not all pupils complete it, which detracts from its effectiveness in helping to raise standards.

22. In Reception classes, teaching is promoting pupils' independence in learning very well. Throughout the rest of the school, although pupils do have some opportunities to develop independent learning skills and engage in research activities in subjects such as history and geography, or investigations in science, such opportunities need to be extended. Developing this aspect of pupils' learning will require careful and very precise teaching in the first instance, especially in the lower part of the school, because a significant minority of pupils experience difficulties and lack confidence to work independently and to explain their thinking. This is in part because some pupils, as yet, have limited basic skills. This was evident, for example, when a group of pupils were taken out of class to work on the Early Literacy Strategy. When asked questions about words that rhyme and which letters made particular sounds, some pupils guessed. They did not realise that if they looked directly at the cards being held up for them, the pictures or writing there may in fact help them to provide the answer. Similarly, in mathematics lessons, lower attaining pupils needed to be explicitly and sometimes individually shown how to perform a practical task. This was the case in a lesson in a Year 3 and 4 class when pupils had to share out a given number of objects into three equal parts. Despite the fact that they had been previously given clear step-by-step demonstrations and explanations, when set to work, a significant minority needed individual repeated explanations. Some pupils are also held back by poor vocabulary. This was the case when pupils in Year 1 were reasonably confident to take off one and add one on to a given number, but some initially had difficulty with written answers to questions such as, 'which number comes before 7?', because they did not know the difference between the words 'before' and 'after'. The school recognises that emphasis now needs to be placed on exploring pupils' learning needs and pupils' different styles in learning and teachers have had some recent training on developing pupils' thinking skills.
23. The teaching of English has improved since the last inspection and is now good overall. Reading is taught particularly well. In the best lessons, teachers set a good pace and ensure that work set will stimulate pupils and challenge the most able. Lessons are planned carefully and learning objectives clearly explained to pupils. Pupils have good opportunities during plenary sessions to show what they have learned and for teachers to reinforce teaching points.
24. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory overall, and some is good. However, in a number of lessons there was also a fine line between strengths and weaknesses. Teachers have a secure understanding of the subject and some teachers have a good knowledge. Not all teachers however, are skilled in or fully understand the principles behind the methods outlined in the Numeracy Strategy, especially the mental mathematics part of the lesson. This results in missed opportunities to teach new methods of calculation and to explore pupils' thinking and the methods that they use. This is a particularly important element of the teaching, given the high proportion of pupils with additional learning needs and who experience difficulty explaining their ideas.
25. The quality of science teaching is satisfactory. Teaching seen during the inspection was good overall, but other evidence indicates that investigative skills have not been progressively developed over time and that the quality of teaching is not consistent throughout the school. In the best lessons, teachers chose interesting tasks and provided a good balance of direct teaching and opportunities for pupils to apply their enquiry skills to find things out for themselves. In these lessons, pupils were highly motivated by the teaching, which led to good discussions amongst pupils.
26. The teaching of religious education is good. Teachers are knowledgeable and skilful questioning is used to check pupils' understanding. Teachers encourage and enable pupils to express their feelings openly and confidently and set challenging tasks. Pupils have good opportunities to reflect upon their learning and understanding of religious and spiritual issues. The teaching seen in personal, health and social education lesson was of a particularly high standard. One lesson on drugs education, taught by a visiting police officer, was excellent. The very good teaching was largely seen in Reception and Year 5. Excellent teaching was seen in one English lesson taught by the coordinator and a dance lesson taught by a teacher with a specialist background in this

area. There is good practice in teaching in most subjects, which needs to be shared in order to strengthen all of the teaching further.

27. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Class teachers usually match work to pupils' needs and in many instances pupils receive additional adult support in lessons. The progression in phonics programme introduced by the school is benefiting younger pupils who have specific difficulties and is enabling them to make better progress with spelling, writing and reading. Pupils with a statement of special educational need are well supported in lessons and also receive some additional focused teaching, which is of high quality, enabling pupils' learning to improve well. This teaching also promotes very good attitudes and enables pupils to understand their own difficulties and explore ways of overcoming them. In mathematics lessons in Years 3 to 6, pupils with special needs do not always have enough adult support. However, pupils who have a statement of special educational need are well supported.

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

28. The school has made good progress in developing its curriculum since the time of the last full inspection and since the HMI follow up visit, when there was a lack of curriculum progression, no systems to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum and weaknesses in the provision for the children in the Foundation Stage of Learning.
29. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage of learning is now good. Children have access to a rich and varied curriculum. They participate in an exciting range of well-structured activities designed to meet their needs and which incorporate all six areas of learning. The most recent national guidance has been implemented well. The provision for children's physical development is, however, compromised by the lack of regular access to outdoor activities. In the longer term this will be rectified as part of the proposed building extension programme. Staff currently make effective use of the playground for regular activities. However, there is a lack of large equipment and toys that needs to be addressed promptly.
30. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 incorporates all subjects and meets the statutory requirements to teach the National Curriculum, sex education and teaching about drug misuse. The school has developed a very good programme for pupils' personal, health, and social education (PHSE). The good teaching of and strong emphasis on PHSE makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development and promotes positive, socially acceptable responses from pupils throughout the school. Pupils are for example, encouraged to reflect upon themselves and the qualities they admire in others and can aspire to themselves and to make informed choices.
31. The school has adopted and adapted the National Literacy Strategy and implemented the Additional Literacy and the Early Literacy Strategies. These are proving effective in raising standards in English. The school uses the National Numeracy Strategy alongside a commercial mathematics scheme of work. Insufficient emphasis is still placed on improving pupils' skills in mental mathematics and on developing pupils' mathematical thinking, however. In Years 3 to 6 the practice of setting pupils for mathematics lessons is well-established. This has helped to increase the number of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 by age 11, but has been less effective in raising the number of pupils who attain Level 4. Booster classes in English and mathematics are provided for the pupils in Year 6 during school time. Previous arrangements to hold them outside the school day and in addition to the normal teaching time, had to be abandoned last year because of pupils' poor attendance levels.
32. Throughout Years 1 to 6, additional curriculum time has been given to English, over and above that recommended. This has helped to improve standards, but restricts the time available for other subjects, especially history and geography. The school now needs to look at its overall curriculum provision, to identify where relevant and effective cross curricular links exist and can be utilised so as to improve the overall curriculum balance. In addition, the links are made between the analyses of pupils' test results and the implications for curriculum are not strong enough.

33. The school has adopted the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidance for teaching science and the foundation subjects. Religious education is taught in line with the locally agreed syllabus. These subjects are taught as part of two-year topic cycle to accommodate some mixed age class groupings. Team planning across the two year groups enables teachers to share their expertise effectively and this is particularly helpful in supporting less experienced teachers. There have been some improvements to the provision for teaching ICT with the setting up of a dedicated computer area, although this currently results in a lack of provision within classrooms in Years 3 to 6. The school has some additional grant funding, however, that is to be used to increase the number of computers in classrooms.
34. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils, which includes educational visits within the immediate locality and further afield. After-school clubs are provided in football practice and training, choir, netball, dance and art. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 also attend a residential trip to Ripple Down House. The school makes effective use of its good links with the community, partner institutions and industry to extend the curriculum. For example, it makes good use of local sponsorship, the contribution of volunteers from the local community through a range of visitors to the school. Pupils in Year 6 also benefit from some French, Spanish and design and technology lessons provided by visiting specialist teachers from local secondary schools. There are good links with secondary schools and playgroups.
35. The school is very inclusive and its aims in this regard are well met and are clearly outlined in the school's equal opportunities policy and its inclusion policy. The school's success is clearly evident in that, although the pupil intake is socially and economically very mixed and there are wide variations in pupils' prior attainments, nevertheless the school is a very harmonious and happy community where pupils grow in confidence, value and respect one another. The provision for pupils with special needs is good. Pupils with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and Traveller pupils, are fully accepted, supported and valued and they have equal access to all aspects of school life. No pupils are disapplied from the National Curriculum. The requirement and support outlined in pupils' Statements of Special Educational Need is provided and pupils are fully included in lessons.
36. There has been a significant improvement in the provision for pupils' personal development since the last inspection and HMI follow up visit. The provision then was satisfactory. It is now very good and a strength of the school. It impacts very well on pupils' relationships, attitudes, behaviour and learning. Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual development. Well-planned assemblies make a positive contribution and include visiting speakers. Pupils have opportunities to reflect on moral themes and to discuss issues and they are challenged to think. Pupils' requests are often incorporated into assembly prayers. There are good opportunities to promote pupils' spirituality through work in other subjects. Religious education and science make a strong contribution. During the inspection, for example, pupils in the lower school were enthralled to observe mini-beasts and, in a number of classes were very excited to see and touch live creatures during the visit from a local zoologist. Subjects such as art, music and physical education also contribute well to pupils' spiritual development, providing some good opportunities to reflect on the beauty of the world and their own and others' responses to it. A particularly good feature is the way in which the school's ethos and teaching promote and emphasise the development of pupils' self esteem. A good example was seen in a lesson in a Year 1 and 2 class. Children were told the story of Polly Panda, who felt that she was good at nothing, until Cheeky Chimp gave her his special box in which she would see a very special person. The box contained a mirror. This surprised and excited the pupils and each could then give an example of something they too could do well. Pupils at all stages of the school learn to care about their environment and value the people within it
37. Pupils' moral development is promoted very well. Pupils are very clear about the difference between right and wrong and this is evident in the standard of behaviour and the way in which some pupils with significant behavioural problems have been accommodated, accepted and helped within the school. Assemblies make a very good contribution: themes are well thought through and the story, hymns and prayers are all used to deliver a clear message. Reception children learn to

share and to play well together. All classes have 'circle time' where moral issues are discussed. The system of rewards celebrates pupils' academic and personal achievements. 'Golden time' is also used well to reward pupils' for effort, achievement, good behaviour and good deeds. Older pupils set a very good example to younger children and all staff provide very good role models for pupils. A pupils' display board clearly shows the school's rules and the names of monitors.

