

INSPECTION REPORT

CUXTON COMMUNITY INFANT SCHOOL

Cuxton, Rochester

LEA area: Medway Towns

Unique reference number: 118323

Headteacher: Ms S.Jones

Reporting inspector: Dr J.N.Thorp
6327

Dates of inspection: 4 – 7 November 2002

Inspection number: 252114

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bush Road Cuxton Rochester Kent
Postcode:	ME2 1EY
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J.Haselden
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
6327	Dr J.N.Thorp	Registered inspector	Special Educational Needs; English; Information and Communication Technology; Design and technology; Music; Physical Education	What sort of a school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19552	Mrs P.Butson	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
12997	Mrs C.Cheong	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Curriculum; Mathematics; Science; Art; History; Geography; Religious Education	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is located in Cuxton, a large village about 4 miles to the south of Rochester. It shares a very pleasant and spacious site with the neighbouring junior school. The school is small in size, with 99 pupils on roll organised into 4 classes. Pupils are admitted into the school at the age of four; there are two admissions each year. Attainment on entry to the school varies, but overall is broadly average. There are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language. Around 1% of pupils are entitled to a free school meal, which is very low compared with the national average. There is one pupil with a statement of special educational need; in total 17% of pupils are on the school's special educational needs register, below average compared to other schools nationally. Most of the pupils with special educational needs have learning difficulties.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school, with some considerable strengths. The headteacher's very good leadership ensures clear educational direction and purpose for the school and the provision of an environment for learning in which all pupils can flourish. All staff work together very well as a team and effectively communicate their high expectations of learning and behaviour. Pupils respond very positively; relationships throughout the school community are very good. Teaching is consistently good. Pupils make good progress in developing their information and communication technology (ICT) skills and achieve above average standards by the time they leave the school. While reading has improved recently, the standard of pupils' writing is not yet as good as it could be. The school's considerable strengths far outweigh any weaknesses identified; it serves its pupils and the community well. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- ? Pupils make good progress in developing their skills in ICT and many achieve above average standards
- ? Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good
- ? Provision for pupils' personal development is very good
- ? Pupils' enjoy school, they are keen, interested and try hard; their behaviour is good
- ? The quality of teaching is good and there is strong teamwork
- ? The headteacher provides very good leadership, ensuring the school is moving forward
- ? Relationships throughout the school are very good; all teaching and non-teaching staff are good role models and contribute effectively to make the school a very caring and supportive community

What could be improved

- ? Standards in writing
- ? The management of learning in the Foundation Stage
- ? The contribution of curriculum co-ordinators towards the evaluation and development of teaching and learning
- ? The use of assessment information to inform teachers' planning

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 1998. There has been satisfactory progress made in addressing the key issues identified in that report, despite the very unsettled period that followed it. There has been significant improvement in provision for children in the Foundation Stage, so that now teaching and learning are not disrupted by movement between rooms. Progress has been made in improving standards in English, particularly in reading. There is also good provision to meet the particular learning needs of higher attaining pupils. In writing however, progress in improving standards has been slow and this remains a priority. The new co-ordinator is fully aware of this issue and has a comprehensive plan for tackling it. Given the effective leadership of the headteacher, the strong teamwork among current staff and the high quality of their teaching, the school is very well placed to continue improving.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	B	E	C	E
writing	D	E	E	E
mathematics	C	D	B	C

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

Children enter the school with wide ranging levels of prior attainment, but overall this is generally average. The results of statutory assessment in 2002, shown in the table above, indicate that the standards pupils achieved in reading were average and above average in mathematics. This represents satisfactory progress in the main. In writing however, standards were well below average when compared with all other schools. This shows that progress has been unsatisfactory and that pupils could do much better. In both reading and writing standards were well below those achieved by pupils in similar schools. In science, the results of assessments carried out by their teachers show that standards were below average. Inspection findings indicate that standards in ICT are above average, but in writing they are below average. In all other subjects in which a judgement could be made standards are at least in line with those expected of pupils their age. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children achieve the early learning goals set for them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy learning and are eager to attend school. In lessons they usually quickly settle to work and most can apply themselves for long periods. Pupils are good at working co-operatively and participate enthusiastically in a range of out of school activities, such as the clubs organised for them.
Behaviour, in and out of	Good in lessons and around the school, so the school functions

classrooms	as a very orderly and purposeful community. Pupils have a clear understanding of what is acceptable behaviour. Pupils are friendly, sociable and polite to visitors.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils work and play well together. They quickly grow in confidence and have good opportunities to take appropriate responsibilities around the school, which they take very seriously. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are very good. Staff are excellent role models, successfully encouraging respect and consideration for others. Parents are right to be pleased with the attitudes and values the school promotes.
Attendance	Attendance is above average; unauthorised absence is below average. Pupils are generally punctual to school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is a strength of the school. In all the lessons seen during the inspection teaching was satisfactory or better; in more than six out of ten it was good or very good. Overall the quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. The new teaching team have quickly established themselves and the quality of their teaching is having a major impact on the progress pupils are now making. Teaching of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is consistently good. The quality of teaching during literacy lessons throughout the school is now consistently good; some lessons are of a very high quality and are leading to improved standards. Teaching of numeracy is satisfactory. Teachers manage pupils' learning effectively, telling them what they are going to do and learn in the lesson and how this links with what they have done previously. Teachers at the school work very hard and pupils benefit from the considerable effort they put into their teaching. At times, however, they make insufficient use of assessment information to help them plan specific learning activities to meet the needs of all pupils in the class.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced. Good co-operation as teachers plan together ensures appropriate continuity and consistency. The Foundation Stage curriculum is generally satisfactory. There is a good range of extra curricular activities and visits out and visitors into school. Homework is used well to extend or reinforce work done in class.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils' individual education plans are clear and inform specific learning activities. Targets are reviewed regularly, which helps the school track pupils' progress effectively. The provision

	of individual education plans for higher attaining pupils also enables teachers to meet their particular learning needs effectively.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good and a strong feature of the school. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Opportunities are provided for pupils to think and reflect; they learn to respect the feelings of others. Pupils' understanding of right from wrong is well promoted and the values of consideration and trustworthiness are effectively fostered. There are good routines to ensure that pupils share, play and work together well. Pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures is well provided for.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good with high levels of care, support and concern for the welfare of all pupils, who feel valued as individuals. There are very good procedures for the induction of very young children entering the school. There are good procedures in place for assessment in literacy, numeracy and science, although assessment in other subjects is not yet fully developed. Overall teachers make insufficient use of this information to help them meet the particular learning needs of some pupils.

The school has very effective links with parents who have very positive views of the school. This positive relationship has been sustained since the previous inspection.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership, ensuring clear direction and purpose for the school. She has done well to manage the school effectively through a difficult and unsettled time and there is now a strong sense of teamwork among staff. Individual subject co-ordinators' contribution to the evaluation and development of teaching is not as effective as it could be.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors make a significant contribution to the management of the school and fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. Governors have clear roles and responsibilities and contribute effectively to management. Individual governors are frequent visitors into school and their links, with both specific classes and subjects, enable them to monitor aspects of provision effectively. The headteacher keeps governors well informed about planned developments and, along with their own monitoring and evaluation, this ensures they are fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher analyses the results of assessment which enables her to gain an overview of standards and progress. Pupils are set clear individual and group targets for improvement. An evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school informs priorities for further development. There is insufficient rigorous monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching.

	Governors have a useful best value statement but the evaluation of spending in terms of the impact on standards is not yet fully developed.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of available resources. Financial planning is very good – the school receives very good support from an independent financial adviser. Resources are used well to support longer-term developments. The school improvement plan appropriately informs priorities in setting the budget. The careful use of available funds has secured good levels of staffing and very good resourcing in some areas such as ICT.

The school is very well staffed. Overall accommodation is good, with valuable additional space for a computer suite, special needs room and after school care. The school has a large hall, which provides a good space for indoor physical education. The extensive school grounds are most attractive and provide good opportunities to enhance teaching and learning in a wide range of subjects. There are good resources for learning in ICT.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? The school is welcoming and a happy place to be ? All children are known as individuals ? The school helps parents understand the curriculum ? Parents and teachers work together well ? Children have good manners and are polite ? Children grow in confidence ? Children gain good understanding of others through multicultural work ? Teachers are all very caring; they are very well respected by children and parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Now there is a more settled staff there were no aspects of the work of the school which parents would like to see improved.

The inspection team agreed with the many positive views expressed by parents about the school. Parents are right to be pleased with many aspects of the school's provision. Inspectors did not agree that there were no aspects of the school's work that needed to improve.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Test results in 2002 indicated that standards in reading were broadly average in reading, above average in mathematics but below average in writing when compared with all schools nationally. When results are compared with those of pupils in similar schools the picture is less positive, with pupils achieving standards well below average in reading and writing and in line with the average in mathematics. Since baseline assessment indicates that most pupils enter the school with attainment that is generally average, these results indicate that their progress in developing their reading and writing skills has been unsatisfactory. The most recent test results show that girls out performed boys in reading, writing and mathematics.

2 Results in 2001 and 2002 were badly affected by a very unsettled period in staffing at the school, during which there has been an exceptionally high turnover of teachers. An analysis of the results of statutory assessment over the past four years, indicating a considerable fluctuation in standards also reflects this period of instability. Since then the situation has become much more stable with the appointment of a new team of permanent teachers. The high quality of their teaching is already having a positive impact on pupils' learning and is addressing this underachievement effectively. As a result, pupils are now making better progress and standards are beginning to rise, particularly in reading and mathematics.

3 The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are also having a positive impact on raising standards. Inspection evidence indicates that standards of literacy and numeracy are now satisfactory overall. The school identified as a priority, and has made considerable efforts to improve, the standard of pupils' reading, the systematic and planned focus on which has resulted in the significant improvement in standards. There is currently a similar focus on improving standards in writing.

