

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SWALECLIFFE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Whitstable

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118558

Headteacher: Mr David Hares

Reporting inspector: Mrs Margaret Britton  
17678

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> July 2003

Inspection number: 253885

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 and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address:  
Bridgefield Road  
Swalecliffe  
Whitstable

Postcode: CT5 2PH

Telephone number: 01227 272101

Fax number: 01227 281336

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Roger Shillum

Date of previous inspection: June 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17678	Margaret Britton	Registered inspector	Music	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?
8992	Julian Vischer	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?
33006	Carol Breakwell	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design	
3942	Keith Sanderson	Team inspector	Science Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22778	Anne Shannon	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Religious education Special educational needs	
1193	Gillian Wiles	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Geography History	
30691	Kathleen Yates	Team inspector	English Design and technology	

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>12</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>35</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school serves the seaside area of Tankerton, to the east of Whitstable. This much larger than average community primary school caters for 608 pupils aged between four and 11 years old. The pupils are drawn mainly from Tankerton, Chestfield and Swalecliffe but a number of parents choose to bring their children from further afield. The pupils are taught in 21 classes arranged by age. Sixty-eight pupils (11 per cent) are eligible for free school meals which is similar to the national average. The majority of pupils are from a white, British background and 34 pupils (six per cent) are from other ethnic backgrounds including Traveller families. Four pupils (Bengali) have English as an additional language and of these, two are at an early stage of language development. One hundred and nineteen pupils (19.6 per cent) are identified as having special educational needs. Of these, nine pupils (almost two per cent) have a statement and six pupils (one per cent), looked after by local education authorities have behaviour and learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is similar to the national average.

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

This is a good school that gives good value for money. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6. The quality of teaching is good overall. The headteacher and the governing body provide very good leadership. They are well supported by the senior management team and the good teamwork of the staff.

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

- The standards pupils achieve in English, mathematics, science, physical education and religious education in Years 5 and 6 are above average.
- Pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> and in Years 3 to 6.
- The quality of teaching is good and the teachers manage the pupils' behaviour and learning very well.
- Pupils' behaviour, their attitudes to learning and to one another are very good.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The range of educational activities provided for pupils in after school clubs and through educational visits is very good.
- The provision for pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral and social development is very good and they respond very well by respecting the feelings, values and beliefs of others.
- Parents make a very good contribution to the work of the school.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership for the school.
- The governing body is very effective in fulfilling its responsibilities.

#### **What could be improved**

- The assessment and recording of pupils' learning in the foundation subjects<sup>2</sup>.
- The link between the strategies used for teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and those in Years 1 and 2.
- Opportunities for pupils to take more initiative and personal responsibility for their learning.

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

<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage includes children aged from three to the end of the reception year.

<sup>2</sup> The foundation subjects are: art and design; design and technology; geography; history; information and communication technology; music; physical education and religious education.





## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1998. There has been a good rate of improvement in many areas of the school's work since that time. The staff have achieved the key issues for improvement and, in most instances, have gone further. Good improvements have been made in teaching information and communication technology; assessment procedures are developing well and the creation of a well-equipped computer suite and a library for pupils in Years 3 to 6 has improved the educational provision. In addition to these improvements, the school has: raised standards in English, mathematics, science, design and technology and religious education; developed the roles of staff with responsibilities; dealt with staffing issues which were blocking the rate of school improvement; improved the provision for children in the Foundation Stage; successfully implemented the national strategies for literacy and numeracy; implemented the new Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs; updated curriculum policies and schemes of work. The inspection identifies improvement in pupils' attitudes and behaviour which are now very good. The quality of teaching is good overall and there is now a higher proportion of very good teaching.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

There has been a trend of improvement in all three subjects between 2000 and 2002. The greatest improvement has been in standards in English. In 2002, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 5) was above average in English. The school has identified and begun to successfully address a significant gap between the performance of boys and girls throughout the school in reading, writing, spelling and mathematics. Changes in boys' attitudes and rate of progress are narrowing the gap. Inspection evidence shows that standards in mathematics have improved with most pupils currently attaining above average levels at the end of Year 2. The targets that the school sets itself for pupils' performances in the national tests for English and mathematics are appropriately challenging and the school came close to reaching these in 2002. In 2003, the school has achieved the target set for English and come close to achieving the target for mathematics.

The results of the national tests and assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2002 show that standards were average in reading, writing and mathematics when compared to all schools nationally. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 3) in writing and in mathematics was average. There has been an overall trend of improvement in standards since the last inspection. The results generally match with inspection findings for Year 2 pupils who generally attain the nationally expected levels in these aspects of their learning. Results of the statutory teacher assessments in science for pupils in Year 2 in 2002 show

that standards were average when compared to the results of all schools nationally. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 3) was below average.

Standards across the curriculum have been maintained at broadly similar levels to those reported at the time of the last inspection. Design and technology standards have been improved and pupils in Year 2 and in Year 6 now attain the nationally expected levels. Standards in religious education have improved with pupils in year 2 and in year 6 attaining levels above those expected for their age groups by the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils achieve well across the curriculum in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve satisfactorily.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils in all year groups have very good attitudes to school and to learning. They are self-confident, cheerful boys and girls.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is very good throughout the school.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils have a very good understanding of the effect of their behaviour on others and show respect for them. Relationships between staff and pupils and pupils themselves are very good.
Attendance	The very positive attitudes are mirrored in the attendance figures that are above the national average.

In most lessons pupils' constructive attitudes and involvement help them to make good progress.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	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 and learning is good overall. In 66 of the 92 lessons observed, the quality of teaching and learning was at least good and there were examples of outstanding teaching in Years 5 and 6. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when the quality of teaching was good or better in about half the lessons. In four lessons, the quality of teaching and learning was less than satisfactory. There are examples of very good teaching throughout the school. A particular strength of teaching in almost all classes is the very good management of pupils' behaviour and learning and the very good rapport between teachers and pupils. Weaknesses in teaching occurred in Years 1 and 2 when the methods used were not the most appropriate for the age group. Pupils throughout the school learn particularly well when the tasks are well matched to their needs, the lesson moves at a brisk pace and there is a good balance between teaching and opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in the learning. The quality of teaching and learning in English and in mathematics throughout the school is good overall; the skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. The

school meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs or with English as an additional language well and they generally make good progress.

### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and the quality and range of learning opportunities are good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes good provision for pupils with English as an additional language and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a very good level of care for all the pupils and has very good strategies for promoting good behaviour.

A wide range of extra-curricular activities, a very good programme of visits and visitors, and good teaching, all motivate pupils to take a full part in school activities. The school works well with parents. Parents have a positive view of the school, support their children well and make a very good contribution to the work of the school. Inclusion measures are very effective, all pupils, including those with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, are fully included in all school activities, and their contributions are valued. The procedures for assessing pupils' progress are developing satisfactorily across the curriculum but the results of assessment are not used consistently in the foundation subjects to guide teachers' curriculum plans.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by a strong senior management team and committed staff who work well together.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their role and responsibilities very well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a clear picture of its strengths and areas for improvement. The targets for improvement are very relevant and the school works very effectively to achieve them.