38. Pupils' social development is promoted very well. Pupils in all year groups have responsibilities for carrying out tasks that contribute to the smooth running of the school. In Year 2, for example, pupils set out and collect playground equipment at break and lunchtime. In Years 3 and 4 pupils have lunchtime responsibilities. Pupils in Year 5 teach the recorder to those pupils in Year 2 wishing to learn. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils have a wide range of responsibilities. They assist the daily running of school by ringing the bell, preparing the hall for assembly, setting up and operating the tape recorder and overhead projector. They perform tasks in the school library, tend school plants, distribute registers and assist teachers by setting up games equipment. They enjoy helping other teachers at playtime and lunchtime and, act as 'buddies' to the younger pupils. Younger pupils report that the buddy system helps them to feel safe. Pupils enjoy their responsibilities and discharge their duties commendably. There is a School Council Box into which any pupil may put a suggestion for improvement that will then be discussed at meetings. At School Council meetings, pupils make decisions about issues such as new playground equipment and improvements to the school. This has involved meetings with governors about some improvements that pupils wanted to be made to the toilets. Governors later agreed to finance the improvements, the caretaker agreed to repaint them and the children were allowed to choose the colours. This is a fine example of ensuring that pupils have a part to play in the school's decision-making process. The school is very good at creating opportunities for all pupils to develop their social skills and a sense of citizenship.
39. Provision for cultural development is good. Visits are limited because of cost, but much use is made of places in the vicinity and school and classroom visitors. Bluewater Shopping Centre is used both for work on travel agencies by Reception pupils and a theme for artwork by older pupils. The choir sings carols there at Christmas. Classes visit the local Anglican and Baptist Churches. In Year 5 and 6 pupils have a five-day residential visit to Deal. Visitors enhance pupils' cultural development greatly. Diwali was brought to life for Years 1 and 2 by a visitor. A zoologist brought a real sense of awe and wonder when he brought his animals into school. Years 5 and 6 have visited the theatre in Gravesend and a travelling theatre company has come into school and led workshops, as well as giving a performance. Pupils interact with those from other schools through sporting and musical events. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 have e-mail links with contemporaries in Canada and younger pupils with others in this country. There is a range of instruments and recordings drawn from different cultural traditions. The curriculum in subjects such as English, music, art, physical education, and religious education make a positive contribution to pupils' cultural development. Subjects such as history and geography play a part in teaching pupils about the significance of past events and comparing different lifestyles and cultural traditions. However, both subjects could play a more significant part in developing pupils' cultural development with more time being given to teaching them.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

40. The school continues to provide very well for the pastoral care of pupils. There are very effective procedures for inducting new pupils including Travellers and those pupils who transfer from other schools. There are very thorough procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and the school provides well for a number of pupils who have special educational needs in relation to their behaviour. The school successfully promotes good behaviour through a clear behaviour policy that results in well-established rules and procedures that ensure that pupils know what the school expects from them and what they in turn can expect from the school. Parents' responsibilities are also outlined clearly. The school excludes pupils only as a last resort and follows appropriate procedures. Governors regularly review exclusions. The school takes all allegations of bullying very seriously and parents and pupils have confidence in the staff to deal with any incidents that may occur promptly. The school shares behavioural issues, for example, those relating to use of bad

language, with parents through the newsletters and invites them to support the school in the action it takes to deal with any issues arising.

41. The school closely monitors attendance and encourages good attendance through awarding certificates and celebrating good attendance. The school keeps parents regularly informed about lateness or unauthorised absences of their children, although it does not routinely contact parents on the first day of an unnotified absence. In spite of the school's best endeavours the attendance of pupils is well below the national average for primary schools.
42. Child protection procedures are securely in place. The headteacher and the special needs co-ordinator are the designated persons responsible for child protection and for overseeing the progress and personal development of pupils in the care of the local authority, including those who are placed with foster parents. The headteacher regularly updates staff on child protection procedures through the staff meetings and new teachers to school are sent on appropriate training. Health and safety procedures are firmly in place. There are annual checks on portable electrical appliances along with gymnastic equipment. Governors receive regular reports on health and safety issues and are currently rewriting the health and safety policy.
43. Teachers monitor pupils' personal development very thoroughly and they report to parents half-termly on their children's attitudes in lessons and to homework. The school also promotes personal development very well through the very caring and supportive ethos of the school and more specifically through its very good PHSE programme. All staff employed at the school are very concerned to ensure pupils' well-being and to offer personal support to the pupils. This extends to those working in partnership with the school; governors and volunteers for example. Pupils with special needs and those for whom English is an additional language are also well cared for. The school liaises with external agencies effectively and as appropriate to the individual needs of pupils. Monitoring of these pupils' attendance takes place in line with that for all pupils.
44. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic performance are good. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics are particularly good and provide a good foundation on which to raise standards. This represents very good progress since the last inspection when assessment was identified as a key issue for improvement. Improvements in this area are mainly due to the enthusiastic and well-informed leadership and development in this key area. The school has a very clear and comprehensive assessment policy. In English and mathematics, pupils' work is assessed and outcomes recorded to show the knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils have acquired. Regular testing of reading and non-statutory tests as well as statutory testing pupils in Reception, Year 2 and 6, are well used to set long-term individual and group targets. Although short-term group targets are also set, the co-ordinator has rightly identified the need to set challenging, yet realistic short-term targets for individual pupils. The school has effective systems in place for tracking the progress of individual pupils in English, mathematics and science year-on-year.
45. End of key stage test results are analysed to plot the fluctuations in attainment from year to year. This enables the senior management team to identify and tackle areas for improvement. For example, past analysis showed that weaknesses in pupils' writing and 'girls' underachievement' were areas for consideration. The school is now using appropriate methods to raise attainment in writing and most teachers are successful in ensuring that boys and girls of all capabilities are improving their writing during lessons. The school has appropriate plans to extend and develop further its analysis of pupils' results by sharing the findings with all members of the staff and the governing body, so that there is a common understanding of what needs to be done to raise standards. Inspection evidence identifies this as a key priority for this school.
46. The assessment co-ordinator has a clear plan that outlines when different aspects of assessment are carried out on an annual basis. This is effective in gaining consistency across the school. There is currently a session dedicated to the moderation of pupils' writing at the beginning of all staff meetings. This is helping to improve and standardise teachers' judgements. The school is now working towards developing a consistent school system for all other subjects linked to recent national guidance. Improving assessment procedures in history and geography, for example, has been identified as a priority in the school improvement plan.

47. There are good procedures for identifying those pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers and learning support assistants are fully aware of pupils' needs and, as a result, help them to meet the targets set in their individual education plans. The school meets the requirements outlined in pupils' Statements of Special Educational Need. Until very recently there was only one child in the school who spoke English as an additional language. A very recent increase in numbers of pupils coming to the school directly from overseas, albeit with some knowledge of English, means that the school will need to develop the staff's skills in identifying pupils' English fluency levels. This is particularly important in that demographic trends indicate that the number of such pupils attending the school is likely to increase.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

48. Parents support the school. In the parent questionnaire responses, most parents felt that their children are taught well and that teachers have high expectations, so that their children make good progress. Parents feel that the school is well led and managed and that staff will deal with their concerns and problems sympathetically. Areas parents would like to see improved are information about pupils' progress, homework, extra-curricular activities and for the school to work more closely with them. The inspection findings largely support parents' positive views but do not support some parents' views about the areas that need improvement. Inspectors judged that teachers use homework appropriately and there is a good range of extra-curricular activities. The school works hard at involving parents in the life of the school and in the education of their children and has increasingly effective links with them. Information provided about pupils' progress is judged to be very good.
49. Information about school life, the curriculum and pupils' progress is all of a very high quality. Annual reports give information about pupils' progress and give examples of what they know and can do in all subjects. In addition, in English, mathematics and science the teachers include the National Curriculum level the pupil is working at or has achieved. There are useful targets outlined to help parents and pupils to improve their attainment. Newsletters are very informative and include examples of pupils' work as well as "challenges" for pupils and their parents. The school provides parents with a wide range of information about the curriculum that should then enable parents to support their children's work at home. These include information about the literacy and numeracy hours, half-termly homework schedules and a list of topics that the pupils will cover over the year. In spite of this, there are a number of parents who do not consistently support their children's learning at home. In particular, some do not ensure that pupils complete the homework that teachers set and, once pupils can read, some parents do not then regularly listen to them reading. In some cases, pupils who have difficulty in reading are not heard read at home. The school recognises this as a problem and provides different types of homework, for example, pupils making a Viking boat, to try to engage more parents in their children's learning. In addition, volunteers and support staff are used to give additional support to some children who are not heard read at home and would benefit from it.
50. Parents have a satisfactory impact on the life of the school. The parent governors are very committed to their role and play a full part in the governance of the school. The newly formed Friends of Stone St Mary's are providing pupils and parents with opportunities to take part in social and fundraising events and are providing the school with extra resources. In addition, parents helped in making the science garden. The school has developed effective links with parents of pupils who have special educational needs. They are kept fully informed and appropriately involved with their children's learning and progress. Parents are involved in school-based reviews of their children's individual education plans and annual reviews as appropriate. They are very appreciative of their contacts with the school and value the level of involvement as partners in their children's learning.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