4 Inspection evidence shows that by the time they are 7, when they leave the school, pupils' speaking and listening skills are broadly satisfactory and at times good. Across the school pupils generally speak appropriately, whether to an adult or with other pupils; many are able to do so confidently when speaking in front of the whole class. They make satisfactory progress in acquiring an appropriate range of vocabulary. Pupils are taught to listen carefully to what others say and they do so satisfactorily. As a result older pupils are able to join in discussions and contribute effectively.

5 Pupils achieve broadly average standards in their reading by the time they leave the school. Teachers provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to develop their reading skills, contributing positively to the good progress they now make. Good use is made of the recently reorganised materials pupils can take home to reinforce reading skills. Generally pupils are attentive in lessons, they enjoy reading and try hard to improve and so the quality of their learning is good.

6 Pupils are making insufficient progress in developing their writing skills and by the time they leave the school standards are below average. Pupils' spelling is often careless, with words learnt separately often wrongly spelt when used in the context of a piece of writing. The approach to teaching spelling insufficiently emphasises the use of the words in context. In their handwriting some pupils generally form their letters accurately, but others have poorly developed understanding of letter formation and this inhibits their ability to write in a fluent

joined up style. Pupils now have opportunities to write for an increased range of purposes, but this has not yet had time to have a significant impact on raising standards. Insufficient opportunities have been taken to extend pupils' writing skills in other subjects.

7 Inspection evidence indicates that standards in mathematics are broadly in line with those expected nationally and that pupils are making satisfactory progress in developing their knowledge and understanding. Unlike the results of statutory assessment, there was no difference noted between the standards achieved by boys and girls. The mental mathematics activities at the start of lessons are managed well at times, ensuring that all pupils are involved. At other times, however, too few pupils are able to contribute and this restricts their progress. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of basic number facts and, by the time they leave, they can add and subtract numbers to 20 confidently. They recognise odd and even numbers and many know the names of simple two and three-dimensional shapes. Appropriate opportunities are made for pupils to use their numeracy skills in other subjects, such as science and design and technology.

8 Standards in science are currently broadly in line with those expected for pupils of this age. There is an appropriate emphasis on investigative and experimental science, with pupils having a good range of opportunities to develop their skills. There is good teaching of this aspect of the science curriculum, which contributes to the good progress pupils make in some aspects of their science work. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of living things, understanding that living things grow and the conditions needed. They understand that living creatures have varying needs and live in different habitats. By the time they leave the school pupils have a satisfactory understanding of materials and their properties. Many understand the difference between man-made and natural materials, which they can sort out in their practical work.

9 Pupils are making good progress in developing their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and overall standards are better than those expected. This is because pupils are well supported in their learning by both teachers and classroom assistants, who make good use of the resources for learning available both in the computer suite and in the classrooms. Pupils use their skills across the curriculum. Resources have been improved recently and this is also contributing to the good progress pupils are making.

10 Attainment in other subjects, including religious education is in line with what is expected of pupils at the age of seven. Although there were few opportunities to observe teaching and learning in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, there was sufficient evidence to indicate that standards in these subjects are broadly in line with those expected of seven-year-olds.

11 The attainment of children entering the school varies quite considerably, but overall is broadly average. The more settled staffing situation and the quality of teaching now found in the school are ensuring that pupils' learning is improving. By the end of the Foundation Stage¹ most of the children are on course to meet the early learning goals set for them in all areas of learning except writing; some exceed them and are already working on the appropriate programmes of study of the National Curriculum.

12 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall. This is because of the very good support they receive. Where required, pupils' individual educational plans meet their individual needs.

¹ The Foundation Stage covers the period from a child's entry to school through to the end of the reception year.
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Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13 Throughout the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 pupils have very good attitudes to school and enjoy learning. They are eager to attend and keen to please their teachers. The school is a relaxed and friendly community. This is similar to that reported in the previous inspection and confirms the very positive views expressed by parents. Pupils show good, sometimes very good, attitudes to their work during lessons. Most settle down to work quickly and, when motivated by good teaching, become absorbed in their work, are enthusiastic and learn well. Teachers value all responses and pupils respect the contributions of others. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning and the standards they achieve. On the very few occasions when teaching is less challenging, some pupils lose interest, do not listen, fidget and become restless. When this happens, they do not learn as much as they should and other pupils' learning can also be affected.

14 The children in all classes are already showing that they can apply themselves well to their work for long periods. For example, the children under five achieved very well in a dance lesson because they concentrated and tried hard for the whole lesson. Pupils are particularly good at working co-operatively. This was evident in many lessons during the inspection: in a numeracy lesson in the computer suite, Year 1 pupils were taking turns on computers to sort numbers into order, and in a Year 1 and 2 science lesson, they co-operated well to create large pictures of different habitats.

15 Behaviour in lessons, including when pupils are withdrawn for additional support, and around the school is good and often very good. This is not quite as positive as was reported at the time of the last inspection, when it was judged to be excellent in lessons and very good at other times. A combination of factors such as different pupils, the recent frequent changes of teachers and an increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs may have contributed to this difference. Pupils have helped to draw up the class, dinner time and playtime rules and have a clear understanding of what is acceptable behaviour. Lunch and playtimes, even wet ones, are very orderly and friendly social occasions, with pupils showing respect for people and property. After lunch, playtimes include a good mix of physical and imaginative play and are well organised by the dinner teachers who have received training in play and behaviour management. The planned building work has delayed improvements to the playground markings and equipment, but these will be done once the new building is complete. Incidents of bullying and other oppressive behaviour are rare, and children and parents report that all incidents are investigated promptly. There have been no exclusions in recent years.

16 Pupils' personal development and relationships throughout the school are very good and a significant strength. Parents think that the school helps their children to become more mature and responsible, and the inspection confirmed this. Children join the school with a wide range of social skills and overall are about average for their age. They make good progress during their time at school, becoming more confident, speaking increasingly well in class and learning to play and work well together. The pupils have excellent role models in the way all staff treat each other with respect and consideration and expect the pupils to do the same. Pupils are beginning to understand the effects of their actions on others and already show an impressive respect for the feelings and beliefs of others, treating all people equally. This reflects the very good provision made to foster pupils' personal development, for example through circle time², assemblies, registration times and the personal, social and health education programme. Pupils appreciate others' efforts, such as when they nominate each other for the 'Wall of Kindness' or clap in assembly when certificates are awarded. They also support each other well, for example, when a Year 2 pupil was helping a younger one with some spelling by asking 'are you sure?' and 'look again' and not just giving the answer.

² Circle time – is an opportunity for the whole class to discuss and reflect on a range of issues, often relating to pupils' personal and social development

17 Pupils take any responsibilities they are given seriously. They collect and deliver registers to the office, help with chairs in assembly and act as monitors for the dinner teachers. The School Council, with members elected from each of the older classes, met for the first time during the inspection. Members wore their badges proudly and were keen to write in their new School Council record books. As pupils' confidence grows, and the Council has a higher profile in the school, it will make an important contribution to pupils' personal development and understanding of citizenship. Pupils, both boys and girls, participate enthusiastically in the clubs run at lunch times and show an increasing awareness of environmental issues through their care for the school and the emphasis placed on putting litter in the bin, saving energy and recycling materials. Sometimes, the pupils are over-supported by adults and so cannot show initiative and independence in their learning.

18 As reported in the last inspection, pupils' attendance is very good when compared with other schools. This means that pupils can take full advantage of what the school provides. There were no unauthorised absences recorded in the last year. Pupils are punctual, enabling lessons to start promptly with no time wasted.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19 The quality of teaching throughout the school is consistently good; in around six out of ten lessons seen during the inspection teaching was good or very good. All the teaching seen was satisfactory or better. The new teaching team have quickly developed strong teamwork, co-operating effectively over planning to ensure consistency and continuity for pupils in the three different mixed Year 1 – 2 classes. The overall quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers are skilful, purposeful and determined to improve the standards of pupils' attainment.

20 Teachers know their pupils very well indeed and communicate appropriate expectations of them right from the start. This contributes effectively to the positive attitudes pupils show in their attitude to school and their approach to learning. All the teachers at the school work very hard and pupils benefit from the considerable effort they put into their teaching.

21 The quality of the teaching for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, with some good lessons observed during the inspection. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory overall, although not always successful in promoting the development of children's reading and writing. For some children there is insufficient challenge and this slows their learning, in both teacher-led and child-chosen activities. At times the activities which children choose for themselves are not used as effectively as they might to extend their learning. The promotion of young children's personal and social development is consistently good. Teachers and teaching assistants collaborate effectively, making a valuable contribution to children's learning and the smooth running of the classroom. Teaching in the Foundation Stage has improved since the previous inspection as there is now little movement between the two buildings so time is not wasted. At times, however, the use of the space and resources is not as effective or efficient as it might be.

22 Teaching in Key Stage 1 is consistently good or very good. The teachers draw successfully on a range of strategies to manage pupils' behaviour and promote learning. They plan their lessons carefully and provide an appropriate variety of activities to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. In most lessons teachers clearly identify the learning objectives, they make sure that pupils know and understand them and display them throughout the lesson. The best lessons contain many strengths. For example, in one literacy lesson, the teacher made clear the slightly different organisation so all the pupils understood how they

were going to work. Lively, engaging and purposeful in her approach she moved the lesson on with good pace, keeping pupils fully focused on the tasks set. Pupils were challenged with the individual questions she was able to pose at an appropriate level. This ensured that all pupils were involved and that their learning was good; as a result they made good progress. There was clear differentiation apparent in the group tasks set and in the good use of direct teaching to help and support individual pupils as they worked. In a science lesson, the teacher very successfully built on what pupils had learned about habitats on a walk during the previous lesson. The teacher was particularly effective in speaking to individual pupils during the whole class part of the lesson which ensured they all contributed, but also challenged and extended their thinking at the same time. The teacher's use of questions to focus pupils' attention, to draw out their ideas and to help evaluate their learning was very good. Such skilful teaching has a most positive impact on the good progress pupils make.