The strategic use of resources	Financial resources are used very well to support educational developments. Staff are deployed efficiently and effectively and learning resources are used well. Support staff make a very good contribution to pupils' progress and achievements.
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There are sufficient teaching and support staff to enable the school to teach the Foundation Stage curriculum, the National Curriculum and religious education effectively. Classroom accommodation is adequate. The eight temporary classrooms are to be replaced by new permanent classrooms early in the next term; this will be a very good improvement. The new administration block and staff room included in the new building will provide much needed space. There are sufficient learning resources for most subjects. Monitoring and evaluation strategies are developing well and are helping to improve the quality of teaching and to raise standards. The principles of best value are well understood and applied.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Behaviour in the school is good.</li> <li>• The teaching is good and children make good progress.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with a suggestion or concern.</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of work that children are given to do at home.</li> <li>• The information that the school provides about children's progress.</li> <li>• The way the school works with parents.</li> <li>• The range of activities that the school provides outside lessons.</li> </ul>

*(N.B. This table represents the views of those parents who returned the questionnaire sent to parents before the inspection. About a quarter of parents eligible to return the questionnaires did so.)*

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views of the school. The inspectors looked at the amount and frequency of the homework pupils are given and are of the opinion that they are appropriate for their age. Teachers and other staff in the school are available every day to speak to parents and they make many efforts to encourage parents to work with them. Most parents respond well to this encouragement and work closely with the school. The school provides a very good range of educational activities during the school day, on residential visits and in after-school and lunchtime clubs. A good range of information is provided for parents but the inspectors agree that there are opportunities for the school to provide more information and to seek parents' opinions.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

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

- Overall, as can be seen from the table below, standards have been maintained at broadly similar levels to those reported at the time of the last inspection. Of particular note, standards in mathematics have improved with most pupils currently attaining above average levels at the end of Year 6 compared to average levels previously. Design and technology standards have been improved for pupils at the ages of seven and 11 and are now at the nationally expected levels for the age groups. Standards in religious education have improved with most Year 2 and Year 6 pupils attaining above the expected levels of the locally agreed syllabus.

		Attainment – Last Inspection	Attainment – This Inspection
Attainment at the end of the <sup>3</sup> Foundation Stage.		Average	Average
Attainment at the age of seven. (Year 2).	English	Average	Average
	Mathematics	Average	Average
	Science	Average	Average
	Art and design	Average	Average
	*DT	Below average	Average
	Geography	Average	Average
	History	Average	Average
	*ICT	Average	Average
	Music	Average	Not enough evidence to judge attainment
	*PE	Above average	Average
	*RE	Average	Above average
Attainment at the age of 11 (Year 6)	English	Above average	Above average
	Mathematics	Average	Above average
	Science	Above average	Above average
	Art and design	Average	Average
	DT	Below average	Average
	Geography	Average	Average
	History	Average	Average
	ICT	Average	Average
	Music	Average	Average
	PE	Above average	Above average
	RE	Average	Above average

\*DT – design and technology, ICT – information and communication technology, PE – physical education, RE – religious education.

- When children start school in the reception classes, the levels they achieve are similar to those expected nationally for the age group in all six areas of learning<sup>4</sup> but they include the full range of ability. By the time children reach the end of the reception year, they have made at least satisfactory and often good progress and almost all attain at

<sup>3</sup> The Foundation Stage includes children aged from three to five years old.

<sup>4</sup> The six areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage are: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development and physical development. The Early Learning Goals set out what most children are expected to achieve by the end of the reception year.

least the Early Learning Goals in all six areas of learning. In the personal, social and emotional area of learning, most children reach levels above those expected for their age. Children, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, make good progress in the Foundation Stage because of the consistent quality of the provision.

3. The results of the national tests and assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2002 show that standards were average in reading, writing and mathematics when compared to all schools nationally. There has been an overall trend of improvement in standards since the last inspection. When compared to the results of pupils in schools in a similar context<sup>5</sup>, standards were below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. The results (when compared to other schools nationally) generally match with inspection findings for the current Year 2 pupils; pupils mainly attain average levels in these areas.
4. When compared to all schools nationally, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 3) in writing and in mathematics was average. In reading, the proportion attaining Level 3 was below the national average. In mathematics, there was a trend of improvement greater than the national trend between 1998 and 2001. Standards in reading and mathematics rose to above the national average between 1998 and 2000 and have been maintained at the national average in 2001 and 2002. The results of statutory teacher assessments in 2002 show a weakness in standards in speaking and listening and a strength in standards in number work.
5. Results of the statutory teacher assessments in science for pupils in Year 2 in 2002 show that standards were average when compared to the results of all schools nationally. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 3) was below average. Assessments revealed a strength in standards in physical processes (Attainment Target 4). When compared with the results of pupils in schools in a similar context, pupils' performance was below average at Level 3. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in the current Year 2 attain average standards in science. Overall, pupils' achievement by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science is satisfactory.
6. Last year's results of the national tests and assessments for Year 6 pupils were above average in English and average in mathematics and science in comparison with all schools nationally. There has been a trend of improvement in all three subjects between 2000 and 2002. The greatest improvement has been in standards in English. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 5) was above average in English. In mathematics and science, an average proportion of pupils reached Level 5. When the results are compared to those of pupils in similar schools, standards are average.
7. The school has identified a significant gap between the performance of boys and girls throughout the school. Over the five years from 1998 to 2002, results of the national tests and assessments at the end of Year 2 show that girls perform better than boys in reading, writing, spelling and mathematics. The difference between the performance of boys and girls in reading has been more than twice the national difference. Successful strategies have been used throughout the school to improve boys' attitudes and rate of progress and these are beginning to have positive effect.

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<sup>5</sup> Similar schools throughout England are banded by the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals.

8. The unconfirmed results of the tests and assessments for 2003 show that standards in English have improved with more pupils reaching the expected level (Level 4) and above. The most marked improvement is in the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 in reading. In mathematics and science, standards have been maintained at similar levels to the results reported in 2002.
9. The targets that the school sets itself for pupils' performances in the national tests for English and mathematics are appropriately challenging and the school came close to reaching these in 2002. In 2003, the school has achieved the target set for English and come close to achieving the target for mathematics. In analysing pupils' performance, it is important to understand that the number of pupils with special educational needs varies from year to year in each school year group. Also, the school suffers from some pupil mobility<sup>6</sup> in the last five terms before the statutory tests and assessments. These factors together mean that pupils' attainment and their results in the national tests for pupils in Year 2 and in Year 6 can be expected to vary from one year to the next.
10. Inspection evidence shows that pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2 and well in Years 3 to 6. Standards in English, mathematics and science are in line with those expected nationally for pupils at the end of Year 2 but above expectations at the end of Year 6. These inspection findings confirm the school's own expectations and show added value at Key Stage 2. The school's assessment data, which tracks pupils' progress throughout their time in school, demonstrates that pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6 and the majority make good progress.
11. In English, there is a wide range in the levels achieved in pupils' speaking and listening skills by the end of Year 2. In Years 3 to 6 pupils are given a wide variety of opportunities to develop their language skills. By the time they leave Year 6, the majority of pupils speak confidently in a range of contexts and for a variety of purposes. Pupils make good progress in reading throughout the school. The guided reading sessions are having a positive effect on pupils' progress. Most pupils read aloud confidently and with good expression. Pupils' progress accelerates in Year 6 and higher attaining pupils use inference and deduction with ease. Progress in writing at the end of Year 2 is variable. A high proportion of pupils have not attained the expected levels in writing although more pupils have attained the higher Level 3. Most pupils take pride in the presentation of their work. By the end of Year 6, pupils enjoy writing extended stories, and incorporate elements of suspense and tension in detailed and imaginative accounts.
12. In mathematics, pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 and good progress in Years 3 to 6 in all areas of the subject. They use and apply their developing skills in solving increasingly complex problems. They decide which strategies they will use and older pupils are beginning to both organise and check their work.
13. In science, pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 and good progress in Years 3 to 6. By the end of Year 2, pupils understand that we need exercise to stay healthy, and that maintaining a 'balanced' diet is good for the body. They describe the changes occurring during the 'life-cycle' of various animals and plants. Pupils make simple predictions, are encouraged to use appropriate scientific language when describing their observations and findings. They understand the rudiments of 'fair testing'. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is higher than average. Pupils have a good level of understanding of a wide range of topics, including why we have skeletons, how sound is produced, physical changes in materials and the factors that affect the

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<sup>6</sup> Pupil mobility is the number of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times of admission and transfer.



growth of micro-organisms. Many pupils are secure in making predictions, and explain whether a test was fair or not. Pupils use a good range of scientific language, and their skills in measuring and recording their results and observations are good.