51. The leadership and management have been effective in moving the school forward since the last inspection in 1998 when the school was identified as having serious weaknesses. There have been good improvements in many aspects of school life since that time; for example to the provision for pupils' personal development, the quality of teaching and learning, the role of subject co-ordinators and the systems for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress. Links with parents and the community and the partnership with and involvement of governors have also been improved. Much has been achieved because the headteacher, staff and governors have all been working well together.
52. The headteacher's leadership is purposeful. She provides a good role model and has high expectations of herself as well of others. Staff have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and so do the pupils. Many parents speak well of the headteacher. The management aspect is strong: the school operates very smoothly and in an orderly manner because it has effective systems and procedures that are clearly understood and applied. The quality of much of the school's documentation, including the information provided for parents, is of a high standard. The headteacher is very well supported by the deputy headteacher in many aspects of the leadership and management. Her work in supporting and leading colleagues has been particularly effective in bringing continuity and stability to pupils' learning. She has been instrumental in establishing effective systems for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress.
53. The school meets its stated aims. Those relating to pupils' personal development and behaviour, providing equality of opportunity and standards of care and behaviour are particularly well met. Pupils are valued and they develop self-esteem. They learn to work co-operatively with others, develop and enjoy very good relationships with staff and each other. Appropriate emphasis is placed on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy within the context of a broad curriculum. This is supporting improved standards, which although slowly improving, remain stubbornly low. Raising pupils' attainment and rates of progress continues to be a key priority for the school.
54. The Senior Management Team comprises of the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special needs co-ordinator and key stage co-ordinators. They collectively have a good range of expertise, including good and very good practice in their own teaching. Their expertise is not being fully utilised. Senior managers do not yet have enough opportunities to monitor the teaching so as to identify immediate priorities, nor to share their own good practice, although there are some plans to extend this aspect of their role. The governors and headteacher need to ensure that this is addressed promptly because it will strengthen the school's capacity to improve and because, at the current time, there is a level of uncertainty and hesitation in identifying precisely what now needs to be done to raise standards. This uncertainty in the leadership may in part be influenced by the fact that the school had been expecting to have a full inspection for quite some time following its HMI visit in 1999, and because it has also been relying on external support from the local education authority advisers rather than developing the expertise of its own staff.
55. The role of subject co-ordinators has been extended since the previous inspection when significant weaknesses were highlighted. Co-ordinators received training and most have been and continue to be effective in supporting their colleagues, developing the curriculum and monitoring its effectiveness. Resources have been improved and in most subjects the co-ordinators have established systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. There is currently no co-ordinator for history and geography. The previous coordinator left at Easter and a temporary teacher is currently covering the vacancy. All other subjects are at least satisfactorily led and managed and in the majority the leadership and management are good. This has been effective in helping to improve standards and teaching. It is not currently part of the co-ordinators' job description to monitor standards of pupils' work and teaching and learning in lessons, although in the past there have been occasions when some have taken part in such activities. This aspect of their work needs to be extended, to enhance the co-ordinators' role in critically evaluating and analysing the work in their subjects so that they can identify precisely what needs to be improved.
56. The support for special educational needs is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of her responsibilities, which she carries out effectively. There are systems in place to ensure liaison between class teachers and teaching assistants and also external agencies.

Liaison with the special educational needs governor is good. The Foundation Stage of learning is very well led and managed. This has enabled the school to respond well to changes in its admission procedures and is enabling the children to make a better start to their schooling than previously.

57. The governors are very supportive of the school and give generously of their time. They bring a range of skills to the task and they fulfil their statutory responsibilities, including that of ensuring that the school has a daily act of collective worship. Governors' involvement in the school has improved well since the last inspection and they are now much better informed. Governors receive regular and clear reports from the headteacher and other staff and many visit regularly to extend their understanding of how the school runs and to monitor the provision. The Chair of Governors is a very regular visitor and a number of governors are also employed in the school. As a result, governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and they are aware of where improvements need to be made. Governors are concerned about the school's test results and want to see the school perform better. They are aware of the adverse factors that impact on standards, such as the above average number of pupils with special educational needs, pupil mobility and in the past some weak teaching. They know that positive steps have been taken to address these issues. However, governors are less clear about the educational direction that the school now needs to take and they are not yet probing with sufficient rigour in respect of what the school is actually doing to raise standards and whether its actions are effective. The appointment of staff is of major interest and the governors are involved in all appointments. They are appropriately involved in school development planning.
58. Systems for the performance management of teachers are securely in place. Procedures for monitoring teaching have improved since the last inspection. As a result, there have been good improvements to the quality of teaching. The headteacher regularly monitors teaching and learning and she takes effective action to deal with any unsatisfactory teaching. Much of this work has also been supported by the Local Education Authority, as part of the support services for schools in the serious weaknesses category. The headteacher could, however, make more effective use of the findings derived from the monitoring of teaching and learning and the analysis of test results, to identify the most pressing educational priorities and use them to inform school development planning. The current school development plan is an unwieldy document that contains too many priorities which means immediate priorities are not clear.
59. There are enough teachers whose experience and qualifications match the needs of the curriculum. Staffing levels have remained relatively stable and the school has links with a staffing agency and a core of reliable teachers to call on to cover vacancies, staff absence and staff release. This has helped manage temporary replacements and reduce the disruption on pupils' learning. Induction procedures for teachers new to the school are good and good levels of professional support are provided. However, in the context of a school in challenging circumstances where a relatively high proportion of pupils have additional learning and social needs, the headteacher and governors should aim to attract experienced teachers and use more financial incentives and career opportunities to effect this. The school does not have the capacity to support too many inexperienced teachers. Currently, the time senior staff give to supporting less experienced colleagues, although effective in ensuring continuity, can detract from their ability to focus on whole school developments aimed at raising standards. The school employs a growing number of teaching assistants and these are generally well deployed, although in view of mixed age classes and the level of pupil needs, there is still a need for increased levels of support for pupils.
60. The accommodation is satisfactory. The main shortcomings are the lack of space for a dedicated computer suite and a covered outside play area for the children in Reception classes. Plans to expand the school building are nearly at completion and these issues will be addressed when the alterations have been undertaken. The school is fortunate to have extensive outside space for physical education and is developing a very useful science garden. The caretaker takes great pride in his work, maintains the school to a very high standard and ensures a very high standard of cleanliness.



61. Resources are adequate in most subjects and, although these have been improved significantly since the last inspection when resources were relatively depleted, expenditure in this area will need to continue to be a priority. The school needs to improve its resources for ICT and geography, in particular, and to purchase large outdoor play equipment and wheeled toys for children in the Reception classes, because a lack of this equipment is restricting the curriculum.
62. There are sound procedures in place for setting the budget, which involve the headteacher, finance clerk and governors. Curriculum leaders and the governors' premises committee bid for funds for the coming year. The school bases the budget on the previous year's expenditure and then allocates money for the current priorities. Although the intention is to link the budget to the school development plan, the lack of focus in the plan makes this difficult. The governing body closely monitors expenditure throughout the year, reallocating money, if necessary. The financial clerk gives governors very good support, providing them with clear and regular information to allow them to fulfil their responsibilities and in managing the budget on a day-to-day basis. The school is currently carrying forward funds above the recommended five per cent of the total school budget. However, the headteacher notes that some of this is planned expenditure on ICT equipment and some is to be used to pay the school's contribution to the proposed new building works.
63. The school uses Standard Funds appropriately; it provides booster classes and finances teachers' professional development. Special needs funding is used appropriately. The school administration is good and the school's use of new technology is developing well; for example, for school security, for managing the school's finances and as teaching aids. The school's administration is very efficient, supporting the smooth running of the school and providing a good contact for parents and visitors.
64. Taking into account pupils' attainment on entry to the school, the satisfactory progress that pupils make and the steady improvement to standards, the satisfactory teaching and the very good provision for pupils' welfare and personal development, the school is providing satisfactory value for money

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards, particularly those in mathematics, science, information and communication technology, history and geography, the staff, governors and headteacher should:

- i. Strengthen the overall teaching and learning by:
  - improving mathematics teaching, especially the teaching of mental mathematics;
  - in science giving more time and attention to scientific investigation;
  - extending pupils' use of practical experience and equipment and emphasising the teaching of appropriate, subject specific vocabulary;
  - ensuring that teachers make better use of formal assessments to target specific groups of pupils and provide better feedback to pupils through the marking of their work;
  - promoting pupils' independence in learning by teaching them the relevant skills; and
  - sharing more effectively the good practice in teaching that exists within the school.

*(Paragraphs 6, 8, 14, 19, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 31, 44, 54,78, 84,85 87, 89, 90, 92,93, 96,97, 99, 102 108, 120)*
- ii. Improve the overall curriculum provision by:
  - ensuring that history and geography are allocated enough time;
  - reviewing the overall curriculum planning to make better use of the relevant links that exist between subjects, in particular incorporating the development of pupils' reading, writing and speaking skills into work in other subjects so that less curriculum time needs to be given to English; and
  - improving the resources available to support the curriculum, particularly those for geography and information communication technology and, large equipment that promotes the physical development of the children in the Reception classes.

*(Paragraphs 7, 29, 32, 33, 39, 61, 73, 103,109, 119, 123, 129, 131, 132)*

iii. Strengthen the overall leadership of the school by:

- extending the role of subject co-ordinators and members of the senior management team in monitoring and evaluating standards, teaching and learning; and
- regularly using the information that this provides to identify and set clear and achievable educational objectives and priorities.

*(Paragraphs 5, 45, 53, 54, 55, 56, 62, 85,93,122,128,134)*

iv. Develop better systems for school self-evaluation which ensure that the headteacher, governors, senior managers and staff are all involved in critically analysing and evaluating what works well in the school and, what is not working so well and why this is the case, so that they then make the necessary changes.