23 Where teaching is less successful, teachers do not use the assessment information they have to help them plan sufficiently clearly differentiated tasks for all groups in the class. Consequently the learning needs of all pupils are not always effectively met, particularly in subjects other than literacy and numeracy. The mixed age classes contribute to this situation, since learning activities are often provided for different age groups rather than pupils of different prior attainment. In a very few of the lessons observed, teachers' subject knowledge inhibited their ability to promote all pupils' learning effectively.

24 Throughout the school, teachers are conscientious in their marking of pupils' work. Verbally they respond very warmly and positively to pupils' efforts and they are frequently enthusiastic in recognising the particular achievements of individuals. This serves to motivate and encourage pupils. This is not always matched by the quality of teachers' written comments on pupils' work; teachers' handwriting is not effective as an example to help pupils improve theirs nor in providing them with a clear indication of how they might improve or develop what they have done.

25 Pupils with special educational needs are well taught. They receive very good support from their teachers and other classroom assistants.

26 The quality of teaching is a strength of the school and is now having a most positive effect on pupils' learning, their personal development and the standards they achieve. Teaching of literacy is consistently good and of numeracy it is satisfactory overall; teachers make good use of ICT across the curriculum. Homework is used appropriately to support pupils' learning as they move through the school.

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

27 The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for children at the Foundation Stage, while the curriculum provided for Years 1 and 2 is good. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Staff provide a wide range of learning opportunities of a good quality. The statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and those of the local agreed syllabus for religious education are well met. The school has a broad curriculum that includes swimming and dance and very good provision for personal, social and health education. It provides good additional opportunities, with visits, visitors and clubs contributing an important part in the life of the school.

28 The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for the Foundation Stage. It is appropriately built around the Early Learning Goals set for children of this age, but too little attention is given to the stepping stones to help plan out the steps that children need to take in their learning. As a result the curriculum does not always ensure that children's prior

attainment is being systemically built upon. Teachers plan and provide a satisfactory range of experiences across all the six areas of learning, but at times provision lacks impact and challenge.

29 The school ensures all pupils enjoy equal opportunities, including those from minority groups. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have full and equal access to all aspects of the curriculum and their needs are well supported, both directly by staff and by carefully adapted materials and tasks. The special educational needs Code of Practice is fully implemented. Equality of opportunity through the curriculum is satisfactory, although tasks set are not always at the correct level to meet the learning needs of all pupils, thus inhibiting the equality of opportunity to succeed. At times assessment information is not used effectively to help teachers plan their lessons.

30 The overall effectiveness of the strategies for teaching numeracy and literacy are satisfactory. The school has recently placed a high emphasis on the teaching of reading and this has been successful in raising standards. Writing is now being treated as a similar priority.

31 The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. They include a band, gardening, a brush and pencil club and choir; currently there are no physical activity clubs. The band plays daily in assembly. The clubs are very popular and, as a result, are full. Pupils regularly collect for charity. The school gives pupils many opportunities to take part in a wide variety of educational visits that very effectively enrich the curriculum by providing additional significant experiences that pupils remember and build on. These include visits to museums and local woods. Very good support for the curriculum is also provided by visitors to the school; for example, drama groups providing insight into period costumes and other cultures.

32 The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is good. There are close links with two churches in the village, with both ministers leading assemblies in school. A local women's group has provided reading resources and local businesses support fund raising events. The school has close links with a local college of education and regularly takes trainee teachers on placement.

33 There are very effective links with the junior school on the same site and local playgroups. The school has a very comprehensive system of induction that includes staff visiting the feeder playgroups and visits from them into school. Similarly, systems for the transfer of pupils to the junior school are very good, with ample visits and a buddying system. Management staff from the two schools meet regularly.

34 The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection and is now a significant strength of the school. Pupils' spiritual development is very good. It is promoted very effectively through daily assemblies, where pupils are encouraged to reflect on aspects of their learning, about the world in which they live and the impact of their actions on others. Most staff usually attend daily worship, which adds to the feeling of value given to the assembly, and sometimes groups of parents are invited. Teachers are effective in the way they give pupils very good opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings; for example, through very brief small-group discussions as part of a whole school assembly. In an observed assembly, a sense of awe was created very well when looking at the length of a sari.

35 The staff promote pupils' development of their social and interpersonal skills very well. Adults provide very good role models and their positive manner helps pupils to do their best. The school's Personal, Social and Health Education programme is very good. It is well embedded into the life of the school. Boys and girls mix and mostly play together well. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to work in pairs or small groups. As a result, pupils are learning to co-operate well together in lessons, such as in a geography lesson

where Year 1 pupils worked harmoniously in groups to produce large pictures of local habitats. Ethnic minority pupils and those with special educational needs are very well integrated into the school community. Social issues are discussed both in class and in assemblies, and also in the recently started School Council. Pupils are encouraged to take on a good range of monitoring and helping roles. Contact with the many visitors to the school also helps them to develop very good social skills. Pupils' social development is further enhanced through fund raising.

36 The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Pupils generally display good levels of self-control and consideration for others. Moral development is strongly promoted through the religious education curriculum, and through the very good personal, social and health education lessons such as discussions in circle times. The staff emphasise school and class rules very well and pupils have a very good sense of right and wrong. The school places a very high priority on equipping them with a strong set of moral values. Schools rules are mostly adhered to. Teachers and other staff help pupils very well towards an understanding of the rules by the way they adhere to a strong, positive behaviour management policy and practice. As part of this, pupils of all ages receive beautifully produced certificates in assembly that reward good behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to share their thoughts and ideas, and to respect the views of others. Issues that arise are dealt with in a calm and sensitive way.

37 The provision for pupils' cultural development is very good, because of the school's very good provision for promoting respect and understanding of beliefs, values and ways of life of other cultures. Pupils learn about music and art from different countries. Staff teach them very well about various religious celebrations. Different traditional practices are taught through collective worship where, for example, pupils listen to Indian music and learn the story of Rama and Sita and the Hindu festival of Divali. Staff use festivals from other cultures to compare and reinforce similarities with their pupils' own cultures when they talk about things that they celebrate with their own families; for example, weddings, birthdays and Christmas. Teachers provide much to help pupils understand and value their own culture; for example, with discussions about Bonfire Night in the reception class. The local culture of the school is extremely well promoted through the large number of beautifully made posters and displays around the school, such as that which says hello in many languages, which is echoed by the children daily when they sing *Hello to the children of the world*.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38 As at the time of the last inspection, the school takes good care of its pupils. All staff know the children well and support them effectively. They work hard to promote pupils' welfare and create an environment in which they can succeed personally and spiritually, as well as academically. A good example of this is the way that children new to the school have an assigned member of staff who looks out for them.

39 There are well-organised procedures for child protection that are well known by all staff. Awareness is maintained through training and staff meetings. Health and safety procedures and practices, including risk assessment, in and around the school are good: staff are trained in first aid, medicines are stored and administered appropriately, and fire drills and equipment checks are carried out regularly. During the inspection, two health and safety concerns were reported to the headteacher, both of which the school had already identified for action.

40 The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good and are reflected in the very good relationships throughout the school and the way that the pupils, although very young, show great respect for the feelings and beliefs of others. Assemblies, circle time and the well-planned programme for personal, social and health education help pupils to develop appropriate values. The benefits of a healthy lifestyle are also promoted well: most children bring a piece of fruit to eat at playtime, drinking water is available

at all times and pupils are encouraged to exercise.

41 The school places a strong emphasis on good behaviour and monitors it well. Pupils are given a very clear message that they should be kind and tolerant and work and play together – ‘treat everyone as you would like to be treated’ is the motto. Bullying or oppressive behaviour of any kind is not tolerated, and pupils know what to do if they have any fears or concerns. All staff monitor behaviour effectively and are consistent in their approach to dealing with any problems that do arise. When necessary, targets are set for pupils’ personal development, for example in the individual education plans of some pupils with special educational needs and in annual reports.

42 Pupils are involved in deciding the clear rules for each class and for dinner and play times. Displays around the school effectively include pupils’ work to reinforce the school’s expectations and encourage pupils to think about their behaviour and its effect on others. Very good examples of this are the displays seen during the inspection on ‘How we can have a good playtime’ and ‘Which person would you like to be? – William Won’t, Charlene Cheerful or Sally Selfish’. Because pupils have a sense of ownership of these rules, they respond well and their behaviour is good both inside and outside the classroom. All staff use praise well as a reward and pupils appreciate that their efforts are noticed. Pupils are keen to be mentioned in their class ‘Sunny Thoughts’ books and are proud to receive their certificates in celebration assemblies, for example when some of the children in the Foundation Stage class were rewarded for learning their sounds. Another very effective way in which the aims and values of the school are promoted and pupils’ self-esteem boosted in one class is the Wall of Kindness. Pupils can nominate others to be ‘bricks’ on the wall for a variety of actions such as ‘playing with someone who was lonely’ or ‘offering to put the rubbish in the bin’.

43 The school’s procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. Attendance records are meticulously kept and all absences followed up promptly. The school makes sure that parents know that regular attendance is an important factor in achieving good standards, and this is reflected in the high attendance rate. Certificates are awarded to pupils who have 100 per cent attendance. Almost all pupils arrive promptly but any lateness is recorded appropriately and monitored closely. The school works very closely with the education social worker where there are any concerns about persistent absence or lateness.