14. Pupils with special educational needs in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6 make good progress in relation to the targets set for them in their individual education plans and some make very good progress and achieve their targets. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress. Throughout the school, the majority of pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to learning and most work hard during lessons.
15. The school has identified pupils who are gifted and talented in subjects across the curriculum. An enthusiastic and well informed teacher leads her colleagues well and they are beginning to plan more specifically for the identified pupils' needs. These pupils make at least satisfactory progress.

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

16. Pupils in all year groups have very good attitudes to school. They are self-confident, cheerful boys and girls who behave very well. Relationships between staff and pupils and pupils themselves are very good. These high standards are an improvement since the last inspection. The very positive attitudes are mirrored in the attendance figures that are above the national average.
17. Pupils settle quickly to their activities at the beginning of the day during the brisk registration sessions before starting lessons. They talk keenly about the school and are very enthusiastic. In most lessons, pupils' constructive attitude and involvement help the learning progress and pupils try hard even in the occasional lesson where the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory and they are not sure of the aim of the learning. Most pupils have a good knowledge of their learning. They are self-confident and involve themselves well, working independently and in pairs. All pupils take pride in carrying out their responsibilities but Year 6 pupils are especially keen to help in the functioning of the school and enjoy assisting members of staff. Pupils are quickly becoming mature and responsible individuals; in the playground, a group of girls continued to include a girl with special needs in their game, with the help of an adult, even though this girl continually sabotaged the activity. Pupils are also keen to earn team points and keep a close eye on their tally. They look forward to celebration assemblies when they can share their achievements with other pupils and especially to participating in performances in front of the whole school.
18. Behaviour, both in lessons and around the school is very good. In recent years, there have been only two exclusions both for fixed periods. There were no incidents of oppressive behaviour with regard to bullying, sexism or racism noted during the inspection. The standard of behaviour can still be high even when the lesson is not engaging because pupils try to do their best. However, in Year 2 behaviour deteriorated in a small number of lessons when the teaching ceased to be effective. Lining up in the morning when the whistle goes is done sensibly and patiently. On the playing field, behaviour is very good. All sorts of activities are carried on at the same time but pupils were never seen to be carelessly disrupting others' games. At lunchtimes, pupils behave well, taking their turn in the dining hall and require little direct control.
19. The quality of relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils is very good. During lessons, both older and younger pupils unselfconsciously help others and often work very cooperatively in boy and girl pairs. Pupils have a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. This was especially evident in a Year 5 lesson

where pupils appraised each other's work with considerable sensitivity. Pupils are happy to include all abilities in their learning activities. Pupils show a high regard for others' feelings and religious beliefs. For example, in a Year 1 religious education lesson pupils listened well to each other, valuing what each had to say. These very good relationships lie at the heart of the happy atmosphere of the school.

20. The attendance figures support this positive picture. They are above the national average. Unauthorised absences are also low. Similarly, pupils are punctual; there are very few regular latecomers.

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

21. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In 66 (72 per cent) of the 92 lessons observed, the quality of teaching and learning was at least good and often better and there were examples of outstanding teaching in Years 3, 5 and 6. In four lessons, the quality of teaching and learning was less than satisfactory. Overall, there has been a good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection when the quality of teaching was at least good in about half the lessons.
22. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and there are examples of very good teaching. The teachers and learning support assistants have very good knowledge and understanding of the learning needs of the age group and this forms a secure basis for their planning for children's learning. The teachers plan stimulating and relevant learning activities for each area of learning and areas of the classroom are resourced well to enable the children to learn in a variety of ways. The plans for teaching generally take good account of the individual needs of the children and their stage of development. Where the teachers challenge higher attaining children, they make good progress. For example, when the children made boats and tested them to see if they would float, the teacher adapted the questions she asked the children. As a result, children's thinking was extended and the pace of learning was very good. Occasionally, higher attaining children are not sufficiently challenged by the activities or the questions.
23. The quality of teaching for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. In about half the lessons, the quality of teaching is at least good. These lessons are well planned to provide interesting activities that are well matched to the needs of all the pupils and that support the intended learning well. Teachers listen carefully to what the pupils say in response to questions and in discussion and value them by giving praise and encouragement and sometimes asking supplementary questions. They manage the pupils' behaviour and learning well so that no time is wasted in the lesson and pupils make good progress. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, the teacher used the time very well to provide the pupils with a variety of interactive activities and as a result, the pupils were confident and enthusiastic right from the start of the lesson; they made good gains in mental addition of numbers and in learning how data can be organised in different ways to give information.
24. The most important shortcoming in the teaching for Years 1 and 2 is that some lessons are not well matched to the age and stage of development of the pupils. In these lessons, the teaching focuses on pupils recording their learning in writing before they have had sufficient opportunities to explore the ideas through well structured practical activities. Insufficient use is made of exploration, investigation, talk and role play to help the pupils to understand and develop subject skills and knowledge. The good learning habits developed in the Foundation Stage are not sufficiently built upon particularly in Year 1. For example, pupils in a Year 1 class were fascinated by a collection of good

quality Victorian and modern household artefacts. A formal question and answer session led by the teacher was well managed but there were limited opportunities for pupils to handle the artefacts, suggest what they were and how they might be used. The written task that followed did not relate well to the learning and added little to the pupils' motivation or their understanding. In their anxiety to show what has been taught, teachers rely too much on requiring pupils to write, and place too little emphasis on practical activities and discussion.

25. In four lessons, the quality of teaching was less than satisfactory and sometimes poor. In these lessons, the activities were poorly matched to the differing needs of the pupils and were poorly explained. The teacher relied on the higher attaining pupils to answer questions and to contribute to discussions and so most pupils were not sufficiently involved in class discussion sessions. This led to many becoming restless and inattentive. The teacher did not insist that the pupils listen and continued to talk above the noise they made and the problem escalated. Pupils with behaviour problems began to disrupt by throwing paper and other objects across the classroom and the teacher appeared to have only limited strategies for dealing with this. Consequently, pupils made few gains in learning in these lessons.
26. The quality of teaching for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is good. In four out of five lessons, the quality of teaching is at least good and of these, teaching is outstanding in a significant proportion. The consistent good quality of teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and they make at least good progress over time. Where the quality of teaching is outstanding, the teachers have excellent subject knowledge that enables them to set the work at challenging levels for all the pupils. Questions are used very well to extend the pupils' thinking and there is a very good balance between the teacher's input and the pupils' responses. The lessons move along at a brisk pace because the teachers use a good mixture of learning strategies including paired and small group discussion, whole-class teaching, opportunities to read for information and practical activities. Expectations for the pace and quality of pupils' oral and written work are high and they respond very well by behaving in an exemplary way, concentrating and maintaining high levels of interest throughout the lesson. They make excellent progress in these lessons and display very positive attitudes to learning. For example, in a Year 6 science lesson on micro-organisms, the enthusiastic teacher included a very stimulating mixture of direct teaching, small group work and question and answer sessions. Throughout the lesson, there was a clear focus on the planned learning objectives and this helped the pupils to make very good progress. They, in turn, were actively involved throughout the lesson, were enthusiastic about the learning, worked hard and made very good progress.
27. Where the quality of teaching is very good, lessons are very well planned, managed and organised and the pupils are involved in a range of activities throughout the lesson. Pupils are actively involved in the learning. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson where pupils classified two-dimensional shapes, pupils sustained their attention well because they were actively involved in drafting their ideas on individual whiteboards. The teacher's manner was friendly, the pace brisk and subject knowledge secure. As a result, pupils concentrated, were eager to please, and made at least good and sometimes very good progress. In these very good lessons, teachers use the time well and make good use of the skills of learning support assistants to ensure that all the pupils develop good work habits and make progress.
28. Where the quality of teaching is good, teachers have positive relationships with pupils, engage them in the learning and sustain their attention. This helps the pupils to make good progress in the lesson. The pupils and resources are well managed and the pace

of the teaching is purposeful. The last few minutes of the lesson are used well to discuss problems, correct misconceptions or to take the learning a step further.