*(Paragraphs 5, 32, 45, 54, 55, 57, 58,93)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	64
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	7	29	23	2	0	0
Percentage	5	11	45	36	3	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	275
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	39

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	81

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.1

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	23	16	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	17
	Girls	11	13	15
	Total	25	27	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	64 (43)	69 (43)	82 (69)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	16	16
	Girls	12	11	14
	Total	25	27	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	64 (43)	69 (74)	77 (74)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	14	17	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	11	12
	Girls	8	6	11
	Total	18	17	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (63)	55 (68)	74 (80)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	11	9
	Girls	7	8	8
	Total	15	19	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	48 (n/a)	61 (n/a)	55 (n/a)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	4
Black – African heritage	5
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	12

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	25

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	246

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	2	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	13	3
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	589,469
Total expenditure	587,348
Expenditure per pupil	2,121
Balance brought forward from previous year	36,073
Balance carried forward to next year	38,194

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	275
Number of questionnaires returned	87

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	42	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	35	58	6	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	53	12	2	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	53	17	2	1
The teaching is good.	43	49	5	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	43	24	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	41	38	18	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	38	6	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	41	38	18	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	54	37	6	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	45	6	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	47	10	9	6



## **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**

65. At the time of the inspection there were 44 children in the Reception classes. Provision for these children is good. Arrangements for admission are well planned and include interviews with parents, open evenings and a helpful information booklet. The co-ordinator is forging good links with the local playgroup so that children get to know her before they start in Reception.
66. Children enter the Foundation Stage with a wide range of attainment. While some have good speaking skills and a sound general knowledge, others have quite limited skills in communication and not much experience beyond their home environment. The children's overall attainment is broadly average on entry. Only one of the pupils currently in Reception is identified as having special educational needs.
67. The indoor space is good and is arranged with care to provide an attractive and interesting learning environment. There is no specific outdoor play area for Reception children. Although members of staff make good use of the infant playground, opportunities for regular outdoor play with a range of large toys and climbing apparatus are restricted. However, the school works hard to offer children a rich, varied curriculum and is successful in doing this. Children are involved in an exciting range of well structured activities designed to meet their needs. This curricular provision shows a significant improvement since the last inspection when it was reported to be satisfactory overall with some weaknesses. The most recent nationally recommended curriculum guidance for the children in the Foundation Stage has been implemented well because of the good leadership. All staff work well together in planning a consistent and progressive approach to teaching and learning. Good links between different aspects of children's learning ensure a well- rounded education. The staff have very good understanding of the needs of young children, and the needs of individual children. As a result, all children achieve well.
68. The quality of teaching is good overall and is much improved since the last inspection when there were significant weaknesses. As a result of this improved teaching, the learning of children currently in the Reception classes is good. Basic skills, such as phonics, reading and handwriting are taught well. Detailed planning, closely linked to the Early Learning Goals, ensures that activities have a clear focus. Staff keep informative records of children's progress which are used to inform planning of future work and are shared with parents and teachers of classes to which children later move on. The management of children is very good and time, support staff and the resources are used very effectively. Staff expectations are high and children apply considerable effort in their work and quickly develop concentration and independence. A very special feature of the teaching is the quality of working relationships between the members of staff. One area for development in the teaching is ensuring that staff gradually introduce more focused whole class teaching in English and mathematics throughout the year and, particularly, as children reach the end of their Reception year.

### **Personal and social development**

69. The development of children's personal and social development is given high priority and underpins all of the work in the Reception classes. As a result, most children achieve at least the standards expected and some exceed them by the time they enter Year 1. They settle quickly into a caring and safe environment where high expectations are fostered. They are encouraged to listen to others, to share and to take turns and to relate positively to adults. As a result, very positive relationships are soon forged. During the inspection, children were observed selecting their own activities ('pegging-on'), and then working together independently and sociably. This illustrates the emphasis placed on the development of children's self esteem, confidence and independence. As a result, they respond to new challenges, displaying enthusiasm and enjoyment in their work and play. They listen attentively and develop good concentration skills. Children behave very well and

gain a good understanding of right and wrong. The well-structured activities support their personal and social development effectively, encouraging co-operative play and consideration for others. The adults in Reception are careful to promote good practice in health and safety and ensure that children wash their hands carefully at the end of activities and before eating.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

70. Children make good progress in all areas of language because of the good quality teaching they receive. As a result, most of them achieve standards expected by the time they enter Year 1. Some children have a limited vocabulary when they first come to school and are unable to engage in extended conversations with adults. Rich opportunities are provided for children to improve their speaking and listening skills through stories, poems and rhymes. In a good story session, children listened in awe as the teacher read them 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch' linked to their topic on the seaside. The quality of the teacher's reading held children's interest and attention and added to their enjoyment. Adults help children to develop their listening skills, by insisting on full attention when they are talking and ensuring that children listen carefully to each other. They speak clearly, thus setting a good example. Through good teaching, children blend sounds together to form words and higher attaining children read simple books with repetitive texts. They benefit from the school's early introduction of phonics and the teaching of letter sounds. Most children can write their names and simple sentences by the end of their time in the Reception classes. In one session, the class teacher used a very effective way of getting children to think about sentences: 'I'm going to close my eyes for one minute and think of a sentence about the sea. See if you can do the same.' This resulted in a high level of concentration and children sharing their sentences with each other so that the learning of all was very good. In another good session, children were challenged to identify mistakes made by a child who wrote, 'It is stormy at The seaside'. They knew that there should be proper gaps between words and that 'The' should not have a capital as it was placed in the middle of the sentence. Children take their reading books home regularly to share with adults. Parents support the school in this way, thus helping children to make steady progress in their reading.

### **Mathematical development**

71. Children attain standards that are in line with those expected in their mathematical development on entry to Year 1. There are good opportunities across the curriculum for developing children's mathematical knowledge and understanding. They learn to count with increasing confidence and work well when investigating numbers. The 'class counting book' shows that most children count to 20 and beyond. In a good session on simple understanding of addition and subtraction, the class teacher made effective use of the song 'ten fat sausages sitting in a pan' to teach children about *more than* and *less than*. Children were actively involved and by the end of the lesson most understood how to add and subtract numbers to ten. This introduction of mathematical language is a special feature of the teaching. Children quickly begin to identify shapes such as triangles, circles, squares, whilst higher attainers recognise cones, triangular prisms and cubes. Teachers introduce children to a good range of practical learning opportunities to further their understanding of shape, space and measure. Groups of children were observed predicting how many paces it might take them to reach identified points in the classroom and testing their predictions. Because of the interesting range of teaching strategies and learning opportunities, most children achieve the expectations of the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

72. Children make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world and attain standards in line with those expected on entry to Year 1. They talk with interest about experiences and events which have taken place in and out of school. Well-planned activities, such as nature walks around the school, visits to the local shopping centre and visiting speakers, are used successfully to develop the children's knowledge of nature and the local area. As a result, they are able to talk about, and describe with confidence, features of the local environment. Children were very interested in the visit by a zoologist and the animals he had brought with him. This activity was very well used to enrich their experiences and to give them a good understanding of

how we must care for animals. Such experiences make a strong contribution to children's spiritual, moral and social development. Children develop a good understanding of their own history through their topics on Toys and the Seaside and through talking to parents and grandparents. Information and communication technology skills are well taught and are used effectively to support teaching and learning. Children were observed controlling the mouse effectively to move images around the screen and to fill shapes with colour. Analysis of the work in children's books, shows that they have been well taught to identify what things you *push* and those that require the force of *pull* to make them move. By the time they leave Reception most children attain the desired outcomes in this area of learning.

### **Physical development**

73. Standards of attainment in physical development meet the requirements of the recommended learning outcomes for children at the end of the Reception year. Lessons in the school hall and the infant playground provide opportunities for children to move in space, to improve their balance and develop physical skills. In these lessons, teachers ensure that children work safely, but at the same time encourage independence. However, there is no specific secure area for these children and no large play equipment to allow for frequent and free physical outdoor play. Although the proposed new building will include play facilities, the school needs to purchase appropriate outdoor equipment for children already in or about to join the Foundation Stage. Fine motor skills are well developed as children regularly use tools, scissors, crayons, and construction kits in their work.

### **Creative development**

74. The children attain standards in their creative development that meet those expected by the time they join Year 1. Teachers ensure a good balance between guided activities and opportunities for children to freely explore. In both classes, teachers provide a good range of opportunities to draw, paint and to explore texture and shade. Children are given a good range of materials to work with, such as vegetables and sponges for printing. They mix and combine colours in their large seaside painting. Their confidence develops as they try out new ideas, with adults working alongside them, talking to them about their work and introducing appropriate vocabulary. In their work on 'Ourselves', children are introduced to different media as they draw self-portraits, considering such detail as eye colouring. Children are taught to enjoy music as they tap out repeated rhythms and compose their own music. In a very good music session, they could use and identify symbols which they had developed as a class in their class music book. 'When we see a dot in the box we clap, when there is no dot we don't clap, and when we see a big dot we give a big clap', showed how well pupils had been taught simple composition strategies. Familiar nursery rhymes and songs are sung with enthusiasm and children are developing the ability to sing tunefully, in unison. Social skills and imagination are developed through a range of role play activities, such as preparing for a holiday to the seaside and role play activities such as 'sharks and mermaids' and 'a visit to the travel agent.' Such experiences also contribute well to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development and their sense of achievement.

## **ENGLISH**

75. Overall test results at age seven and 11 in 2001 were well below the national average and those in similar schools. Standards were depressed by the higher than average proportion of lower-attaining pupils. Inspection evidence shows that standards for the majority of pupils in Years 2 and 6 is at least in line with national expectations. This improvement is as a result of the school's recent emphasis on improving pupils' standards in writing. There are no significant differences in the performances of boys and girls. The teaching of English is a developing strength and all pupils, including ethnic minorities, those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, are making at least satisfactory progress.
76. Pupils' attainment in writing at age seven and 11 and in all year groups is close to national expectations. Standards have improved this year, because improving writing has been a whole-school focus. Higher and average-attaining pupils write interesting stories, some using good,

descriptive language and appropriate grammar and punctuation. Many lower attaining pupils, including some with special educational needs, are able to write simple sentences, sometimes using capital letters and full stops. In some lessons, there are not enough systems to help pupils prompt, find or check the correct spelling of words needed for their writing. The practice of displaying subject specific words across the curriculum is not a general feature of the teaching. Pupils' presentation of work is generally good and in some classes very good. In some instances, weak handwriting is preventing them from attaining age-appropriate levels.