44 Procedures for assessing pupils’ academic development are satisfactory overall in reading, writing, mathematics, science and ICT. A new assessment policy has been implemented recently, introducing four formal periods of assessment each year. Teachers record pupils’ progress effectively against National Curriculum levels in reading, writing and science, but this is not yet the practice in mathematics where progress is recorded against the key objectives in the framework for teaching and learning of the National Numeracy Strategy. In these subjects the outcomes of assessment are appropriately stored in separate files, enabling co-ordinators to track pupils’ progress effectively. While assessment information is used to set group and individual targets for improvement in literacy, numeracy and science, it is not used sufficiently to help teachers plan next steps in pupils’ learning, other than in English. Consequently sometimes individual pupils’ learning needs are not always as well met as they might be. In other subjects, procedures for assessing pupils’ attainment and progress are underdeveloped, so accurate information about pupils’ attainment is not available to support teachers’ planning. In the Foundation Stage teachers are not using the identified ‘stepping stones’ towards the Early Learning goals as effectively as they might to help them plan specific learning activities to meet individual children’s learning needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45 The school’s partnership with parents is very good and one of its strengths. Parents

are kept well informed about school life and are encouraged to become involved in any way that they can. They make a very effective contribution to their children's learning. This is similar to the position at the time of the previous inspection.

46 Links with parents and carers are good at the Foundation Stage. Arrangements for starting school are very good, so children settle quickly and confidently into the life of the class. Information is regularly sent out to parents, and they are kept well informed of the curriculum that the class is going to cover. Many parents very regularly assist with reading and other small tasks at home.

47 In the meeting with parents before the inspection, the very good relationship between school and parents was apparent. This was confirmed by the many questionnaires that were returned which showed that parents think very highly of what the school provides for their children. Parents are very happy with almost all aspects of the school, particularly the excellent procedures for helping their children settle in, the leadership, the teaching, and the way that the school helps their children become more mature and responsible. All who returned their questionnaires, and those spoken to during the inspection, said that their children liked school – *'He wants to come on Saturday too!'* said one mother. Some parents choose to send their children to Cuxton even though they live a considerable distance away, because of its justified reputation as a caring community in which all pupils are valued. Just a very few parents expressed reservations about some aspects of the school's work, such as homework and annual reports, but inspection evidence indicates that these are not justified. The headteacher has plans to provide more opportunities for parents to contribute their views on school development, for example through a School Forum, which would have parent members as well as staff and governors.

48 Parents contribute to the standards achieved by listening to their children read at home – pupils cannot change their reading books unless an adult has written in their home-school contact book – and by encouraging them to complete their other homework. Parents also attend class assemblies, help regularly in the classrooms, accompany pupils on visits, run the successful book and present shops, and support the Friends of the School's fund raising events and the governors' action weekends to improve the school site. The money raised recently has helped fund the maintenance of the swimming pool and, this year, fund raising will contribute to improvements to the playground, contributing directly to standards achieved and to the quality of education provided. The school hopes to be able to repeat this year two of its most successful schemes to encourage more parents into school – the Internet Café Week and Dads into School. Almost all parents sign the comprehensive home-school agreement, which was drawn up with the adjacent junior school. All these links contribute to the very strong sense of community that is evident as soon as you enter the school.

49 The quality of information provided for parents is good overall, with staff making excellent use of computers for presenting information in an attractive, interesting way. The care and pride shown in presentation is a very good role model to pupils. The school is developing a very professional, effective website that includes pupils' delightful descriptions and drawings of staff, as well as the more usual information about the school's aims, routines and the subjects taught. There are also very informative newsletters from the headteacher and from each class which give details of school routines and forthcoming events, as well as what the pupils will be learning during the term. These are complemented by meetings with parents, such as the recent one on literacy, which allow teachers and parents to discuss what is going to be taught and the methods used. The parents' notice board and suggestion box in the reception area, the notices by each classroom door and the leaflets on special educational needs and giving guidance to parent helpers, are further very good examples of the school's commitment to working closely with parents to encourage pupils' learning.

50 Parents are kept informed about their child's progress through termly consultation

evenings at which pupils' targets for improving their work are agreed, annual reports and, where appropriate, meetings with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). Parents are encouraged to contact the school at any time if they have concerns about their children's progress, and there is a time set aside each week for teachers to see parents if they wish. The annual reports have improved since the previous inspection and no longer use the impersonal statement bank. They indicate clearly what a pupil can do in each subject and usually include general targets for improvement. However, the addition of information on how well a pupil is achieving in relation to what is expected, and of more subject-specific targets for improvement, would give parents a better idea of their children's progress and the next steps in their learning. Similarly, giving pupils and parents the opportunity to contribute to the reports would encourage even greater involvement in their learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51 The headteacher's leadership of the school is very good. She is thoughtful, purposeful and communicates clear educational direction for it. Relatively new to the post, she has done well to manage the school through a difficult time recently, securing stability after a period of significant problems in recruiting and retaining staff. Her good management has ensured that strong teamwork is developing amongst the new teaching team and their firm commitment to the agreed aims, values and policies is now contributing positively to improving the school. She is effectively supported by her deputy. The school is very committed to inclusion; all pupils are fully included in all aspects of its work. The very good leadership of the school has been sustained since the previous inspection.

52 There are good arrangements in place to provide time for individual subject co-ordinators to monitor developments in their areas of responsibility. In some subjects like ICT, for example, the co-ordinator is managing a wide range of developments very well. In others, such as literacy, the co-ordinator has identified specific priorities for improvement and has devised a programme of activities designed to raise standards. Although there are plans in place to develop their role, the co-ordinators' are not yet using the time available for monitoring teaching and learning as effectively as they could in other subjects. As a result, the evaluation of teaching is insufficiently rigorous, so co-ordinators are not able to contribute as effectively as possible to the further development of their colleagues' skills.

53 The co-ordinator for special educational needs provides very good and effective leadership. She works closely with outside agencies to ensure that pupils get the best support available and she supports teachers and learning-support staff very well. She undertakes a detailed review of the previous year prior to planning further development, which ensures she has a clear view of the next steps required in managing and improving the provision. Regular meetings with both teaching staff and learning support assistants also contribute to the effectiveness of her management. Procedures for curriculum planning operate well, ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The high quality of provision for special educational needs has been sustained since the previous inspection.

54 The governing body plays a full part in managing the school. There is a very good and mutually supportive relationship between the headteacher and governors. All staff and governors are involved in reviewing the work of the school annually and identifying priorities for further development to be included in the school improvement plan. This very good arrangement reinforces the school's shared values and aims, strengthens teamwork and the commitment to improve and ensures that agreed policies and practice underpin the work of the school.

55 The school improvement plan is comprehensive and detailed. Useful action plans support the programme of planned initiatives, identifying responsibilities, timescale, resources

needed, monitoring arrangements and the criteria against which success will be measured. This provides a useful tool for the management of the further development of the school; its capacity to improve even further is very good. The very good leadership of the headteacher and the commitment and teamwork which characterises the work of everyone in the school provide an excellent basis for further development. Everyone in the school understands the importance of the task of raising standards of attainment, particularly in literacy and teachers are deployed effectively to promote this.

56 The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. The two principal committees meet regularly and report to the full governing body where all decisions are taken. All the school's policies are regularly reviewed and updated by governors. Individual governors have clear roles and responsibilities and are frequent visitors into the school, fully involved in aspects of its work through their links with both individual classes and subjects. They provide valuable written reports on monitoring visits for other members of the committee. The headteacher keeps governors well informed about planned developments and, along with their own monitoring and evaluation, this ensures they are fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses, enabling them to provide appropriate challenge to the school as it seeks to improve.

57 The school has tackled the key issues from the last inspection satisfactorily, despite the very unsettled period that followed with a high turnover of staff and the difficulties in recruiting and retaining new teachers. This has had a negative impact on the speed with which the school has been able to address identified weaknesses in standards, particularly in literacy. There have been steps forward however, in the improved arrangements made for children in the Foundation Stage and the provision now made to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils.

58 Day-to-day management is very good, ensuring the school runs smoothly and efficiently. The headteacher is very well supported by able and efficient administrative staff, who contribute most effectively to the running of the school.

59 Financial planning and the monitoring of expenditure are very good. The management committee makes an important contribution to the strategic management of the school; members receive very good advice and support from an independent financial consultant. There are close links between the budget and planned developments identified in the school improvement plan and this ensures the headteacher and governors are able to manage resources efficiently and effectively. There are plans to review the organisation of classes in the light of the number of pupils on roll and appropriate contingency funds available to preserve existing staffing levels in the short term. Careful planning is ensuring a minimum of disruption and prevented financial deficit. The use of specific grants is good; additional grants and funds are used effectively to benefit the school.

60 Effective measures for budgetary control are in place. The consultant provides very good financial information to the governors and headteacher. Governors are involved in reviewing the outcomes of developments identified in the school improvement plan. Action plans support the work required to address identified priorities and they include some indication of how such planned development will be evaluated. However, the identification of the ways in which spending on specific developments will be judged in relation to the impact on standards and the quality of education provided by the school are underdeveloped. The governing body has a useful statement of best value, but these principles are not yet sufficiently rigorously applied in comparing the performance of the school with others, for example, or in challenging its use of resources.

61 The school is generously staffed ensuring classes are relatively small; teachers are experienced and skilled and in the main are appropriately deployed. Good use is also made of

the skilled and effective learning support assistants to support teaching and learning across the school, including at times pupils with special educational needs. Procedures for performance management are fully in place, enabling the headteacher to identify strengths and weaknesses. She has regular reviews with teachers to discuss their performance and further professional development. This makes an important contribution towards the quality of teaching in the school. There are good arrangements for supporting newly qualified teachers. The deputy headteacher takes responsibility as mentor; she has weekly meetings with the newly qualified teacher currently in post to discuss issues of concern and at times works with her in the classroom. The clear guidance provided by the mentor, the good support given by all staff and the local education authority's induction programme are all contributing positively towards ensuring the newly qualified teacher is making good progress in developing her professional skills and that her particular needs are being met well.