29. Where the quality of teaching is satisfactory, lessons are planned in detail and the resources well prepared. Questions are used well to both extend and assess pupils' understanding and knowledge. The most frequent shortcomings in the quality of teaching in these lessons are:
- the tasks are not well matched to the needs of the pupils who are not sufficiently challenged;
  - the teacher talks for too long, the pupils become restless and inattentive and this slows the pace of learning;
  - teachers rely too much on photocopied worksheets to direct the learning. They do not create sufficient opportunities for pupils to select the tools, materials and approach to their learning or the way that they will record the task.
30. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good throughout the school. Lessons are based on the national strategies for literacy and for numeracy and are well structured. Learning objectives are clear and are shared with the pupils. This helps them to focus on the tasks and activities and to understand what they have achieved by the end of the lesson. In the very best lessons, the pace is brisk and teachers have high expectations of the pupils. This is reflected in the pupils' positive attitudes in these lessons and their willingness to persevere and work hard.
31. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well throughout the school. The teachers have a good knowledge of phonics and teach the basic skills effectively. Pupils are given many opportunities to use their skills in reading and in writing and to a lesser extent, to develop their speaking skills in other subjects. In numeracy, the teaching of mental mathematics strategies is effective and the use of correct mathematical vocabulary is systematically taught. Pupils have some opportunities to use their skills in other subjects but there are not enough opportunities for them to use their basic skills to solve problems, work independently and to choose how to present their work.
32. Pupils throughout the school have positive attitudes to learning. The pupils learn best when they are given a variety of interesting activities within a lesson and the pace of learning is brisk. Where the direct teaching for the whole class is interspersed with activities that make intellectual demands of the pupils, they concentrate, achieve success and are motivated to greater efforts. Pupils generally work hard, concentrate and show perseverance with their tasks even when the pace of the teaching slows. In Years 3 to 6, pupils produce work at a good rate because of the high expectations of the teachers and the brisk pace of lessons. They cooperate and collaborate very effectively in pairs and in small groups when they are asked to do so. Where the teachers are less prescriptive, pupils show that they are able to plan and carry out some of their learning independently. However, opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for initiating and planning some of their learning are limited. This limits the development of pupils' independent learning skills and teachers miss valuable opportunities to assess the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding when they work.
33. Pupils with special educational needs are given very good support by the special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) and the learning support assistants. The coordinators plan the interventions for each pupil and give guidance to teachers and learning support assistants but do not directly teach the pupils. The learning support

assistants play a vital role in managing the pupils and guiding them in activities. Although the learning support assistants see the individual education plans (IEPs) and know the pupils' targets, the class teachers written lesson plans are not consistently shared with them. Where the teachers share the lesson plans, the learning support assistants are able to play a much more active role in teaching and supporting the pupils. All staff have very good relationships with the pupils, they offer unobtrusive but effective support, and as a result most pupils make good progress.

34. Teachers give pupils immediate oral feedback on their work whenever possible and this helps them to make good progress and builds their confidence and self-esteem. Teachers make honest but encouraging comments to pupils in lessons and this motivates them to continue to offer answers to questions or comments in discussions. Praise and encouragement are usually well linked to the learning objective and this helps the pupils to know how well they are doing and spurs them on to greater efforts. Pupils' work is marked regularly and teachers sometimes write useful comments by the piece of work. Where marking is most effective, teachers tell pupils where and how they have been successful and what they need to do to improve.
35. Teachers give pupils an appropriate quantity and range of work to do at home. They practise reading, learn spellings and tables, complete tasks and find out information. The majority of parents are happy with the range and frequency of the homework. The inspectors agree that what is set is well matched to the age and learning needs of the pupils. Many parents provide good support for their children and, as a result, the work their children do at home has a positive impact on standards.

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

36. The curriculum is broad and balanced and the quality and range of learning opportunities is good, especially for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Statutory requirements are met. A wide range of extra-curricular activities, a very good programme of visits and visitors, and good quality of teaching, all motivate pupils to take a full part in school activities.
37. The quality of the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. It includes all six areas of learning and is planned well to give children a range of relevant learning experiences in the classroom and in the outdoor area. The teachers plan together and this is effective in ensuring that the children in all three classes have equal access to stimulating learning experiences. The staff make good links between children's learning in the six areas and this helps them to use and practise their developing skills in a variety of contexts.
38. The school has responded well to implementing the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and this makes a significant contribution to the trend of rising standards in English and mathematics. The overall quality of teachers' planning is good. The school has worked hard to refine its planning so that it more closely meets the needs of all pupils. All staff have shared in 'group review' sessions, particularly in looking at the planning of mathematics and science, and consequently feel positive about the content of the planning frameworks they have created. The school is now looking to further develop how this planning is implemented, especially for the transition from Foundation Stage to Year 1.
39. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). PSHE is not timetabled as a separate subject, but the school develops many

- opportunities across the curriculum. For example, initiatives such as 'Health and Fitness Week', the 'Life Education Centre', a mobile classroom on site for a week, and 'circle time', where pupils have opportunities to discuss matters of importance to them, all give pupils appropriate experience of issues relating to sex education, drugs use and misuse and 'healthy lifestyles'. Subjects such as science, physical education and religious education make a good contribution to pupils' PSHE experiences.
40. The curriculum is enhanced by a very good range of out of school activities, visits and visitors and events. Clubs include dance, netball, football, music, guitar, choir, cross-country, rugby, cricket and rounders. Pupils also undertake cycling proficiency training, and several peripatetic music teachers visit. The school has residential visits to Devon, day visits to Canterbury and Broadoak Environmental Studies Centre and other visits to places such as Hever Castle, Whitstable Museum and Howlett's Zoo. Visitors such as the Fire Brigade, Puppeteers Company, the 'Living in the Past' group, authors of books for children and musicians from The Gambia all contribute well to pupils' social and cultural development. Community links are developing well. Initiatives such as links with local churches and elderly citizens groups, links with Sainsbury's as part of 'Healthy Eating' projects, and the involvement of a wide spectrum of local professionals such as doctor, nurse, optician, dental therapist and osteopath during 'Health and Fitness Week' show the community working well together. Local sports clubs make significant contributions to pupils' social and physical development.
  41. Pupils with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds are fully included in all school activities and their contributions are valued which raises their self-esteem. Pupils who need additional language support, whether because English is an additional language or because they have speech and language therapy needs are targeted well. Pupils are included well in discussions and in moments of prayer and reflection teachers include mention of other faiths.
  42. The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs throughout the school. Procedures are very well organised. The requirements of the New Code of Practice for special educational needs are fully met. The coordinators work very effectively with all members of staff. The SENCOs are responsible for organising the support the special educational needs pupils have and they ensure that they have full access to the curriculum. Nine pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need and the school has ensured that their needs, as specified in the statement, are fully met. The school has also provided additional sessions which have benefited pupils who have poor social skills. Individual targets are reviewed regularly to monitor each pupil's progress towards the learning targets and to set new ones. The school also ensures that provision matches the individual pupil's education plan. Pupil's progress is very carefully tracked and if targets are not met the SENCO investigates the reason. The school makes good use of interventions such as the 'additional literacy strategy'.
  43. The provision for personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects, is very good. The school projects a very happy atmosphere which is rooted in the inclusive philosophy that is reflected in the school's approach to behaviour. This is an enabling spirit that permeates through the school. It is reflected in the parent questionnaire responses where one of the most positive responses is to the question on how approachable the school is. It runs through all the things that the school does, and has a very positive impact on pupils' self-esteem, their self-belief and their behaviour with one another. The headteacher embodies this spirit and leads by example. In lessons too, regular opportunities are given for pupils to develop positive attitudes and relationships through shared activities, such as very good working in mixed gender pairs, where pupils can show respect for one another's work and help

each other develop their work. In a Year 1 lesson where elements of religious education and design and technology were combined, there was a special atmosphere of respect as pupils gave the presents they had made during the session to one another at the end. In a Year 3 information and communication technology lesson, there was an audible sigh of surprise as a picture, sent as an e-mail attachment, appeared simultaneously on all the pupils' computers. In a lunchtime library period for Year 6, the quietly positive attitude to study and curiosity about one another's books made for a very relaxed and yet serious session for all pupils. These moments are not at all rare.