77. Most pupils' attainment in reading is in line with national expectations and almost all pupils enjoy reading. Average-attaining and higher-attaining pupils in all year groups read accurately, fluently and expressively, generally taking note of punctuation. Lower attaining pupils are able to talk about their books and a few can retell the story, if they are familiar with the text. Most can make predictions and offer opinions about the story. They occasionally use phonic strategies and some self-correct. There is a tendency to read single words rather than groups of words. All pupils have reading records that are well maintained, up to date and show that many pupils are heard read regularly, albeit less regularly at home. Comments in reading records, however, do not give much information about what pupils can do to improve. The school has in place effective strategies for teaching basic reading skills. The National Literacy Strategy, with some adaptations, has been implemented successfully and meets pupils' needs. This is particularly evident in shared reading and the teaching of guided reading. This is ensuring that pupils are making good progress in reading.
78. Standards in speaking and listening are improving and most pupils attain the expected level at age 11, although standards are below national expectations at age seven. Some higher - attaining pupils have very well developed speaking skills; they use interesting language, can form complex sentences well and make themselves clearly understood. A significant minority of pupils throughout the school still lack confidence in speaking and some pupils have specific difficulties and poor vocabulary. As a result some pupils demonstrate a limited vocabulary and cannot easily explain their ideas.
79. The teaching of English is good overall. A small proportion of the teaching is very good and in one lesson in Year 5 the teaching was excellent. Teachers have good subject knowledge, especially in teaching reading and writing and they have a good understanding of the methods outlined in the Literacy Strategy. Lessons usually maintain a good pace. Positive praise and reinforcements are used well. Lessons are usually well-planned to meet the needs of pupils of different prior attainment levels, although this is not always the case in relation to the potentially higher attaining pupils. Teachers' delivery is confident and maintains a good pace. Pupils are managed very well.
80. Pupils are well motivated by the teaching and clearly enjoy their literacy lessons. Many pupils are becoming increasingly confident and enthusiastic learners as a result of the good teaching they receive. They behave well in lessons, remain focused and on task and respond very positively to their teachers and support staff. Most pupils share well, listen to each other and work collaboratively in lessons; however, this is not always the case. In two lessons seen, some pupils' behaviour adversely affected their learning.
81. There are some good links made between work in English and other subjects, but not all teachers are maximising opportunities to read, write and develop speaking skills through work in subjects such as science, geography and religious education. Such opportunities are yet to be used consistently enough so as to help contribute to improve pupils' confidence and skills in writing, although ICT is effectively incorporated into some English lessons.
82. The quality and range of books are good and have been significantly improved since the last inspection. There is a wide range of books in all classrooms. There is a need for multiple copies of smaller texts to match the big books, particularly for those pupils who would benefit from looking directly at a book in front of them: some pupils have difficulty with co-ordination and are not able to cope with reading a book from a distance. There is also a good range of non-fiction books in the school library and the school is keen to continue to extend the stock of fiction here. The range of dual language books will also need to be extended, bearing in mind the very recent and

further possible increase in the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language attending the school.

83. The use of additional support staff enables all pupils to access the curriculum. As yet however, the school does not use available support to maximise its effect on improving the attainment levels of the lowest attaining pupils.
84. Assessment procedures in English are very good and are well established. Assessment information is being used appropriately to identify specific priorities. During the current academic year, for example, the school's previous analysis of results has been used to identify writing as a priority for development and in the previous year the need to improve reading standards and address differences in boys' and girls' achievements was highlighted. Pupils are now being set individual and /or group targets. These need to be further emphasised in lessons. When asked, some pupils could not talk about their targets with any degree of certainty. Ongoing assessment during lessons, however, helps pupils to be clear about how to improve their work. In some classes, teachers make very good use of pupils' self-assessment at the end of lessons. The quality of marking varies between classes. However, some teachers are using marking effectively, for example, to pose questions, give praise and provide supportive comments and suggestions for improvement. Homework is used satisfactorily to support learning.
85. There have been good improvements to work in English since the last inspection. The leadership and management of English are good which is having a positive effect on the teaching and learning. Although the co-ordinator is relatively new to the post she is a very able practitioner and has a clear vision of what needs to be done. Her role in monitoring teaching and learning and sharing good practice needs to be extended in order to improve standards further.

## **MATHEMATICS**

86. There have been satisfactory improvements to developing work in mathematics since the last inspection. Pupils' overall attainment at age seven and eleven is still below national expectations, though boys and girls of all prior attainment make satisfactory progress during their time at the school. Standards are depressed by an above average proportion of lower-attaining pupils, including a significant minority of pupils who have special educational needs.
87. In the mathematics tests at age 11, overall standards have been improving at a rate that is in line with the national trend. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 in the tests in 2001 was well below the national figure, although the proportion attaining the higher Level 5 was fairly close to the national average. By age 11, average and higher attaining pupils have a sound grasp of place value and of the four number operations. They understand the relationships between decimals, fractions and percentages and complete written calculations fairly confidently. They have a secure understanding of measures, properties of shape and data handling. From work in pupils' books there is clear evidence that at age 11 the highest- attaining pupils are being challenged by the teaching. A challenge for the school, however, is to improve the attainment of the pupils identified as being of average attainment, because too few of these pupils attain the expected Level 4 by age 11. This is in part because some of the teaching in Year 6 does not do enough to challenge these pupils. In Years 5 and 6, lower attaining pupils, pupils with special educational needs, some of whom have a statement of special educational need, work within the same topics but at a simpler level. For most of these pupils, the standard of their work is below, but not well below national expectations. Indeed, in the most recent national tests many of these pupils performed as well as their 'average attaining' peers.
88. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 at age seven has increased slightly since the last inspection. In 2001 four in every five pupils attained at least the expected level. The proportion attaining the higher Level 3 was slightly below the national average. In the current Year 2 classes the proportion attaining the expected level is similar to that achieved last year. In Years 1 and 2 a significant minority of pupils have very low mathematical skills and understanding. By age seven, average attaining pupils understand, for example, place value to tens and units, with the higher-attaining pupils working with hundreds. Most pupils recognise odd and even numbers and count confidently at least to 100. They learn methods for doubling. They recognise and use

coins to a pound in shopping activities and know the names of regular two and three-dimensional shapes and some of their properties. Pupils are developing sound skills in measurement and handling data.

89. Throughout the school, boys and girls and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, including a small proportion who learn English as an additional language, work to similar standards and are represented in the higher-attaining groups in each class or set. Inspection evidence did not highlight differences based solely on ethnicity or gender. Pupils with a statement of special educational need are well supported in mathematics lessons and make appropriate progress. Lower-attaining pupils are usually well supported by class teachers in lessons and occasionally there is additional adult support provided. In lessons in Years 3 to 6, lower attaining pupils are also being challenged by the teaching. Teachers in general need to use more visual materials and to emphasise the development of basic mathematical vocabulary because some pupils have limited language and a restricted vocabulary. Not enough use is made of mathematical equipment to demonstrate new learning and support pupils when they are working in groups or on individual tasks.
90. Evidence from scrutiny of pupils' work and lesson observations shows that teaching is satisfactory overall and teaching was good or better in three lessons out of seven seen. In several lessons however, there was a very fine balance between strengths and weaknesses. In these lessons there was insufficient direct teaching to ensure that pupils' learning was moved on at a good pace as a high proportion of the lesson was given over to pupils working independently or in groups. During this time, teachers sometimes focused on one particular group at the expense of the rest, or, played a generally supervisory role in the class rather than teaching directly. Occasionally in these lessons, teachers' explanations of new concepts were also rushed and this led to a lack of clarity. The mental mathematics sessions are generally a weaker aspect of the overall teaching. In view of pupils' needs and current attainment levels, this aspect needs to be emphasised. Teachers do not sufficiently explore and develop different methods and strategies that pupils can use to solve even the simplest mathematical problems.
91. Where the teaching seen was good or very good, new tasks and concepts were carefully and precisely explained and systematically developed. Questioning was very focused and specifically targeted to individual pupils to ensure that all pupils understood. Teachers adapted their teaching throughout the lesson to the emerging needs of pupils and in response to any difficulties they experienced. Strengths in much of the teaching are that teachers are well prepared and plan work that takes account of the needs of different groups of pupils. Pupils are very well managed and encouraged to try hard.
92. There is a secure coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study and good breadth in the curriculum. Teachers' weekly planning is based on the National Numeracy Strategy's objectives. The school also has a published set of teaching plans and associated pupil materials available, which teachers can use as a resource. Samples of work show an over-use of published worksheets in some classes in Years 1 and 2. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and there is some good evaluative marking, especially in the upper school. However, there is little evidence of pupils repeating and correcting their work to address any identified weaknesses. Pupils have suitable opportunities to apply their numeracy skills satisfactorily across the curriculum, for example in their work in geography, design and technology and ICT, although there is the potential to extend this.
93. Teaching and learning in mathematics lessons are regularly monitored and pupils' progress is tracked, using the school's very good assessment procedures. The co-ordinator and senior managers do not use the analysis of pupils' results in the statutory and optional tests sufficiently to identify patterns and inform priorities for the subject. This is particularly important, given the wide variations within different year groups, which to a large extent is an outcome of the number of pupils with additional needs. Resources are adequate, but are not readily available to the pupils. Consequently, choosing when it may be appropriate or helpful for them to use equipment is not a regular feature of their learning.

94. Relationships between pupils and with staff are very good and pupils behave well in most instances and work hard, showing good levels of concentration and perseverance during lessons. This is a good achievement when taking account of the difficulties that some pupils experience. Homework is used satisfactorily to support learning, but not all pupils complete the tasks.