62 Overall accommodation is good. It is spacious and well cared for; the caretaker takes a pride in the school and ensures that it is clean and well maintained. There is valuable additional space for a computer suite, a special educational needs room and after school care. Attractive displays of pupils' work enhance all areas of the school. The school has a large hall, which provides a good space for indoor physical education. There are plans agreed for a valuable extension to the main building to accommodate Foundation Stage children and to provide better facilities to support their learning outdoors. The extensive school grounds are most attractive and provide good opportunities to support teaching and learning in a wide range of subjects. Resources for learning are satisfactory overall; in ICT they are good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

63 The headteacher, staff and governors should continue to build on the success they have had in developing the school. To improve the standards of pupils' attainment and the quality of education provided they should now:

1 Improve the standard of pupils' writing, by:

- (a) building on the flexible use of the national literacy strategy to provide more opportunities for pupils to write in an increased range of forms and for a wider variety of purposes and audiences
- (b) teaching skills of planning, drafting and re-drafting and providing more opportunities for pupils to draft and re-draft their work using a computer
- (c) extending pupils' skills of writing through other subjects of the curriculum
- (d) creating stimulating writing areas in the classrooms where pupils can go to write for different purposes
- (e) providing opportunities for writing in role play
- (f) modelling writing of different kinds
- (g) improving the quality of teachers' handwriting as an example to pupils in their books

(Paragraphs: 24; 84 – 86)

2 Ensure that the management of children's learning in the Foundation Stage is as effective as possible, by:

- (a) developing a wider range of organisational arrangements in the classroom and adopting a variety of teaching styles to address the needs of different groups in the class
- (b) simplifying procedures for assessing children's acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills
- (c) using the 'stepping stones' to plan for further learning
- (d) using the space and resources available to provide more opportunities to learn through practical activity and structured play and exploiting the opportunities for learning these provide

(Paragraphs: 21; 28; 44; 66; 73 – 74)

3 Develop the role of the subject co-ordinators so they contribute more fully to the monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching, by

- (a) building on the existing strategies for monitoring planning, to include teaching, scrutiny of pupils' work and assessment
- (b) ensuring the quality of teaching is rigorously evaluated
- (c) extending the opportunities individual co-ordinators have to provide support for the development of teachers' skills in the subjects for which they are responsible

(Paragraphs: 52; 87; 93; 100; 105; 114; 118; 125; 139)

4 Devise appropriate assessment procedures in those subjects where they are lacking and ensure that teachers' assessment of pupils' learning fully informs

their planning, so that planned activities meet individual pupils' learning needs, by:

- (a) ensuring there are agreed procedures for assessment in all subjects
- (b) fully implementing the school's policy for assessment
- (c) using the outcomes of assessment to identify specific learning objectives and targets for small groups and individual pupils
- (d) ensuring that planned activities meet individual pupils' learning needs

(Paragraphs: 44; 93; 99; 105; 109; 114; 118; 139)

The school has already identified some of these issues as priorities for development. There is already a firm commitment and detailed plans for improving standards in writing.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	11	8	0	0	0
Percentage	0	24	44	32	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		99
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		17

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	21	18	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	14	19
	Girls	16	17	18
	Total	33	31	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (64)	79 (77)	95 (91)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	18	18
	Girls	17	15	17
	Total	34	33	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (86)	85 (84)	90 (89)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	97
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
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.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.5
Average class size	24.75

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	150

Financial information

Financial year	2001 –02
	£
Total income	393 517
Total expenditure	410 436
Expenditure per pupil	3569
Balance brought forward from previous year	32 340
Balance carried forward to next year	15 421

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	11
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	99
Number of questionnaires returned	67

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	27	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	37	4	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	46	6	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	49	9	0	3
The teaching is good.	73	24	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60	36	3	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	22	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	16	3	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	70	27	1	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	67	27	0	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66	28	0	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	42	1	0	17

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

64 The school makes satisfactory provision for children in the Foundation Stage. Last time the school was inspected two of the key issues for action concerned the provision for this age group. One concerned the disruption of children's learning by unnecessary movement between rooms and this is now better. The second was to provide more effective teaching, particularly in expectations for children to settle quickly to tasks and remain involved. Again this is better, with children generally concentrating appropriately. While this aspect of teaching has improved, the wider need of providing more effective teaching still applies.

65 Children enter the school in September or January in the year in which they become five. They start school with attainment broadly in line with the county average. By the time they start in Year 1, most children, including those with special educational needs, have made satisfactory progress towards the Early Learning Goals set for children of this age, achieving all of them other than in writing.

66 The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory; some good teaching was observed, although at other times there is too much emphasis on whole class teaching. The school provides a caring and welcoming environment for these young children. The classroom assistant makes a positive contribution to their learning. Together the staff provide a satisfactory range of planned learning experiences, with an appropriate mix of teacher directed and child-chosen activities to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum. The activities children choose, however, are not always used as effectively as they could be to extend or reinforce their knowledge, understanding or skills. At times the space and the range of resources available are not used to their full advantage to promote children's learning, for example through practical activity or structured play. Satisfactory use is made of the existing outdoor facilities, although these will be significantly improved along with the new classroom being provided for children in the Foundation Stage. Procedures for assessment are over-complex and insufficient use is made of the identified 'stepping stones' towards the Early Learning Goals as teachers plan the next steps in children's learning.

Personal, social and emotional development.

67 The teaching in this area of learning is good. Children make good progress, attaining better than the level expected for their age group by the time they enter Year 1. They quickly settle into the routines of school, helped by the staff's very good induction procedures. The teacher and the learning support assistant have very good relationships with the children. Children generally respond well to an ethos that promotes good behaviour and care for one another and the good role models that the adults provide. Most can co-operate well with each other; for example, two boys took turns fairly using a computer mouse, helped by a sand-timer that the teacher has taught them to use.

68 From the start, staff expect children to take some responsibility for organising aspects of their work. In their free play, they are expected to get out and put away toys. Each child recognises a responsibility for their personal belongings; for example, with the baskets in which they carry their physical education (PE) kit over to the hall and back. Although they dress and undress at different rates, almost all children show a good level of independence and they are developing a good awareness of the rules of safety and personal hygiene.

69 The teacher has appropriately high expectations for children's behaviour. As a result,

children are developing positive attitudes to learning, and most settle promptly to both self-chosen and teacher-chosen tasks, sustaining concentration for an appropriate length of time for this age group. Most children show a good level of commitment to the task and show pride in their efforts.

Communication, language and literacy

70 Teaching is satisfactory and this ensures children make satisfactory progress. Children enter the school with attainment in line with that generally found, but with wide variations in capability across the class. By the time they enter Year 1 most children have developed their skills of reading and speaking and listening, satisfactorily achieving the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning, but their progress in writing is unsatisfactory and they fail to achieve this goal.

71 Attainment in spoken language and communication is generally similar to that found in other schools. The staff satisfactorily promote speaking and listening skills. Most of the children listen to each other with interest, in both large and small groups. Social times, such as having a drink in the middle of the morning, are satisfactorily used to encourage conversation between children. They are willing to talk and express their thoughts, but staff miss opportunities to extend their vocabulary such as when children described fireworks.

72 By the time pupils enter the Year 1 class they have made satisfactory progress in reading, but unsatisfactory progress in writing. In both reading and writing teaching opportunities are being missed. There is an insufficiently broad range of ideas and knowledge applied to ensure this area of the curriculum is taught well to this age group. More able children are not being sufficiently challenged and extended.

73 All children are developing satisfactory knowledge of initial sounds. The teacher uses lively methods to teach this. Most children are able to recognise their first name. They are being taught satisfactorily to start to read a few of the key words for this age group, but expectations for children's progress are too low. Children who are ready and able to read are still being given only picture books. By the time children enter the Year 1 class the standard of writing overall is lower than that generally found and many do not achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area. Too few purposeful opportunities are given for pupils to write within their play. Supplies of paper, pens, crayons and pencils are readily available, but children rarely use them to write. The school has just started a new approach to early writing, *Write-Dance*, which children enjoy, but it is too early to evaluate its impact on writing. Unsatisfactory assessment procedures in the Foundation Stage make it difficult for the staff to be fully aware of what children can do and therefore focus work closely to their next learning needs.

Mathematical development

74 Teaching and learning are satisfactory. By the time children enter Key Stage 1, attainment in mathematics is in line with the level expected of children of this age but too few children will have exceeded it. Some good opportunities are provided to extend children's skills of counting, such as when they register their names on a number line each morning so that they can count the number present and compare this to the number reached on the line. This is helping them learn the 'teen' numbers. Learning aims for individual lessons are too general and unchallenging however. As a result of an unsatisfactory assessment system, the work given to children, while suitable for about half the class, is at too low a level to meet the learning needs of others who therefore are making insufficient progress.

75 The school has a target of extending children's mathematical language and the teacher provides satisfactorily for this. Children take part in number games and songs, make pictures

from two-dimensional sticky shapes, make rockets from cylinder and sort out toys. As a result children can use mathematical language appropriately to describe shapes and position.

Knowledge and understanding of the world.

76 The teaching in this area of the curriculum is satisfactory. Children come to school with a basic knowledge of the world around them and they make satisfactory progress in extending it, attaining average levels by the time they transfer to Year 1. They learn about their immediate surroundings and can talk satisfactorily about their family life and experiences, such as their walk to school. Children are helped to understand change effectively using photographs of the school grounds taken at different times of the year. Teaching in this area could be better at times, as opportunities are missed to introduce children to natural objects and being encouraged to look closely and record what they see. Girls are not sufficiently encouraged to build and construct.

77 Children are learning to use the computers, acquiring appropriate skills in using the mouse for example and they use a range of basic programs effectively. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to raise standards in literacy. Children use their knowledge of how to operate a program to help them select and follow a story and rhymes.

Physical development

78 The teaching of physical development is good. Children make good progress in this area and standards are better than generally found by the time they move to Year 1 because of this good teaching. In their classroom, children move around confidently, with a good sense of balance and generally mindful of the needs of others. The teacher's clear instructions encourage children to join in confidently with their *Write-Dance* lessons and, as a result of her high expectations, they concentrate well, try really hard and achieve good results. Children are presented with many suitable activities to develop their fine motor skills through handling appropriate objects and tools. Although resources outside are limited at present, satisfactory use is made of them to promote children's physical development.

Creative development.