44. The provision for the moral and social aspects of pupils' development are very good and are evident in the pro-active approach to managing behaviour and bullying which is systematically applied across the school. This clear strategy, based on openness between pupils and staff, forms the foundation underlying the very positive relationships in the school. Adults consistently treat pupils with respect and this colours pupils' perceptions of one another in a positive way. Pupils are invited to be involved in the resolution and management of behaviour issues so that this encourages their personal development. Younger pupils are encouraged to behave well, in addition to the usual rewards, by the effective use of a promise of so-many minutes on the adventure play equipment – this is particularly useful for badly behaving pupils as it means the pupil's standing goes up in the eyes of the whole class as pupils benefit from his or her improvement in behaviour. The programme of PHSE is well developed. Circle time is used well to explore pupils' hopes and fears. Discussion is encouraged on difficult areas. For example, in a Year 6 religious education lesson difficult areas for debate were bravely tackled on death and the after-life from the pupils' perspective. Various good opportunities are offered by the school to encourage pupils to take on responsibilities in Year 6 but these are less well developed for other year groups. A school council is planned and due to be set up by the time this report is published. At present, pupils' views are actively canvassed informally by the headteacher and deputies to which pupils have testified.
45. The provision for the cultural aspect of personal development is good but multicultural opportunities are not so frequently provided. Cultural and faith differences are highlighted and investigated by pupils but the breadth and frequency of cultural experiences offered to pupils could be increased. The school has a long list of visitors who contribute well to pupils' personal development. The annual transformation of the school hall into a Christmas 'department store' is an interesting and very well supported event. This offers Year 6 pupils the chance support younger pupils in budgeting their money and selecting appropriate gifts for members of their family. The Easter Parade offers another good opportunity for pupils to be involved in the life of the local community. A good range of off-site visits to places like Hever Castle and Broadoak Environmental Centre extends these opportunities as well as curriculum breadth. The school offers a regular residential trip for Year 6 pupils to Devon where teambuilding and outdoor pursuits clearly go down very well with pupils and staff alike. The long-standing link with the French school in Dainville also provides pupils with useful avenues to extend their cultural awareness and education. Pupils hear music from a wide range of world traditions and learn to value the different qualities. This makes a good contribution to their cultural development.

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

46. The school takes very good care of its pupils. This sensitive and very effective support for their welfare contributes well to the standards of pupils' attitudes and behaviour and

consequently to their all-round development. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

47. Child protection procedures are satisfactory; they would be better if another member of staff was trained to support the headteacher. Staff are made aware of the importance of vigilant and sensitive monitoring, and know their pupils well. Although the links with the educational welfare service are good, the school only benefits from this additional expertise when it calls for it because there is no regular programme of visits. Health and safety procedures are good because frequent monitoring of the buildings and site are carried out by staff and governors and minor repairs carried out effectively both by the site manager and a local handyman on call to the school. Procedures in the classrooms are good; staff take care to brief pupils well. Satisfactory first aid provision ensures that pupils are treated effectively for injuries. Logs are kept for serious injuries warranting parental involvement, and there is a record of minor incidents for statistical or tracking purposes. A good proportion of staff are trained in administering First Aid. Safe routines for lining-up, and moving around the school are well practised. The level of supervision in the playgrounds is good. Adult support and supervision are supplemented by Year 6 pupils whose 'buddy' roles with younger pupils extend to a general level of care for them. The school makes certain that all pupils have equal access to school trips through financial support. Transfer arrangements for older pupils are good; Year 6 pupils feel confident about moving on to their next school. Induction arrangements with the neighbouring infant schools are very good for pupils joining the school in Year 3 and they are rapidly integrated into school life.
48. The school offers very good welfare and personal support for all pupils, because staff are approachable and build very good relationships with them. Staff are patient and listen well; as a result pupils are ready to talk to them if a problem arises. Some assemblies and other regular opportunities to perform in front of the school develop pupils' public speaking and performing skills well and are keenly anticipated by pupils and staff. The behaviour policy sets out a clear foundation for expectations of good behaviour upon which each class negotiates its own rules. The anti-bullying policy is promoted keenly by the headteacher whose open approach to the subject gives pupils confidence. He also monitors carefully the development of pupils who have been involved in major incidents through detailed records. All pupils are encouraged to perform well or improve their behaviour through a good programme of awards and specific achievement certificates.
49. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. The numerous opportunities offered to pupils to take responsibility around the school especially in Year 6, reflect the school's acknowledgement of the important contribution pupils can make to the easy running of the school. The school has plans in place to create a school council so that pupils' views can be listened to more formally in order to enrich their sense of ownership and responsibility. Records of Achievement for each pupil are built up as they progress through the school with some input from pupils themselves as to what should be included. These not only serve as a good record for pupils and parents but also encourage pupils to take pride in their work.
50. The monitoring and the promoting of attendance are good overall. Teaching staff are conscientious in marking the register on time, noting reasons for absence and keeping daily and weekly tallies. They liaise closely with the administrative officers over latecomers. Special educational needs coordinators monitor attendance figures well for those who have become a concern. Very few pupils arrive late for school but the school monitors this carefully and when necessary appropriate action is taken.



51. Pupils with special educational needs are given very good support. The school identifies pupils with special educational needs at a very early stage and makes appropriate provision. Individual education plans are written by the class teachers and approved by the special educational needs coordinators. They contain appropriate targets, which are informed by detailed assessment of pupils' difficulties. This information is used effectively to plan appropriate work and has a positive effect on children's progress. Individual education plans are reviewed at least each term and where needed more frequently. The SENCOs regularly look to see whether targets have been met and if not look for the reason. The school works closely with the local education authority's support services, for example, speech and language specialists and the educational psychologist.
52. Assessment procedures are good in English, mathematics, information and communication technology and science and contribute well to the good progress pupils make in these subjects. In all other subjects, they are satisfactory. There are variations in the way in which teachers record what pupils have learned and in how they use assessment information to identify the next step in their learning. This means that teachers do not always have a clear view as to what they should teach next in order to help pupils to make progress. The assessment manager makes a careful analysis of national test results that shows clearly where improvements need to be made. The results of boys and girls and of different groups of pupils are scrutinised and any differences are thoroughly investigated. These results are shared well with the senior management team, governing body, subject managers and teaching staff. At present, only the assessment manager is familiar with the computerised system of recording assessment. The school tracks and records pupils' individual performances throughout the school in English, mathematics and science. From the information gained, teachers set challenging targets for pupils to reach. These targets are monitored carefully to ensure pupils are progressing well enough and, if necessary, additional support is given to help pupils further.
53. All pupils with English as an additional language are well supported and are making good progress. Two pupils, one in reception and one in Year 1, receive weekly support from an English as an additional language teacher. A speech therapist and the educational psychologist also support one of these pupils. All four pupils receive assistance within class from learning support assistants; this support helps them to make good progress.