## SCIENCE

95. Although test results are below national expectations, an analysis of the school's data shows that they are improving. Around three quarters of all pupils attained the expected Level 2 at age seven and the expected Level 4 in the test at age 11. This represents an improvement since the last inspection at age 11 when just over half of the pupils attained Level 4. Over a four-year period, the improvement to test results had kept pace with the national trend. Overall standards are depressed by the above average number of pupils with special educational needs in the school, a significant number of whom join other than at the normal time of admission. The number of pupils in Year 6 achieving the higher Level 5 in 2001 was close to the national average and was average when compared with similar schools. Although no lessons were seen in Year 6 during the inspection, scrutiny of work indicates that the time given to revising for tests slows progress in developing skills of scientific enquiry. Much as it helps higher-attaining pupils to remember facts they have been taught, most pupils need more time to continue to investigate and use sources of information, so that they remember more easily what they have discovered for themselves. This should result in pupils being able to call upon strategies they have developed through independent research, when faced with an unfamiliar scientific question.
96. Pupils' attainments in the current Year 2 and Year 6 classes are below those expected for their age. This is because pupils' skills in the investigative aspect are below those expected. Much of this is explained by the fact that a significant number of pupils in the past entered the school with below average levels of attainment in literacy and communication and in their understanding and knowledge of the world. A significant minority of pupils in Year 2 still have difficulty explaining their work and in making task-related observations. They do, however attain standards as expected for their age in their knowledge of life processes and living things, because of the strong emphasis placed on this aspect and the facilities they have for learning from first hand experiences. There is less of an emphasis placed on materials and their properties, and standards are below average in this area.
97. Pupils in Year 6 attain standards that are in line with expectations in their knowledge of life processes. Analysis of pupils' work shows that by the end of Year 6, most pupils appreciate the feeding relationships between plants and animals in a habitat, describing them in scientific terms such as *food chains*, *predator* and *prey*. In their work on materials, they are taught to identify the various changes which lead to evaporation and condensation. In physical processes, pupils are taught to build circuits and to identify which circuits will work and which will not. They begin to generalise about physical phenomena such as the apparent motion of the sun and shadow formation. Although all of these aspects are taught during the year, inspection evidence shows that pupils in Years 3 to 6 have too few regular opportunities to plan independently and carry out experiments. They are not challenged to employ primary and secondary data to conduct a range of scientific investigations to deepen their understanding of these aspects of the subject. The weaknesses in pupils' progressive development of skills are, in part, a result of disruptions to pupils' learning in the past caused by staffing problems and long term staff sickness. Although teachers place an increasing emphasis on investigative work throughout the school, practice is not consistent. Evidence indicates that activities are often too teacher directed, and there are too few opportunities for pupils to make independent decisions in their work and be taught how to do so. For example, pupils are often presented with materials and equipment to find things out when they would benefit from being challenged to plan what they need and what to do in order to reach a conclusion.
98. Although girls did not achieve as well as boys in last year's tests, there was no evidence during the inspection of a difference in the attainment of boys and girls nor of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. Some girls do not readily offer to answer questions, but most teachers are aware of

this and encourage all pupils to play an active part during whole class discussions. In all classes, pupils are well grouped and boys and girls work together at different levels of attainment.

99. The quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning is satisfactory overall. Although the quality of teaching and learning seen during the inspection was good overall in lessons, other evidence indicates that investigative skills have not been progressively developed over time and that the quality of teaching is not consistent through the school. Of the seven lessons observed, teaching was very good in one lesson, good in three lessons and satisfactory in three. There was little significant difference between teaching of different age groups. In the best lessons, interesting tasks were well chosen, with a good balance of direct teaching and opportunities for pupils to apply their enquiry skills to find things out for themselves. In these lessons, pupils were highly motivated by the teaching, and this resulted in worthwhile group discussion. A very good example of this was seen in a lesson in Year 5 where pupils were dissecting plants so as to identify, mount and label the different organs. The class teacher continued to teach and challenge as pupils worked, so that the pace of learning was maintained. As a result of this high quality teaching and of the very effective support provided for pupils with special educational needs, all pupils made very good progress in their learning and were very well motivated. At the end of the lesson, all hands were raised when pupils were asked to identify the *style, anther, stigma and stamen* on a large, well-drawn picture of a plant. Although two pupils who suffer with hay fever did not participate in the dissecting activity, the teacher made good provision for them so that they too made very good progress. This is a fine example of the school's caring attitude and its commitment to educational inclusion. When specific support is provided in lessons, it is well used to support pupils' learning.
100. Other good lessons on life processes and living things were seen in Year 1 and Year 2 classes where pupils were making detailed studies of habitats. Different habitats containing mini-beasts in glass containers had been very well prepared and excited pupils' interest. As a result of good, focused teaching, pupils went on to identify and compare the principal external parts of animals, and to extend their knowledge of how different habitats suit the needs of different creatures. In these lessons, it was clear that pupils had learnt a lot from their visits to the school's recently developed science garden. The school is justifiably proud of this community effort, which is involving a wildlife charity, staff, parents, pupils and the local community. It is an excellent resource and is already having a strong impact on pupils' learning.
101. In a short lesson in a Year 3 and 4 class in which pupils were testing materials in relation to friction, it was clear that they had been taught the importance of making predictions and the need for fair testing. The class teacher built well on what pupils already knew, and used questions such as 'what are we trying to find out?' to focus pupils' attention and to develop their scientific thinking. As a result, pupils made good progress in their understanding of scientific enquiry. The class teacher continued to make effective use of questioning to challenge pupils to think how they might improve their experiments. As a result, learning was good and pupils worked well in groups, discussing sensibly how they would make the test fair. They went on to provide a description of the movement of a car changing speed and direction.
102. All teachers have established strong, positive relationships within their classes. As a result, pupils behave well and work hard. The good relationships also give pupils confidence to ask questions and to discuss problems with adults, thus enhancing their learning. The marking of pupils' recorded work does not always extend their thinking or indicate how they might improve. The development of pupils' numeracy skills is well supported as pupils measure temperature, mass and capacity and record their findings graphically. The subject provides some opportunities for pupils' to practise and apply their literacy skills. Pupils' skills in ICT are applied satisfactorily to their work in science. The subject also makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development with opportunities to appreciate the wonders of nature and to the need to care for the environment.
103. There have been sound improvements to the work in science since the last inspection. The co-ordinator provides enthusiastic leadership and is dedicated to raising standards in the subject. Other members of staff share this commitment to improvement and there is a good capacity to do



so. Resources are well managed and are adequate for present needs. However, the range and quantity will need to be increased to provide pupils with more opportunities for independent research and decision making in their work. The co-ordinator has identified the need to improve the quality and quantity of books to support this area of pupils' learning. Assessment procedures, linked to national guidance in the subject are in place but need to be applied more rigorously to ensure that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are progressively developed.

## ART AND DESIGN

104. Judgements have been made on the basis of two lessons observed and work seen around the school and in classrooms. Standards of work at age seven and 11 and throughout the school meet national expectations, as was the case at the time of the last inspection. Displays around the school and within classrooms are well presented and demonstrate that pupils are making appropriate progress. Pupils show good attitudes and clearly enjoy their art lessons. This is also reflected in the quality of pupils' work that is on display.
105. Work in Years 1 and 2 develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of processes and skills through their experience of working with a range of materials, which they use with increasing confidence. Pupils are able to mix colours effectively, such as in the paintings illustrating their writing on 'We are special'. Their observational drawing skills also develop satisfactorily, as demonstrated in the sketches of fruit and vegetables where some pupils demonstrate increasing control and awareness of how to look carefully at shape and line in natural forms. Opportunities for pupils to develop their work are satisfactory. For example, through the extension of their drawings, pupils use paper and fabric effectively in collage work to represent their earlier drawings. Pupils have also experienced using paper and string to experiment with weaving techniques, including basic notched looms, with some success.
106. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have been extending their skills in observational drawing and painting through their work on portraits and relationships in portraits. Pencil drawings show that pupils are making appropriate progress in developing scale and proportion within faces, and some pupils are showing increased awareness of how pencil can be used to create different effects. Pupils have used creative application of different layers of paint to increase detail in their paintings well. Some delightful paintings of flowers in one class show that pupils' observational skills are developing very well; they have made careful observations of the proportions and shapes of flowers and then mixed colours to match the shades seen. The paintings have been further enhanced through use of colour washed backgrounds.
107. By Years 5 and 6, pupils' show good development of pencil drawing and colour mixing and improved observational skills. Pupils can select and arrange attractive groups of objects and produce some accurate and detailed charcoal and pencil sketches. They mix colours with increasing accuracy to explore tones, shades and the effect of colour, such as in their still life paintings. Pupils have learned how to extend their designs well through use of viewfinders to select and enlarge sections of their work. Further use of colour mixing and of families of colours in paintings has enabled them to think more widely about how to explore and develop their ideas in art.
108. Teaching seen in two lessons was satisfactory. Printing, three dimensional work and computer based art and design are not well represented in the work sample. Work seen in the style of other artists was limited to some delightful paintings produced by last year's Year 6 pupils. Scrutiny of sketchbooks shows that these are not yet being used regularly enough to develop and extend ideas. Work is not dated and marking lacks evaluative comment.
109. Linking pupils' artwork to their work in other subjects can be further developed. Where there is evidence of this, links are used well. In English, Year 1 and 2 pupils have used art to present traditional tales, such as the three dimensional collage illustrating the story of the Three Little Pigs. In geography, Year 1 pupils have produced pencil and crayon drawings of Tocuaro in their study of Mexico.
110. The art co-ordinators are enthusiastic and have a clear educational direction. They have done much to develop the curriculum and promote work in the subject since jointly taking up the post. They have outlined the topics to be taught each year, linking these to appropriate skills development and promoting the subject throughout the school. They run an art club which approximately 60 pupils attend during the course of the year. Some of the work produced here is displayed within the local community, for example in the hospital and church. The subject is generally well resourced to meet the needs of the curriculum and there has been some monitoring

of teachers' plans to ensure coverage. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory and there is effective liaison between teachers and the co-ordinators in order to provide advice and support when required.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

111. By age seven and 11, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection, when pupils' attainment and progress in Years 3 to 6 were unsatisfactory.
112. By the end of Year 2, pupils can design and make puppets and simple models that need wheels and axles. They explore designs found within the local environment and learn appropriate skills of planning and evaluation. They acquire a range of skills and techniques for joining, fixing and assembling different materials. In Years 3 and 4, pupils more frequently accompany their work with written plans, as seen for example in pupils' work on photograph frames and their designs and modifications of a printing block and a Jack-In-The-Box. In Year 6, pupils' use a wider range of tools; hammers, saws and drills, for example, and they incorporate the use of a cam into their work. Above average and average pupils in Year 6 spoke confidently about their previous work and learning. For example, when talking about some biscuits they were about to make, they described how during a previous lesson they added different ingredients to a basic biscuit recipe and then compared the different textures and tastes this brought about. They had learned well from this activity and were then able to make up their own recipes to suit a specific consumer, taking account of the person's age and preferences.
113. Pupils make sound progress in lessons and over time. No differences in the attainment and progress of boys and girls or pupils of different ability were noted. In lessons seen, and as evidenced from samples of work, pupils have good attitudes to their work and enjoy activities.
114. Taking into account the evidence from the three lessons observed and from the scrutiny of completed work, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teaching in one lesson was good. Activities were well-planned and organised to promote pupils' interest and develop their skills. Pupils are given good opportunities to plan and redraft their work. Occasionally, the finishing techniques for products are given rather more attention than the design element.
115. The school is using a scheme of work based on national guidance, which ensures coverage of the programmes of study, including that for food technology. The co-ordinators have worked hard to link this to a skills based scheme. This ensures that the appropriate skills are taught progressively as pupils move up the school and a simple system of assessment is linked to this. The coordinators provide good leadership. They are keen and enthusiastic and clear about the subjects' requirements and support their colleagues well. The subject is promoted well through displays around the school. The arrangements for the assessment of pupils' progress are sound. Resources are satisfactory, but not extensive. The school makes good use of resources beyond the school.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

116. Scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and teachers indicate that standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations and in Year 6 are below national expectations. This was the case at the time of the last inspection.
117. Pupils in Year 1 observe their surroundings and make a simple map to record their route from home to school. They can locate the United Kingdom on a world map before finding Mexico and Egypt to compare life in the three countries. In Year 2, pupils build on this experience. They look again at their journeys to school and make a graph showing the transport they use. This is a good use of numeracy in this subject. Pupils also study the Mexican Horta family in Tocuaro and can contrast the physical and human features of life there with those here. For example, they note the differences in everyday activities such as shopping, cooking and food preparation.

118. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn to locate the major cities of the United Kingdom and identify the physical and human features of their immediate area. In Year 6 however, during a discussion with a group of pupils they commented on how little geography they have done this year. They showed good understanding of the water cycle and could remember where several of the world's greatest mountain ranges are located. They were unable, however, to recall information about the features of a river or explain the difference between due north and north as a compass point. They also had little understanding of grid references and contour lines.
119. Blocks of geography are taught alternately with history as part of a two-year cycle of units of work. Less time is allocated to the subject than is recommended nationally, leading to the programmes of study not being addressed in sufficient depth and there are some missed opportunities to apply pupils' literacy skills to work in the subject. Ineffective planning and co-ordination of history and geography lead to pressures on time. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were looking at the Mexican village of Tocuaro in geography lessons whilst, earlier in the year, they had studied the Aztecs in history. By combining these two topics, more effective use could have been made of curriculum time and pupils' learning would also have been more meaningful.
120. Three geography lessons were seen during the inspection. In two lessons, seen in Years 2 and Year 6, the teaching was satisfactory and in the third lesson the teaching was very good. All three lessons were well planned with the learning objectives clearly stated. In the very good lesson in Year 1 on using secondary sources, the teacher had very high expectations of pupils, used very effective questioning and set tasks were both challenging and appropriate for their age and capabilities. The teacher emphasised key geographical knowledge and skills and emphasised the skills of effective research, collaboration and cooperation. Pupils showed good or very good attitudes in lessons, clearly enjoyed their work and behaved well. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 showed great enthusiasm when tasting Mexican food as part of their work on comparing and contrasting life in a Mexican Village with that in Dartford. They co-operated very well in group work, discussing their ideas and learning sensibly and effectively. Pupils take a pride in their written work, presenting it neatly with good handwriting. Marking of pupils' work, however, does not do enough to tell pupils how their work could be improved.
121. Visits by pupils to places that would support the geography curriculum are restricted by cost. There are few opportunities to compensate for this by bringing visitors into school. Much use is made, therefore, of the residential five-day visit to Deal for pupils in Years 5 and 6. ICT is used satisfactorily to support work in geography.
122. The previous co-ordinator left the school at Easter. The headteacher is seeking to appoint a replacement for September. Since the last inspection, there have been some developments to the curriculum. Assessment procedures need to be implemented. Developing work in the subject has been identified as a whole-school priority. Resources are inadequate to support the effective teaching.

## **HISTORY**

123. At the time of the last inspection, the attainment of pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 was judged to be in line with national expectations. The scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils as well as evidence from lessons seen indicate that attainment at seven is in line with national expectations but, at age 11, is below it. Insufficient curriculum time is given to the subject and more emphasis needs to be placed on the development of key skills, particularly the use of historical evidence. National Curriculum requirements are covered, but they are not taught in sufficient depth.
124. As a result of a topic about the seaside, pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 can see the differences between swimwear of 1900, 1950 and the present day. They also focus on the story of Florence Nightingale and learn about houses in the 1900s. Pupils in Year 2 spoke enthusiastically about all the topics they had covered and could sequence the time of Christ, Florence Nightingale and the present correctly and could identify how new and old objects such as toys differed.

125. In Years 3 and 4, pupils learn about life in Ancient Egypt. In their work on the Tudor period pupils learn about Henry VIII and his wives, a comparison of rich and poor and the food eaten then. Pupils have searched the Internet for information on the Tudors, which is a good feature of their work. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 noted that, because of the change in study programmes, they had covered the Tudors twice. Pupils said they had enjoyed their work on the Egyptians. They had also enjoyed studying World War II. There had been opportunities for individual research and the handling of artefacts, as well as to learn from visitors who reminisced about their own personal experiences. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have learned about the Ancient Greeks and Explorers and Exploration.
126. The work scrutiny shows few examples of tasks being planned to meet the needs of pupils of different prior attainment levels. There was also evidence that in Year 6 pupils spent time copying work into their books, which does not develop either their historical language or skills. The presentation of pupils' work in all year groups is good and reflects the pride they take in their work. The scrutiny of work showed that generally, marking is carried out consistently. However, there are few comments to suggest how work might be improved.
127. The teaching seen was always at least satisfactory and was good in a lesson seen in a Year 3 and 4 class. The teachers seen had good subject knowledge and their lessons were well planned. The learning objectives were shared with the pupils. Teachers brought a range of artefacts to support pupils' learning and there was good use of pupils learning from others' first hand experiences. For example, this was seen when one pupil talked about the discussion he had had with his grandfather and about life during World War 2, and in two lessons visiting speakers talked to pupils and answered their questions about growing up during World War 2. These provided a good opportunity for pupils to learn from first hand accounts. In lessons, pupils showed interest, listened well and behaved well. In one lesson, pupils' response was very good.
128. The co-ordinator left the school at Easter having held the post since September 2001. There has been little development to the work in recent times, although curriculum plans and a scheme of work have been introduced since the last inspection. There are no formal assessment procedures and this is an identified priority on the school development plan.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

129. There have been positive improvements to work in the subject since the last inspection when standards were judged to be below national expectations and pupils did not cover the National Curriculum requirements. The school now has more computers and a scheme of work for the subject. Pupils' attainment at age seven and eleven is now in line with national expectations, except in the control aspect where pupils' attainment is below that expected.
130. By the age of seven, pupils can access programs and use the mouse. They are beginning to develop typing skills, identifying letters and capitalising; they can use the space bar and save and delete functions. They use a variety of fonts and generate pictures, which they can then print out. Most work in this part of the school, however, is restricted to supporting pupils' work in literacy and numeracy and there is little evidence of control technology being taught. The 'roamer' is currently in need of repair. The technical assistance available is currently ineffective. This results in non-functioning equipment staying out of action for some time. This problem is being addressed in conjunction with neighbouring schools that, together, plan to form a consortium to employ more reliable technical support to be shared by the group.
131. By the age of eleven, pupils are able to load and save material, insert clipart and organise information in different forms. They talk with understanding, using terms such as "format", "edit", "website" and "download" with confidence. They can access search engines to gain information to support other areas of the curriculum. This is a good feature. They sustain concentration well, despite work being slowed by slow typing skills. They are able to create multi media presentations and can use the school's digital camera. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have an e-mail link with a school in Canada and younger pupils have contacts in other parts of this country, for example, with a school in Maidstone. In a lesson seen they showed confidence in loading their

previous work, in using Powerpoint to edit, change, resize and relocate pictures and text. There is, however, little work in control technology as a result of lack of appropriate equipment.

132. Teaching was seen in three lessons. In two it was good and in the other lesson was satisfactory. The teachers demonstrate at least sound knowledge and in one lesson taught by the coordinator, the teacher had good subject knowledge that promoted pupils' learning well. In this lesson the teacher used the projector well to demonstrate. Her questioning promoted good discussion that led to sensible and mature observations being made by pupils and very good attitudes and response from pupils. Lessons are well planned; the learning objectives are shared with pupils and achieved by the majority of them. Teachers' focus well on key vocabulary and procedures are well explained. When not in use for whole class lessons, the computers are often used by groups of pupils. A group of Year 6 pupils, for example, were at one time working with a classroom assistant to support their work in religious education and, on other occasions they worked independently on a task related to measuring angles. The school caretaker, (who is also very involved in the daily life of the school), helped a group of pupils from Years 3 and 4 to access the Internet to find information about life in the 1940's. Computers and software available in the designated area and in classrooms are being used effectively to support work in other subjects, but the range of software available is restricted. Teachers are working hard to develop and extend the use of ICT and increasing the opportunities.
133. The school now has a site for eleven computers linked to the Internet, which is situated in an area adjacent to the hall that doubles up as a library. This is not an ideal siting as lessons there are subject to some noise, particularly when the hall is being used for physical education. A new purpose built suite, however, is planned as part of the building extension programme. The computer area is timetabled to enable teachers in Years 3 to 6 to choose their time there. This may lead to some variance in the amount of time pupils spend developing information and technology skills because more confident teachers generally choose to spend more time there. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use the computers based in their classrooms. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They enjoy their work and are reluctant to stop when the lesson ends. They listen attentively to instructions and act upon them enthusiastically. They help each other very well and those pupils with special educational needs benefit from the support of their peers as well as that from the teacher or support assistant. Pupils treat equipment with care and respect.
134. The coordination of the subject is sound. The co-ordinator brought computer skills from her previous work in industry. She has held the post for the last three years. The latest national guidance was adopted when she took up her appointment and she has introduced a scheme of work. The co-ordinator monitors planning, but not pupils' work or teaching in lessons. As yet, there are no systematic assessment procedures in place. The co-ordinator is aware that some staff are more confident in using ICT than others. The school development plan notes that samples of work in ICT from all classes are to be collected during the year as part of a portfolio of levelled work that will enable all staff to become familiar with the different levels of attainment. However, there was little evidence of this having yet been undertaken. Progress in the subject since the last inspection has been effective, despite some restrictions on funding which have slowed acquisition of the hardware and software needed in order to improve access and opportunities for pupils. Pupils' attainment has improved.