79 The teaching of creative development is satisfactory and children make satisfactory progress over the year. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children attain the Early Learning Goal, in line with children nationally. A very good range of materials is provided for art, but this wide choice is insufficiently promoted, so children's work is often too similar. Satisfactory opportunities are provided for children to develop their early music skills. Staff lead singing satisfactorily to reinforce other areas of the curriculum, such as number in mathematics and sounds in their language and literacy lessons. Learning is supported satisfactorily by classroom displays, such as initial letter sound cards and a picture of the world from space.

ENGLISH

80 Pupils continue to make progress in speaking and listening and reading at a rate similar to that observed at the time of the last inspection and so standards are much the same and broadly in line with those expected of pupils this age. Currently their progress in writing is not as good, however, so when they leave the school aged seven pupils' writing is below average. A recent period of instability, with frequent changes of staff, has had a negative impact on standards. While a focus on raising standards in reading last year has had a positive impact and led to significant improvement, the current focus on improving writing has not yet had

sufficient time to have a similar impact.

81 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they receive very good support and additional help. Girls often do better than boys in English. This is an issue already identified by the school, although as yet there are no specific strategies in place to tackle it.

82 Standards in speaking and listening are often above average by the age of seven, with pupils making good progress in developing their skills. Teachers make appropriate provision for discussion and question and answer sessions in lessons. Pupils are given time to answer, respond or contribute and, in most lessons, teachers are good at ensuring everyone is involved. They are good at initiating discussions, by posing a range of questions to the class or individuals to prompt their thinking; they accept pupils' ideas and develop their suggestions well. In talking about a story read earlier, for example, the teacher's questions extended the whole class's thinking and led one pupil to conclude, '*It must have been a stray cat*'. This approach is helping to develop pupils' skills in all subjects. Progress is particularly good in Year 2 although, because pupils are frequently involved in sometimes lengthy discussions at the start of lessons, younger pupils benefit from their involvement with older ones.

83 In reading, standards improve steadily through the key stage and most pupils now achieve expected levels by the time they leave. By the time they are seven, many pupils can read passages with reasonable accuracy and fluency from their reading books; a smaller number reach higher standards. Pupils grow in confidence over the key stage as they tackle different texts. They can often retell a story they have been reading, although some still find it difficult to talk about the meaning of some words they have read. In class pupils identify their favourite storybook characters, like Elmer, but they find it more difficult to discuss the different characters in a story they are reading for themselves. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of phonics and this knowledge is successful in helping many pupils work out words they do not immediately recognise. Very few pupils can use other strategies to help them understand the text however. The recent grading of all reading materials in the school is helping to improve pupils' progress because the materials they take home to read are now of the same level as those they read at school.

84 Pupils' writing is below average by the time they are seven in terms of composition, spelling and handwriting. The rate of progress in developing their writing skills is unsatisfactory through the key stage and many could do better. The school has rightly identified this as a priority for improvement and, although early in the year, there are indications that standards are improving. Some pupils in the current Year 2 are on line to achieve expected levels, but very few will achieve a higher level; for a significant proportion, much of their work shows a lack of care in presentation. There is a clear emphasis on improving pupils' understanding of punctuation and by the time they leave the school most pupils can write in sentences with appropriate punctuation used accurately. There is good reinforcement of basic rules, as in the use of capital letters in their acrostic poems on *Harvest* for example and teachers frequently remind pupils about what they need to do to improve, like adding full stops. Higher attaining pupils are learning to use linking words, such as *next*, *before*, *meanwhile*; some use a good range of vocabulary, although spelling is frequently inaccurate. There has been some discussion on planning for writing, with story planners for example, but generally this is underemphasised and most pupils include little consideration of setting, characters or sequence in their work. Pupils generally have insufficient opportunities to learn and practise the skills of drafting and re-drafting their work and in using the computers to help them do so. Insufficient emphasis is given to improving pupils' writing skills in other subjects.

85 Pupils' handwriting has been unsatisfactory. There is now a consistent approach to teaching handwriting across the school, with all pupils learning a joined cursive style right from the start. This builds in the interesting work being started in reception with the *Write-Dance*

programme. This is ensuring that even the youngest children are learning how to form letters correctly. This is an improvement, since letter formation among a high proportion of older pupils is inhibiting their ability to improve their handwriting.

86 The quality of teaching in English is consistently good throughout the key stage. The new team work well together and the co-ordinator's planning is ensuring a consistency in approach among the three classes and continuity across Years 1 and 2. There is a common understanding of the need to improve standards and to extend pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum. This is particularly effective in raising standards in speaking and listening and in reading, shown in the way teachers talk so effectively with their pupils, promoting discussion, asking questions and prompting response to ideas or things read. However, the provision teachers make to improve standards in writing is not yet as effective as it could be. Most classrooms lack a writing area, to which pupils can go to write for different purposes, and teachers are not effectively modelling writing of different kinds for pupils. Lessons are clearly structured and move along with appropriate pace. Teachers ensure pupils are fully engaged and involved, making very good use of the learning support assistants to help them to manage the various group activities more efficiently. Teachers' marking is generally positive, providing remarks that are encouraging; they use praise effectively to motivate and reward their pupils. However, there is not yet a sufficiently consistent approach to correcting and improving pupils' spelling and too often teachers' handwriting is unhelpful in enabling pupils to improve their own work.

87 The new English co-ordinator is leading development work effectively. As a leading literacy teacher she is providing good advice and support as the school works hard to improve standards. This has been particularly successful in improving standards in reading. She has a clear plan for improving standards in writing. While classroom monitoring has begun, the evaluation of teaching is not sufficiently rigorous so the co-ordinator's ability to support the development of teachers' skills is not used as effectively as it might be. The regular scrutiny of pupils' work is also not yet sufficiently well established to provide further indication of standards or to track their progress. Assessment in English has been improved, with pupils' attainment recorded against National Curriculum levels, and the co-ordinator is now using this information to support her planning for the whole key stage. Substantial work has also been completed in banding and reorganising reading resources, so the books pupils read are now much more closely matched to their levels of attainment.

88 The school has good resources for teaching and learning. The classification of all reading materials has contributed positively to improving pupils' progress. The library is temporarily housed in the hall until the new building work is complete but pupils are still able to use it appropriately. At times learning support assistants provide good support to individuals as they choose or change their books.

MATHEMATICS

89 In the 2002 National Curriculum tests for seven year olds, pupils' attainment was better than that generally found and in line with schools in similar circumstances. This is significantly better than in the previous year when results dipped. It is similar to the results of the national tests at the time of the last inspection.

90 Inspection evidence indicates that pupils are making satisfactory progress and by the age of seven achieve standards in line with those expected of pupils their age. No significant differences in levels of attainment were found between boys and girls during the inspection.

91 Across the school, many pupils demonstrate satisfactory knowledge and understanding of number facts. They are generally keen to learn and take part in the lessons.

In Year 1, pupils use computers to fill in missing numbers up to 15 and confidently count on to higher numbers, but they find counting back harder. Computers are used regularly and this works well to encourage pupils to learn. Teachers challenge pupils appropriately in Year 2 to count in fives, tens and twos, but many still need a 100 square to help. A few pupils are able to count in threes and are aware, when the teacher's puppet misses out a number in the sequence, what the number is. By the age of seven, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of adding and subtracting numbers to 20. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to explain their methods and understanding. Most can confidently explain why a number is odd or even, although they are not yet able to multiply. In their work on shape and space, pupils know the names of 2-D and 3-D shapes and know how many sides and corners they have. Their understanding of mathematical vocabulary is satisfactory. This is currently an appropriate priority target for the whole school, as many in Year 2 are not sure, for instance, of what *minus* means. Other subjects, such as geography when they learn about scale, or when they measure in design and technology, make a contribution to improving pupils' mathematical skills.

92 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. During the inspection, equal amounts of satisfactory and good teaching were seen. Teachers are familiar and secure with the National Numeracy Strategy, which they use satisfactorily; the three-part lesson suggested by the strategy is well established. In the mental arithmetic part of the lessons, the methods that teachers employ ensure that all children can contribute. However, there are times when too few pupils in the class are involved and contributing satisfactorily, which inhibits their learning. Whilst the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is satisfactory overall, teachers could do better in challenging their higher attaining pupils. Lessons have clear objectives that are generally well explained to pupils. These are written on the board and referred to at the end of the lesson to see if they have been achieved, which again is good. Lessons are satisfactorily planned, mostly with due regard to the differing capabilities of pupils in the class, although there are times when work is differentiated more by age than by capability. Some good teaching methods are used. In their better lessons, teachers form strong connections with previous learning. For example, one teacher used the good example of 'longer notes' from the previous day's music lesson to reinforce an understanding of measures. This particular teacher also used hand and arm movements very well, and all these things helped pupils to understand. At other times explanations are not so clear. Pupils are supported well by teaching assistants. However, too few reminders are given to pupils to learn mental arithmetic facts so that they can recall them without effort.

93 The school administers national tests and has suitable different types of assessments of pupils over the year. Currently, the information gained is recorded in relation to the key objectives for each year indicated in the National Numeracy Strategy rather than in National Curriculum levels, thus making it harder to be clear about actual levels of attainment. Work is collected from a small number of pupils but unlike in English, it is not compared with the levels expected so it is not helping with assessment or the monitoring of pupils' learning. Although the headteacher monitors teaching, there are insufficient opportunities for the co-ordinator to observe teaching and learning in classrooms and so contribute effectively to their development. The school has put plans in place to improve this.

SCIENCE

94 Standards are broadly in line with those expected of pupils at the age of seven. Pupils' progress is satisfactory across the school. The last time the school was inspected standards were better than those generally found and teaching and learning were good. The teaching of this new team of teachers is still good. No significant gender differences in levels of attainment were found during the inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make progress similar to the rest of their class.