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

54. The majority of parents have positive views about the school. Nearly all parents who responded to the questionnaire sent to them by the inspection team say that their children like school and are consistently expected to achieve their best. Many feel that behaviour is good and a similarly high proportion agree that they would feel comfortable in approaching the school with a problem. The two main concerns that parents have are the range of activities provided for children outside school and how closely the school works with them. This last is closely followed by how well informed they feel about how their child is getting on. These views have to be contrasted with those expressed by parents who attended the meeting with inspectors held before the inspection. Although the turnout was low, very positive views were expressed about the above concerns and all other aspects of the school's work discussed. Inspectors judge that the school has good links with parents. Parents are very involved in the work of the school, but more could be done to inform them about what their children are to be taught and to seek their views.

55. The strongest feature of the links that the school provides is its approachability. The headteacher has established a reputation of being available at almost any time and teaching staff too, are often available both at the beginning and the end of the school day in the playground. This has generated an ethos of being an open school. However, those parents who cannot take advantage of this during the working day are more dependent on the school providing them with information and soliciting their views. Individual pupil reports to parents are good because they not only offer a good level of detail about their children's academic and personal progress, but also provide some aims for improvement. Regular parents' consultation evenings are enhanced by an open evening in the summer term. On this occasion, parents can tour the classrooms with their children and see examples of work on display.
56. The procedures for children's induction into the Foundation Stage are very good and help the children to settle in quickly. The staff offer home visits so that the prospective teacher, the child, and their parents, can get acquainted straightaway. The prospectus is informative and serves as a useful source document for parents to refer to. The home-school liaison books provide good links with parents whose child has an ongoing behaviour issue. There is a promising school website but it is in its infancy. The school provides extensive, often individual support for parents when their children transfer to the next stage of their education. Written information and meetings help to smooth the process of selecting grammar, private or other secondary schools.
57. Curriculum information is given in the prospectus and in an annual overview of the topics to be followed during the school year for each year. Although this is satisfactory, opportunities are missed to improve the quality and depth of information for parents so that they can provide even more active and consistent support for their children and the school. Some curriculum workshops have been held and meetings about the statutory end of Year 2 and Year 6 tests and assessments have been held but they represent a bare minimum of information. The well established and successful Health and Fitness Week and a Science Week are held annually and parents are well informed about these. General newsletters to keep parents abreast of news and events are satisfactory but could be improved by a greater level of information and feedback on events and activities. Parents have not been formally consulted by the school for their views on the way forward or for feedback on how well they feel the school is doing. This could for example be used to shed light on concerns about provision for extra-curricular activities, which inspectors judge to be very good in comparison with the national picture, but which parents are concerned about because of restricted numbers and opportunities for younger pupils.
58. Parents are very involved in the work of the school and support school events very well. For example, they attend sports days and school performances and support out-of-school sports fixtures. There is a high turnout at parents' consultation evenings. The very supportive and active Parents and Friends Association regularly raises substantial sums of money to support school projects. They have made a very significant contribution to the new information and communication technology suite equipment with additional fund raising. The annual Christmas shopping is an unusual and very well organised and supported event. Parents contribute well to their children's learning at school and at home. There are also always volunteers to help with educational visits. A good number of parents and some grandparents help in the school regularly by, for example, listening to children read.
59. The school works closely with parents when their child is identified as having special educational needs. The parents' views and opinions are sought and are considered when drawing up targets for the child to achieve. An 'open door' policy operates where

parents are able to discuss their child's progress with one of the SENCOs. The SENCO meets with parents to explain and discuss the targets, which have been set for their child. Parents of pupils who have English as an additional language are supportive and work with the school to help their children improve their learning.

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

60. The school is very well led by the headteacher. He has a clear and well expressed philosophy that underpins the development of the school. His reflective but determined approach ensures that the pace of change is managed well and is effective. One of the strengths of his leadership is his ability to identify and develop strengths and expertise in individual members of staff. He gives them opportunities to play a real part in school improvement and this enables them to develop leadership skills. For example, responsibilities are appropriately delegated to the deputy headteachers and senior staff to make the most of their individual strengths and to give them opportunities for personal and professional development. The headteacher works very well with the two deputy headteachers and they are a united and very strong leadership team. They have developed a strong sense of teamwork between all those who work at the school and this is having a positive impact on the rate and extent of school improvement. The school is very well managed. The senior management team, which includes the headteacher, two deputy headteachers and two senior teachers works very effectively in bringing about school improvement, providing a clear lead for colleagues, and ensuring the smooth day-to-day management of the school. The headteacher and staff have strong support from the governing body and parents who recognise the amount of work done and the changes achieved. There is a very strong commitment to improve the school further and a good capacity to succeed.
61. The school's aims and values are well reflected in all its work. For example, the school provides a secure, caring and happy learning environment. In the vast majority of lessons, the school's aims and values were reflected well. The lessons were stimulating, expectations were high and pupils were given praise and encouragement which helped to raise their self-esteem. In a small number of lessons, expectations were not sufficiently high and did not consistently reflect the school's aim to provide effective teaching and to expect the very best of academic standards.
62. The governing body is very effective and fulfils its statutory duties well. They have a very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and how they complement those of the headteacher and staff. They have a very good understanding of the strengths and relative weaknesses of the school. They receive detailed information from the headteacher and subject leaders and visit the school regularly. This enables them to base their decisions on relevant information and to play a very good part in shaping the direction of the school. A very effective committee structure helps members of the governing body to make good use of their time in meetings and the skills of individuals. Each committee has clearly defined terms of reference and a very clear understanding of how their role fits with the responsibilities of the other committees. An interesting development has been to combine the responsibilities for curriculum and for the school improvement plan. This committee is very effective in monitoring progress towards the targets for improvement in the school development plan and in acting as the 'critical friend'. They do this by asking the subject leaders to report to them on progress towards their targets and by asking questions. A governor is 'attached' to each of the key issues in the school improvement plan. This enables them to keep a close eye on progress towards the planned change. However, they are less effective in evaluating the effect of changes brought about through the school

improvement plan. This is because the success criteria in the plan are not consistently well focused and measurable.

63. The headteacher and members of the senior management team carry out a regular programme of classroom observations, evaluation of pupils' work and feedback to teachers. They have focused on specific elements of teaching and learning drawn from the school's policy. For example, they have evaluated the quality of the learning environment or the use of the last few minutes of a lesson. The formal feedback to teachers has been instrumental in improving the quality of teaching. These monitoring activities have enabled them to identify the need to focus on, for example, the quality of the use of learning support assistants in the classroom. They analyse the results of the national tests and assessments in English, mathematics and science and identify areas of strength and weakness. For example, a gap between the performance of boys and girls was found. This became a priority in the school improvement plan and the strategies put in place are narrowing the gap in attainment. This is very good practice.
64. Subject managers generally provide good leadership for their colleagues and manage the subjects well. Those leading English, mathematics and science have had some opportunities to observe their colleagues teach and have given written feedback. They have analysed the results of the statutory tests and other assessments. In science, for example, this led to a plan to improve the approach to teaching scientific enquiry (Attainment Target 1). In English, the subject managers identified targets for improvement in each year group and have supported colleagues in working towards these. In mathematics, the regular monitoring of planning and teaching has given the subject managers a clear view of what needs to be done to further raise standards. Those leading the remaining subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education have developed schemes of work often based on national guidance. They have monitored samples of pupils' work to check that their learning builds year on year. They have checked teachers' plans to ensure that all the areas of the curriculum are taught. Subject managers have carried out a review of resources and identified areas for enhancement. They have used this information well to identify targets for improvement in their subject and have written an improvement plan which is included in the school improvement plan. Overall, the school makes good use of monitoring and evaluation activities to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching.
65. The management of special educational needs is very good. The special educational needs coordinators are experienced and committed to seeing that these pupils fulfil their potential. They are committed to introducing strategies, which will further improve the provision for special educational needs in the school for example a new tracking system is being introduced which will track pupils' progress more tightly. The school's approach is very well organised and designated funds are used appropriately. Most of the support staff are experienced and all have had training. The expertise of individual learning support assistants is used well by the teachers. Teachers have attended courses on all aspects of special educational needs. All staff work closely with the coordinators who ensure that they are all aware of the procedures. Parents are kept well informed and are invited to all reviews. Very thorough records are kept. There is a governor designated as a person responsible for overseeing special educational needs and she is very well informed and plays an active role. She meets regularly with the SENCOs and reports to the governing body.
66. There are good strategies for the appraisal of teachers. Performance management procedures are well embedded and targets have been set for all teaching staff. The headteacher and deputy headteachers know the staff very well and this helps them to

focus appropriate support, training and challenge for individual teachers. Teachers are given good opportunities for personal and professional development linked to their performance management targets and the priorities in the school improvement plan.