## **MUSIC**

135. Pupils' standards in music by age seven and 11 are in line with national expectations and pupils achieve well. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection when standards were below national expectations for pupils at the end of Year 6. The school has introduced a good scheme of work, which ensures that all aspects of the subject are appropriately covered. This, together with related training, has led to increased teacher confidence. As a result of these improvements, most pupils, by the end of Year 2, sing tunefully, clap rhythms from notation and experiment with instruments to create sounds. A consistent approach to teaching ensures that by the end of Year 6, most pupils show a developing ability to use sound expressively to achieve an intended effect. They sing with clear diction and good phrasing, as was observed in assemblies and hymn practices. Pupils are taught to describe, compare and judge a range of music from their

own and other cultures, using a suitable musical vocabulary such as tone, pitch, dynamics and tempo. Teachers' planning and discussions with them show that pupils compose group pieces, using their own notation, and perform these with an understanding of how different parts fit to achieve an overall effect. Opportunities for public performances, both in school and within the local community, enhance pupils' learning and provide well for their social and cultural development and sense of achievement.

136. The quality of teaching and learning seen during the inspection was good overall. Teaching was good in two of the lessons observed and satisfactory in the third. There is no significant difference between the teaching of different age groups. Teachers throughout the school ensure that boys and girls of all capabilities and backgrounds are fully included in lessons and use support staff effectively to achieve this.
137. A particular strength of the teaching is the very good management of pupils which helps create an atmosphere in which all are encouraged to contribute. Teachers use a good range of interesting teaching strategies to motivate pupils' interest and to ensure that lessons are fun. As a result, pupils behave very well and work hard to improve their performances. In a particularly lively lesson in a Year 3 and 4 class, the teacher successfully introduced pupils to songs and dances from Spanish, Maori and Indian cultures. Pupils performed with delight and listened with respect to taped music and when a learning support assistant played an Indian drum. This is another fine example of how music contributes to pupils' appreciation of other cultures and traditions. A strong feature of teachers' planning is the way in which all aspects of the subject are linked in each lesson. This ensures that singing, composing and musical appreciation are taught in sufficient depth. In a well-planned lesson in Year 1 and 2, for example, the learning objectives indicate that pupils were to learn the song 'Tuesday Night', to revise earlier work on graphic symbols and to listen to an extract of music to recognise and identify some special sound effects. The good use of time and the pace of teaching resulted in all of the learning objectives being achieved and pupils' good learning in singing, composing, performing and appraising.
138. This good use of time and teaching of basic skills are common features in all lessons. Management of the subject is good and has resulted in improved provision. There is a good range of learning opportunities to support the curriculum and teachers have received training in identifying links between other subjects such as history and science. Extra-curricular choir practices, class and school assemblies, recorder clubs and visits from folk and classical musicians add a further valuable dimension to pupils' learning. There is a satisfactory and developing range of resources, which are efficiently managed and well used in lessons. Information and communication technology, through programs such as 'My World Music' and packages for composition, is increasingly used to support the music curriculum. Arrangements for assessing pupils' learning are satisfactory and teachers are aware of the particular needs of pupils in lessons.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

139. Standards of attainment are in line with those expected for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection was satisfactory overall. Eight lessons were seen, one of which was excellent, three were good, three were satisfactory and one was unsatisfactory. This represents a good improvement in teaching since the last inspection when a quarter of the teaching seen was unsatisfactory. However, teaching still needs to be more closely monitored to help ensure consistently good learning as pupils move through the school. Teachers are secure in their knowledge of the subject and plan their lessons with clear learning objectives.
140. Lessons begin with good warm-up sessions and are generally well structured to keep pupils warm. This was not the case in the unsatisfactory lesson where the pace of activities was too slow and, as a result, the learning objectives were not achieved. In the excellent lesson in a Year 3 and 4 class, on the other hand, the outstanding pace resulted in total involvement by all pupils, including those pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties. This dance lesson was highly structured to allow pupils enough time to explore, practice, improve and demonstrate their skills at the level of which they are capable. Teachers ensure that boys and girls of all abilities and backgrounds play a full part in lessons. High expectations, as well as the good example set by teachers, ensure that

the great majority of pupils have the correct kit and, as a result, can take part in lessons. Only two pupils throughout the school were seen to have forgotten their kit during the week of inspection. The very good relationships that teachers establish in their classes give all pupils the confidence to perform for the rest of the class. These pupil demonstrations are well used by teachers as a stimulus for improvement. As a result, pupils identify aspects that make an effective performance and offer suggestions for improvements.

141. By the end of Year 2, guided by supportive teaching, pupils have increased their confidence in physical control and ability. They perform a range of movements, including running and balancing and are gaining an appropriate awareness of space. They plan and perform simple skills safely, and show control in linking actions together. In a Year 2 games lesson, where skills were being effectively taught, pupils could send, receive and strike a ball with some accuracy, using a racquet. Planning shows that in dance, they are taught to explore moods and feelings and develop their response to music and other stimuli. Most pupils, by the end of Year 2, remember, reproduce and explore simple actions with control and co-ordination.
142. Pupils enter Year 3 with a sound basis for further development. They continue to develop ball and games' skills, as was seen in a Year 6 lesson, where pupils were being taught skills of throwing, catching and bowling which they then applied in small sided cricket games. A significant number of pupils showed above average attainment in applying skills and tactics in attack and defence. In athletics, pupils participate in and devise competitions that require stamina, speed and precision. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, pupils were working on spring start techniques and baton changes. The class teacher's good knowledge allowed her to give crisp, clear instruction and to teach the correct skills which ensured good learning. A special feature of this and all other lessons is the way boys and girls work well together. Teachers have benefited from recent training to increase their confidence in teaching dance and gymnastics. As a result, the pace of teaching and learning seen when these aspects were being taught was mostly good. However, teachers do not always consider the importance of directly teaching the skills to help pupils to devise and perform fluent sequences on the floor, which they then transfer to large apparatus. Pupils attain the expected standards in swimming by age eleven.
143. Pupils are provided with a broad, well-planned curriculum, which is designed to promote their physical development and social interaction. Lessons in games, dance, athletics and gymnastics were observed during the inspection period. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 also attend swimming lessons at the local pool and they make good progress because of the quality of teaching by the accompanying trained teacher and other adults. Older pupils have opportunities for outdoor and adventurous activities in the school's own grounds and during their annual residential trip. The co-ordinator has been successful in improving the provision since the last inspection. The scheme of work gives helpful advice to teachers and recognises the links with other subjects. Pupils, for example, perform Tudor dances linked to history and poetry is used as a stimulus. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. Links with local professional football clubs, extra-curricular sport and participation in competitive competitions with other schools, do much to enhance the curriculum, pupils' social development and their sense of achievement. The satisfactory range of resources is well used to support learning. Assessment opportunities are identified on lesson plans and sound use is made of this information to plan future lessons.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

144. As at the last inspection, attainment of pupils at both seven and eleven meets the expectation of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils demonstrate that they are developing a good knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions. All pupils, regardless of gender, race or prior attainment, make at least satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding and in their ability to reflect on their learning.
145. By the age of seven, pupils have a sound knowledge of Christianity and an awareness of other religions. They know stories from the Bible and people that Jesus met and helped. They understand that clubs and organisations are often part of church life and discuss the meaning of promises and prayers. In their discussion of relationships, they successfully reflect upon their own



and others' feelings and show good understanding of the meaning of friendship and helping one another. They know that Christians pray, sometimes using the prayer that Jesus taught. Barnaby Bear has been used to illustrate the baptism ceremony. Pupils also study Judaism, looking at important figures from the faith, such as Moses, as well as festivals such as the Passover.

146. By the age of 11, most pupils have a sound knowledge of the key features of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and Sikhism. They learn how these religions celebrate festivals and about significant rites of passage. The work is arranged over a two-year cycle to accommodate mixed age classes. The younger pupils have learned about Sikhism and Judaism as well as Christianity. The older pupils have learned about Hinduism, focusing particularly on the Temple and Divali as well as the origins of the Bible. They explore the contributions to humanity of people such as Martin Luther King and Mother Theresa.
147. Five lessons were seen during the inspection. The quality of teaching in all but one of these lessons was good and in the remaining lesson was satisfactory. Lessons are carefully planned. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they impart well and skilful questioning is used to check pupils' understanding. Teachers are successful in enabling pupils to express their feelings openly and confidently. They set challenging tasks and this is reflected in the quality of the ensuing class or group discussion. Pupils have good opportunities to reflect upon their learning and understanding of religious and spiritual issues. For example, they talk about ways in which people show belief in God. This is a very strong feature of teaching in the subject. In all lessons pupils with special educational needs are well supported and this enables them to be fully included in both discussion and activities. Where the teaching is good, methods ensure that pupils share first-hand experiences, have opportunities to handle artefacts and use good quality books. Although there are a few opportunities to visit places beyond local churches, pupils' subject knowledge is much enhanced through visitors to the schools from the nearby Hindu and Sikh communities. This is a strong and developing feature. Teachers use computers well to support learning in the subject and other subjects are being increasingly linked with religious education. As well as literacy links, three lessons effectively incorporated mathematics into them to aid pupils' understanding of common and different features of faith communities and of people within them.
148. Religious education is taught to all pupils. Parents are informed of their right to withdraw pupils from lessons and assemblies through the school's prospectus. The co-ordinator, who has been in post for almost two years, takes an active role and provides good leadership. She has rewritten the scheme of work in relation to the latest national guidance and the locally agreed syllabus, so that there is now a greater multi-faith emphasis than there was at the time of the previous inspection.
149. The school has made significant improvements since the last inspection. This is due to the hard work of teachers and, particularly, to the good contribution of the subject co-ordinator. The quality of teaching has improved, resources have much improved and, although now satisfactory, are to be improved further. More visitors are to be invited into school. The school now has a much more effective relationship with the church to which the school is attached and the vicar is a frequent visitor. He reports that the school's work has also impacted on drawing the local community into the church. Religious education makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.