95 By the end of Year 2, pupils' investigation skills are in line with those expected. As pupils move through the classes, they take part in a good range of practical activities that successfully develop their skills of observation. Pupils are given good opportunities to investigate through the appropriate use of their senses, such as when they hold chocolate and then chalk and see what happens in the warmth of their hands. They are able to make sensible judgements on the evidence that they have found from their investigations. Pupils record their findings in a wide variety of ways. This part of the science curriculum is well taught to both age groups in each class and to all pupils.

96 Pupils have a satisfactory understanding and knowledge of living things. They study a suitable range of topics. They recognise that living things grow and they know the basic conditions of life. Higher attaining pupils recognise that these requirements are similar for all groups of living things. They recognise that different living things are found in different places, such as the habitats of the pond, woods and field. Much of this work is reinforced through practical work such as visiting the three habitats and then researching the animals that live there from books and the Internet.

97 By the end of year 2, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties. Many pupils are beginning to understand the difference between natural and man-made materials, which they reinforce by sorting them out. They can sort materials into groups of flexible and non-flexible through writing about the weaving they have done in art. This forms strong connections with the literacy curriculum too.

98 Teaching is good. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is good overall, and sometimes very good. They use the rich local environment very well, and provide good opportunities for pupils to learn by carrying out interesting observations, predicting and experimenting, and thinking for themselves ensuring that scientific enquiry is taught well. In the best lessons teachers make strong connections with previous learning. In one lesson, for example, the teacher built very effectively on pupils' previous work on creatures and habitats. She used accurate scientific vocabulary and drew attention to it appropriately. Her own knowledge of the subject was good and this enabled her to pose very good questions and to explain things clearly and in an interesting way. As a result, with the teacher's help, pupils could sort the creatures that they had seen on their walk according to the three habitats they visited. This practical approach helps to promote concentration and good behaviour by holding the pupils' attention and helping to bring the subject alive for them.

99 Long term planning is satisfactory; teachers have recently introduced a new format for science lessons. Teachers plan for both the age groups in the classes, by covering the same material and then adding in simpler tasks for the younger pupils and extra support for pupils who need it. This is generally working well, although sometimes differentiation is only done by age group rather than capability. Assessment is satisfactory, undertaken regularly four times a year, and individual pupils' results are recorded. This part of the system is working well, but the outcomes of assessment are not sufficiently well used to inform planning. Examples of pupils' work are collected from three selected pupils, but these are not compared with levels within the National Curriculum, so do not add greatly to the co-ordinator's knowledge of pupils' progress

100 Leadership and management is good. The co-ordinator has been in post for only a short time, but she has a clear vision for the development of the subject. She has very good subject knowledge and has put together an innovative programme to raise standards. She has not yet fully put into practice a systematic programme for monitoring of teaching or learning and analysis of the school's results. While assessment in science is satisfactory, there is generally insufficient use of assessment information to ensure that plans meet the learning needs of all pupils in the class.

ART AND DESIGN

101 Pupils' attainment is in line with nationally expected standards at the end of their time in the school. Standards are similar to those found last time the school was inspected. Pupils of all abilities take part fully in the opportunities provided and pupils with special education needs achieve standards similar to other children in their age groups. The subject contributes effectively to pupils' personal development as a result of the overall provision and the range of planned experiences.

102 It was not possible to observe any art lessons during the inspection so it was not possible to make a judgement about the quality of the teaching. Judgements on the quality of the curriculum and the standards being achieved are based on discussions with pupils and staff, along with an examination of teachers' planning and the work displayed around the school.

103 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 show increasing skill in the use of colour, shape and texture and are able to use these elements successfully in their own work. They are developing a sound knowledge of different techniques and effects, using the good range of materials provided. Attainment in their collage work is good. Teachers give pupils ample opportunities to develop their skills of collage, with figures of themselves made wearing their own favourite clothes and costumes from history for example. They make clay model shoes to a high standard. Pupils have satisfactory control when using brushes and pencils. Teachers provide some opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of observational drawing, when they are given regular opportunities to practise their skills over time. In the brush and pencil club, they drew a toy rabbit and produced work of a good standard. Teachers introduce pupils to the work of a wide range of artists, whose work is sometimes well used as a finishing comparison with pupils' own work, for example, looking at the work of William Morris after a unit of work on gardens.

104 Teachers' planning is very clear. Planned work shows that pupils are involved with a good range of materials and a satisfactory range of techniques. Pupils are given good opportunities to select their own materials, from a good range of resources. This could be even stronger; for example, with a range of drawing implements to achieve a desired effect. Overall there is little evidence of observational drawing, three dimensional work or printing. In planning the lessons there is a good balance between art as a subject in its own right and its use to support learning in other areas. Art is well used to promote learning in areas such as cultural education, where faces made with seeds on plates are used to say 'hello' in many languages. ICT is particularly well used to extend pupils' skills in art. Teachers use visits and visitors well to stimulate pupils' interests and skill development.

105 The current joint co-ordinators have only had a very short time in post and have yet to make a positive impact in developing the subject. However, they are knowledgeable about art, have a strong sense of what is important for raising standards in the subject and a very firm will to succeed. They have not yet had time to monitor teaching or take action as a result of it. There is not yet a whole-school system for assessment and record-keeping in the subject. The school has a good range of art materials and of reproductions of artists' work. Art is well displayed and contributes strongly to the ethos within the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

106 It was possible to observe only one lesson in design and technology during the inspection. While it was not possible to evaluate teaching overall, there was sufficient evidence to support a judgement about standards from the displays of already completed work, photographs, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils. Standards are in line with those

expected of pupils by the age of seven, although this is not as high as that reported at the time of the last inspection.

107 Pupils have good opportunities to develop and extend their skills in design and technology and they achieve satisfactory standards by the time they leave the school. They use their experience of materials to help in their making and they can manipulate tools such as scissors safely and with appropriate control. They join materials in a number of ways, using glue, clips or stitching for example. They use other sources of information, such as books to help them generate ideas when they were researching moving toys, and they give appropriate attention to design. In some very good completed work on Joseph's coat, for example, pupils had disassembled a shirt to derive a pattern and then stitched pieces of fabric to create their own coat. The design was completed with printed fabric on which they had created repeating patterns.

108 Pupils make good progress in developing their skills. They learn to work with a range of materials and to join them in different ways. Their skills in designing improve as they begin to discuss how they are going to approach a particular problem rather than describing what they have done. With little support pupils were able to discuss the completed moving toys they had made, for example, while higher attaining pupils were beginning to evaluate what they had done and consider ways to improve them. In the single lesson seen pupils' response was very good; they were engrossed in their work showed considerable enjoyment as they worked with the tools and materials and were justifiably proud of their achievements.

109 Teaching in the lesson seen was very good. More generally teachers' planning indicates that they provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to work a range of materials, including paper, card, wood and fabrics. They show pupils how to use different materials and provide opportunities to work with them. Appropriate attention was paid to safety. There are no agreed procedures for assessment and so no information is available for the co-ordinator to track progress. Resources are satisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

110 Pupils achieve standards in line with national expectations by the age of seven. The previous inspection found standards were average, with good planning seen; this is still the case. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.

111 It was possible to observe only one lesson during the inspection. It is not possible therefore to form a firm overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning. Judgements of standards are based on the one lesson seen, discussions with pupils and teachers and teacher's planning for the unit of work to be undertaken this half-term.

112 Pupils make satisfactory progress. By the end of Year 2 they have studied the immediate environment, identifying features of their village which they record in words and pictures. They understand that some features are man-made and some natural. They visit the local woods and learn about different landscapes. Pupils are able to explain well how to find out information about far away places. For example, they suggest looking in books or the Internet, asking a friend who has been there or a travel agent. Year 2 pupils are satisfactorily learning skills of using maps of a range of scales to find places, and using the index to locate them in an atlas. They are well aware of places that are not local and list many that they have visited on holiday. However, they are not yet able confidently to compare the features of their own location with another. Helped by a teacher's good questioning, Year 1 pupils were learning about the need for a passport and making their own, although many were unsure of their own address. Pupils are interested and very keen to answer questions.

113 The quality of teachers' planning is good. It is undertaken jointly by the three members of staff involved with the age groups. The lessons are delivered in an innovative way in a block of six over a two-week period within a half-termly topic that includes science, history, geography, design and technology, and art and design. Although this is a new format, the system seems likely to succeed in raising standards, as pupils will be so quickly building on previous learning. The small amount of teaching seen in a Year 1/2 class was good. In this lesson, questioning was well used to prompt thinking and reinforce learning. The teacher used her own passport and the pupils' experiences of travel to further their understanding. The lesson was well supported by the learning support assistant. There is little evidence in teachers' planning of the use or development of pupils' skills of literacy or numeracy, but computers are used effectively at times to search for information.

114 Leadership and management are satisfactory. As yet there has been too little emphasis on the development of geography however. The co-ordinator has had no opportunities to monitor teaching and there is no school wide system for assessment or agreed record keeping. Consequently there is too little clarity about what standards are being achieved and how to raise them further. Assessment information is not well used to inform teachers' planning and frequently different tasks are provided for pupils of different ages rather than on the basis of their particular learning needs. The co-ordinator monitors planning and has begun to collect samples of pupils' work although she is not yet analysing them to provide information about standards and progress. Resources are satisfactory overall, but sets of atlases do not have an appropriate amount of detail in the index for Key Stage 1 pupils.

HISTORY

115 It was not possible to observe any lessons in history during the inspection and therefore there is insufficient evidence to support a judgement about teaching. Teachers' planning for the unit of work covered during the previous half term, pupils' completed work and discussions with them about it have informed judgements about the standards of their attainment and progress. Pupils attain standards in line with those expected nationally. This is unchanged from that found at the time of the previous inspection.