67. The senior management team uses the results of monitoring, evaluation and appraisal very well to identify school improvement priorities. Their good practice in school self-evaluation is helping them to focus on the most important areas for improvement. This means that staff and financial resources are appropriately focused on a few key areas. Because of the very good leadership and the coherence of the work of the staff team, the action that the school takes to meet the targets they have identified is having a positive effect on the rate of school improvement. The school's priorities for development are closely reflected in the outcome of the inspection.
68. Procedures for the induction of staff new to the school are satisfactory. Staff are given good support by their colleagues and this helps them to follow the school's procedures and strategies. Newly qualified teachers are given good support by their mentors. They have appropriate opportunities to continue their training through watching their colleagues teach, being observed and receiving feedback and attending training courses. The mentors are trained and are well aware of the needs of the teacher they support. The school is committed to providing placements for teachers in training and supports a considerable number each year. A 'teaching for learning' policy gives good practical guidance on the school's expectations for teachers new to the school.
69. Financial planning is very good and very good use is made of the resources available to the school. The members of the governors' finance committee are very knowledgeable and ensure that the funds are used to support the school's educational priorities. Specific funds are used well for their intended purpose. For example, funds to support pupils with special educational needs are directed to providing staff and learning resources for them. Priorities in the school improvement plan are allocated realistic levels of funding and this enables the headteacher and staff to bring about the planned changes. Funds have been very well managed to enable the school to contribute a significant amount to building the eight much needed classrooms and administrative area. The higher than average amount carried forward from the financial year 2002 to 2003 is allocated to the building work. Where the school improvement plan has measurable success criteria the headteacher and governors are able to evaluate the effect of the spending on quality and standards of education. However, the success criteria are not consistently measurable and this limits the opportunities for governors and the senior management team to evaluate the impact of the resources allocated.
70. The day-to-day financial management procedures are efficient and secure. The administrative assistant with responsibility for financial matters operates secure, efficient and effective systems for financial control. She is able to give the headteacher and governors regular financial statements that enable them to monitor spending. The administrative assistant responsible for the day-to-day organisation of the school is very efficient and the school runs smoothly. They are both friendly and efficient and are welcoming and helpful to parents and visitors. Good use is made of information and communication technology to support the management of finances and administrative tasks. The administrative staff provide very good support for the headteacher and staff enabling them to focus on their work with the pupils.
71. There are sufficient well qualified and experienced teachers whose skills and expertise are well matched to the needs of the curriculum. They are supported by a satisfactory number of suitably qualified and experienced support staff. The roles of the senior

management team and subject managers are developing well and they are making a positive contribution to the quality and standards of education.

72. There is sufficient accommodation to enable the Foundation Stage curriculum and the National Curriculum to be taught but some of this is of poor quality. The mobile classrooms are small and cramped and create difficulties when teachers want to give opportunities for pupils to learn through practical activities. However, these will not be in use for much longer. Two newly built blocks of classrooms are to be opened in the next term; they will considerably improve the classroom and administration accommodation. The classrooms and shared areas are enhanced by stimulating and relevant displays of pupils' work and learning resources. This reflects the school's aim to provide pupils with a stimulating learning environment. The organisation of resources in some classrooms promotes opportunities for pupils to make decisions about some of the tools and materials they use for a task and to develop independence in organising their own resources. However, this is not consistent throughout the school. The reception outdoor classroom is well equipped to support children's development in all six areas of learning. The playgrounds are adequate for the number of pupils and there is a large grassed area that provides a good space for teaching physical education. Improvements to the outdoor areas are planned once the building work is complete.
73. There is a satisfactory range of learning resources of good quality to support the teaching of most subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and the Foundation Stage curriculum. There have been some improvements since the last inspection. For example, a new library for pupils in Years 3 to 6 has improved the range of books available but the room is not large enough for a whole class to use it comfortably. A new computer suite and resources for control technology have been added and resources for mathematics and science, which were barely adequate, have been improved. The range and quality of resources for science, information and communications technology and the Foundation Stage are good. Although there have been improvements in the learning resources for design and technology, there are still not enough to support teaching. Learning resources are satisfactorily stored to give staff and pupils access. The staff generally provide attractive and good quality resources for pupils in lessons and this makes a positive statement about the importance of the learning activity. Pupils respond well to the resources they use and handle them carefully.
74. The headteacher, staff and governors work well together to meet the targets for improvement set for the school at the time of the last inspection. They have achieved what they were asked to do and, in most instances, have gone further. For example, good improvements have been made in teaching information and communication technology and standards are rising. Similarly, good improvement has been made in developing assessment procedures and using the results to identify targets for improvement. The addition of a library for pupils in Years 3 to 6 has provided them with good opportunities to develop library and research skills; this represents a good improvement. In addition to these improvements the school has:
- raised standards in English, mathematics, science, design and technology and religious education;
  - developed the roles of the deputy headteachers, the senior management team and subject managers;
  - developed a culture of monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning;
  - dealt with staffing issues which were blocking the rate of school improvement;
  - implemented the new curriculum and developed the outdoor classroom for children in the Foundation Stage;

- successfully implemented the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and the additional interventions for teaching literacy and numeracy;
- implemented the new Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs;
- updated curriculum policies and schemes of work;

Overall, improvement since the last inspection is judged to be good and the school continues to provide good value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

75. In order to further raise standards and improve the quality of education, the headteacher, staff and governors should work together to fulfil the intentions of the agreed school improvement plan and focus on:

- (1) Developing an approach to assessment in the foundation subjects that builds on the good practice in English, mathematics and science and provides a way of monitoring pupils' achievement and progress and reviewing how the curriculum is taught.

*Paragraphs: 52, 114, 119, 124, 129, 141, 147 and 153.*

- (2) Developing an approach to teaching in Years 1 and 2 that builds on the good practice in the reception classes and better reflects the learning needs of the age group by giving pupils more opportunities to learn through practical activities, role play and structured play activities.

*Paragraphs: 24, 31, 38, 92, 116, 123 and 128.*

- (3) Increasing the opportunities for pupils throughout the school to take initiative and personal responsibility for their learning and the way that they record it.