116 By the age of seven pupils have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the topics they study; some pupils have a good level of knowledge. By the time they leave the school pupils understand change, for example in styles of clothing and they can discuss the different materials used to make them. They are able to explain that people wore different clothes at different periods in history. Pupils are very interested in the past and very keen to talk about it. They can explain about men wearing wigs '*because they didn't like their own hair*', ladies wearing long dresses with hoops, and opera hats that can be closed up. They remember many facts because of the interesting and exciting way that they are helped to learn. For example, they have visited a local museum where they dress up in some of the items and have visitors in period costumes. This approach to teaching and learning works very well, ensuring pupils retain a lot of the information taught to them. Teachers encourage pupils to compare and notice the differences between then and now, such as between different ages of shoes that they reproduce with great detail in clay. History lessons help promote their social skills of how to ask questions of a visitor and how to behave when visiting a museum.

117 As with other subjects, history is successfully taught in two-week blocks. Teachers' planning shows they have a good knowledge of the subject and that their lessons are well structured. Little use is made of pupils' literacy or mathematical skills, although good use is made of the computers at times to search for information. Teachers' planning is good, with lessons planned jointly this ensures appropriate consistency across the three mixed age classes.

118 Leadership and management is satisfactory overall. However, the co-ordinator is not yet evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and there is no agreed approach to assessment or record keeping. Resources are satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

119 Pupils' learning in information and communication technology (ICT) is good and many of them achieve standards above those expected nationally by the age of seven.

120 Right from the start pupils acquire good mouse control, using this skill to click, drag and drop as they move cubes around the screen to build a tower for example. They soon learn to select various fonts and to change them and to vary the size and colour of text. By the time they leave the school pupils can assemble text using word processing software, as they did successfully in their Fireworks poems for example. Many of them are beginning to edit text and add clipart to their stories; some can already insert appropriate missing punctuation. Most pupils can store and retrieve their own work; they have their own files on the hard drive onto which they can log on to use. Pupils can present information using the computer to create pictograms or block graphs as they did to show favourite party food amongst the class. They can follow on-screen instructions appropriately as they work with various programs. There has been some very good work with *Colour Magic* recently and most pupils are able to use a range of the tools in this program, particularly well illustrated as they used the spray can to create firework pictures. At other times they have used the paint brush to create a picture and stamps to create a repeating pattern. Good use is made of the computers to promote pupils' learning in other subjects. They have completed some good work in art recently, using the grid and fill functions to create a picture in the style of Mondrian.

121 Good use is made the computers to extend pupils skills in literacy and numeracy. In literacy pupils can use the computer to select a word from a word bank to complete a sentence, add endings to sentences so they make sense, they can create lists and they are able to print their own work. As they use text to communicate information pupils in year 2 have been able to add text to speech bubbles. In numeracy pupils have been able to follow positional language to create a picture, putting a tree in the *middle* for example, and then putting a pond in *front* of the tree and a cow *beside* the pond. This good use of computers, both in the computer suite and in the classrooms is contributing very positively to extending pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

123 Pupils' response to ICT is good. Most of them approach the computers with confidence, and they are able to work independently with them managing the various programs for themselves. Pupils observed working with the computers concentrated intensively for lengthy periods, engrossed in the tasks set.

124 Teaching in ICT is good. Teachers use ICT successfully in a variety of their lessons. The timetabling of the computer suite is effective and this enables teachers to plan for its use. The well established routines for group work and the flexible use of learning support assistants ensures that this facility is well used. Teachers are able to give clear and precise instructions so pupils are quickly enabled to get on and they provide good support where individual pupils need it. Teachers are not afraid to let pupils experiment with the various programs and this promotes confidence and learning.

125 ICT is particularly well led and managed and this makes a most significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning and the good progress they make. The detailed policy ensures that ICT is an integral part of the curriculum and that pupils' skills in ICT are developed effectively across the whole curriculum. The co-ordinator has provided very useful guidelines to support teachers' use of the different available programs and this helps teachers in their planning. The development of individual portfolios is enabling the co-ordinator to track pupils'

progress; her evaluative comments on pupils' work informs and supports teachers' assessment of their learning. The monitoring of teaching across the school is not yet sufficiently well developed. It has, however, ensured that improvement since the last inspection has been good, particularly in the increased provision of computers and the organisation of the computer suite.

MUSIC

126 Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their skills in music as they move through the school and, by the time they leave, they achieve standards appropriate for their age. Although overall standards are not as high as reported at the time of the last inspection, on some occasions the standard of pupils' singing is good.

127 In both the lessons seen during the inspection pupils were enthusiastic and eager to participate in the planned activities. Pupils understand the difference between pulse and rhythm. They demonstrated they can keep a steady pulse in the rhyme *Grand Old Duke of York*; most Year 2 pupils could then stamp the pulse and clap the rhythm. In their new work on duration pupils could recognise short and long sounds in songs they have sung and in thinking about the sounds made by fireworks. They understand the role of the conductor as they begin to repeat long and short firework sounds.

128 Pupils sing songs from memory and join in action songs. When they sing together in the hall their singing is tuneful and words are usually clear. Pupils also listen attentively when music is played for them, as they enter the hall for collective worship for example. Good use is made of these occasions to provide music of different styles or related to particular theme, as it was during the inspection with Handel's *Music for the Royal Fireworks*. The music board in the hall is a good way of providing information about the pieces played and to pose questions to stimulate pupils' thinking about them. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to compose their own pieces and they are introduced to graphic scoring using symbols to represent the sounds instruments make. Pupils perform music in a variety of contexts, to parents in assemblies, at special occasions such as harvest or Christmas and in the larger Medway Music Festival. The band and choir provide opportunities for pupils to participate in extra-curricular musical activities.

129 The quality of teaching is good. Detailed planning around six topics ensures that pupils experience a fairly well balanced programme of musical activities. The teachers' own knowledge, understanding and confidence enables pupils to make appropriate progress in developing their own musical skills. Teachers' warm response to their pupils' efforts is clearly encouraging and motivating. Where teaching is best, teachers transmit an obvious enjoyment of music. In a very good lesson observed, the teacher was able to organise interesting ways to promote pupils' understanding of pulse and rhythm and the result was an ensemble performance with a pulse of 'clothes, clothes' against a rhythm of 'cardigan, anorak, jumper, dress', which pupils enjoyed very much. Such lively and engaging teaching contributed to the good progress pupils made in this lesson. Teachers manage their classes well in music lessons, communicating clear expectations; pupils respond well.

130 Leadership and management are good overall. The new co-ordinator is just beginning to have a positive impact; she has a clear view of further development, for which she has a subject development plan. She has identified clear priorities, including improving singing, providing additional challenge for Year 2 pupils and beginning monitoring teaching and learning across the school. Resources for music are good with a useful range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments readily accessible.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

131 Although there were few opportunities to observe lessons in physical education during the inspection there is sufficient evidence to indicate that pupils' learning is good. The standard of pupils' attainment is not yet at the level seen in the last inspection, but it is early in the school year and since learning is good many are likely to achieve an above average standard by the time they leave. Pupils continue to have the benefit of learning to swim in the shared pool on site.

132 In lessons seen pupils demonstrate good control over their bodies as they work on a variety of pieces of apparatus. Movement is well controlled as they travel along or over, and they control their dismount well. In a lesson of dance, pupils responded very well, trying out a variety of movements, exploring the theme of the lesson imaginatively and working very hard to develop a sequence of movements. They showed good control over their movement, changing direction and speed with good awareness of space.

133 The teaching is good. Teachers manage their classes well, clear in their expectations which they communicate well to their pupils. This ensures that pupils respond well. Lessons have a good structure; teachers begin lessons with appropriate warm up activities and pupils know the purpose of these. Pupils are given time to explore their own ideas and opportunities to demonstrate their work to others. Teachers are well able to comment on the quality of pupils' work, making very good use of these occasions to make teaching points to all the class and indicating how they can improve what they are doing. Lessons are managed with good pace, which ensures that pupils are fully involved throughout and as a result pupils make considerable efforts during their physical education lessons. Teachers are generally well prepared, they share the lesson objective with the pupils and make good use of learning support assistants to support individuals.

134 The co-ordinator has a clear view of physical education across the school because she monitors teaching and learning. This enables her to track standards and progress effectively. The school hall is of a good size and facilitates vigorous physical exercise; teachers use it well to promote the development of pupils' skills. There is an appropriate range of large apparatus and a good supply of small games equipment. The school enjoys good outdoor facilities. Pupils enjoy some extra-curricular physical activities, during their clubs for example, and the provision of equipment during lunchtime provides further opportunities for physical activity.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135 Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve standards broadly in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus by the age of seven. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make progress similar to the rest of the class. Pupils display positive attitudes towards the subject.

136 It was possible to see only one lesson during the inspection, so it is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning. Judgements on the quality of attainment and progress are based on the one lesson seen, discussion with pupils and teachers, an analysis of pupils' work in their books and on display and a scrutiny of teachers' planning.

137 By the end of Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of stories from the bible and other religious traditions which are used well to promote pupils' understanding as they move through the school. For example, pupils have recently studied the Christian story of the

Prodigal Son and the story of Rama and Sita from Hinduism. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding about aspects of Christianity; they know for instance that Jesus taught his people through telling special stories called parables. Most pupils know that celebrations are an important part of many faiths and can name some important days and explain a little about them. Pupils are keen to talk and be involved in the work, and they contribute well to discussion when the lesson includes opportunities for this. The other main religions studied are Hinduism and Judaism. Here pupils make copies of the Torah, the Jewish holy book, and its decorated cover. They can explain well about the *yad*, the pointer that is used when reading it. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

138 The curriculum provided is satisfactory. Lessons follow a long-term plan drawn up satisfactorily from the locally agreed syllabus, but also use materials from other sources. This forms a satisfactory basis for teaching and pupils develop satisfactory knowledge. Acts of collective worship support the subject well. Information and communication technology is little used in the subject. Too little use is made of pupils' literacy skills.

139 Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. However, there are no agreed procedures for assessment and record keeping so teachers have insufficient information about pupils' existing knowledge and understanding to support their further planning. The co-ordinator is new to the school. She monitors teachers' planning and, although she is not yet monitoring teaching, she has already made plans to observe lessons. Resources are satisfactory. Good use is made of visitors such as the ministers of local churches.