*Paragraphs: 24, 29, 31, 100, 109, 113 and 116.*



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	92
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	48

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	7	17	42	22	2	2	0
Percentage	8	18	46	24	2	2	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	n/a	608
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	68

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	119

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	44
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	31

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	45	41	86

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	34	38	41
	Girls	39	40	38
	Total	73	78	79
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (82)	91 (88)	92 (96)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	36	42	43
	Girls	39	40	39
	Total	75	82	82
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (87)	95 (96)	95 (91)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	51	45	96

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	40	40	48
	Girls	40	32	39
	Total	80	72	87
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (78)	75 (63)	91 (78)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	42	42	47
	Girls	39	36	38
	Total	81	78	85
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (77)	81 (71)	89 (89)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	564	2	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	19	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	10	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	24.05
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	29

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

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	393

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2002-2003
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	£
Total income	1,340,874
Total expenditure	1,281,755
Expenditure per pupil	2,071
Balance brought forward from previous year	136,478
Balance carried forward to next year	195,597

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.8
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	608
Number of questionnaires returned	147

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	40	3	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	41	7	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	56	3	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	53	14	1	2
The teaching is good.	49	42	3	1	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	47	14	5	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	37	5	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	41	3	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	30	46	17	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	40	46	3	2	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	46	7	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	36	18	6	8

## **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**

76. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. The provision for children's learning in knowledge and understanding of the world, personal, social and emotional development and physical development is good.
77. Children usually start school in the reception classes at the beginning of the year in which they have their fifth birthday. When they start school, children achieve broadly average levels for their age and the group includes the full range of ability. Throughout their time in the reception classes, the majority of children make good progress in most areas of learning. Higher attaining children, make satisfactory progress in mathematical development and writing. Children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are supported well and this enables them to make good progress towards their individual targets. By the time they move into Year 1, the majority of children have reached all of the nationally expected Early Learning Goals for children in the Foundation Stage and some have exceeded them.
78. The quality of teaching and learning is good in all six areas of learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall. All staff, including the learning support assistants, are knowledgeable about the needs of the age group and the individual children and plan activities that stimulate and promote their progress across the curriculum. They relate well to the children and interact and intervene in their learning with good effect. The most important shortcoming in the quality of teaching is that the adults' expectations for the higher attaining children are not consistently challenging in mathematical development and in writing and this slows their progress in these areas of learning.
79. The plans for teaching are very good. They are clearly structured, manageable and closely related to the National Curriculum guidance for children in the Foundation Stage. Because staff plan together, a coherent approach is evident throughout the three classes. They ensure that the learning support assistants are involved in the planning and evaluation of teaching and learning. This enriches the quality of their support for the children because all the adults are then able to promote the key learning objectives in all the activities. Many of the activities are planned to give children opportunities to learn in all six areas of learning. An outdoor climbing structure and the outdoor classroom are used daily by all three classes and are well managed to provide stimulating learning opportunities for the children. The outside area has been developed well since the last inspection and now gives opportunities for children to develop not only their physical skills but also support their learning in the remaining five areas of learning. There are appropriate plans to develop this good provision further.
80. Staff work hard to assess children regularly through a system of frequent, carefully recorded and dated observations. This gives a detailed picture of each child's achievement and progress which staff use to plan their day-to-day intervention in children's learning. However, opportunities are missed to use the information to evaluate the effect of the curriculum or to identify targets for improvement in the approach to teaching and learning. The school has meticulously trialled the nationally produced Foundation Stage Profile for each child this year and the staff now have a good understanding of how they will manage the process in the next academic year. However, the introduction of these national changes has meant that measuring

children's attainment when they start school has not been a requirement. Consequently, the rate of children's progress during the year is unclear. Teachers have introduced an informal system to get some picture of what children know, understand and can do upon entry to school but not with a long-term view of measuring how successfully their planned provision is raising the levels of achievement and attainment of all groups.

81. Whole-class sessions are lively and interesting in the majority of lessons because teachers have very good class management skills and they interact skilfully through well-focused questions and comments that encourage children to participate positively. Basic skills in language and mathematics are taught systematically and the staff use the opportunities to develop children's speaking and listening, and personal and social skills.
82. There is a strong ethos of partnership between teachers and learning support assistants. This results in well organised and smoothly managed lessons. In these lessons, the good balance of direct teaching and well-structured learning activities encourages independence and self-confidence in the children. In the best lessons, teachers' use of well deserved praise, clearly expressed explanations, a willingness to listen carefully and respond with discrimination to children's contributions and suggestions, leads to strong involvement and a greater capacity for children to think more clearly. Where there are high expectations for children's achievement as in knowledge and understanding of the world, personal, social and emotional development and physical development, all groups of children make good progress. Not all teachers, however, expect enough of higher attaining pupils and do not always challenge them sufficiently during oral sessions or expect of them high enough quality of work when they are engaged in independent activities. At times, teachers tend to talk for too long, which inhibits children's capacity to develop their own speaking skills.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

83. Standards in this area of learning are above those expected by the national Early Learning Goals. The children have a clear understanding of school routines and demonstrate happy confidence in their interactions with each other and with adults. They are enthusiastic and responsive to new ideas and ready to have a go, sometimes overcoming their own lack of confidence. For example, a child in a movement lesson stood at the top of a sloping plank and gazed dubiously downwards before eventually deciding on the best way to face the seemingly long distance between him and the floor. He was encouraged by the supportive presence of the teacher and was able to complete the task successfully. Children have learned to work constructively in pairs while engaged in the same task such as identifying details from pictures about boats. Others respond confidently during circle time with comments that can be heard clearly. In most instances, children listen to others quietly, do not interrupt or call out except when excitement catches them unawares.

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

84. Children attain the levels nationally expected levels by the end of the Foundation Stage. Children are careful listeners and audible speakers but are sometimes unable to respond to problem solving questions because the teachers do not give them enough time to respond or provide the answers themselves. In their play, the children interact with others and take turns in the conversation. They enjoy stories and rhymes and show a real interest in books.

85. Children make good progress in reading. Several recognise fiction and non-fiction texts; they know what a book title is and although not all know the term *author*, they know that someone has written the book. Higher attaining children read the words they know with confidence. They make good use of clues in the illustrations and tackle new words in unfamiliar texts by sounding them out letter by letter. Other children retell the story using the illustrations and some words and letters that they know to prompt them.
86. Almost all children write their names correctly. Most write simple words and demonstrate that they understand that writing is used to communicate with others. They write for a variety of purposes. For example, they create lists and letters, recall a personal event or retell a story. The lower attaining children make marks and behave as writers. Some group the letters together, which suggests that they have an understanding that writing is made up of separate words. Higher attaining pupils write simple sentences using their knowledge of letter sounds well to help them to write the words. Children's handwriting is generally legible but there is a noticeable variety in their control over the size and spacing of letters and words.

### **Mathematical development**

87. Standards are average overall. The majority of children will have achieved the Early Learning Goals by the end of their year in the reception classes. Good progress is made in early number work. The majority counts forward and backwards to ten confidently and says the number words to 100. Most order and recognise numbers to 20, some to 40 and beyond. Some count in twos. Several children add up mentally to five and add on one more or two more to a given number. They are beginning to understand and to use the symbols for *addition* and *equals*. Some children understand the concept of subtraction. Children have worked on measuring and know and use correctly terms such as *bigger than* and *smaller than*. The higher attaining children reach levels above those expected nationally for their age. However, teachers do not consistently expect enough of the children in oral sessions and in the way they present their written tasks. Where children of all levels of prior attainment make the best progress, the teachers ask challenging questions and give them tasks that are well matched to their learning needs. The resourced areas of the classroom are used well to consolidate children's understanding of number and measures. For example, children use their knowledge of numerals and addition in the café role-play area as they serve the 'customers' and when they add prices to the menus they create. Computers are used well to consolidate their learning.

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

88. Children attain levels above those expected nationally by the end of the Foundation Stage particularly in the development of computer skills and in the skills of investigation and exploration. When they use the computers, children are adept users of the mouse and can select icons accurately. Their use of a paint program demonstrates care and imagination through the well-controlled lines and colour blocking. They make lively and effective pictures. Others have begun to word process some of their writing. When the children made and investigated boats, they selected appropriately from a variety of materials and created boats that were likely to float. They explained their decisions well. When they had tested their boats, they gave sensible reasons for their success or failure. Several children persevered to refine their structures until they had successfully floated. Some made sails to catch the slight breeze and knew, some with prompting, what makes the boat move on its own. The children got much satisfaction from a task well done.



## Physical development

89. Children reach at least the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. In some lessons, the children reach higher levels because of the well paced and challenging teaching. For example, in some lessons where they practised balancing and climbing, the children attained well because of the variety of strategies the teachers used to help them to improve their performance. Most of the children are agile, confident and frequently very inventive in the way they move over and around the apparatus. They are keen to refine their movements and work with quiet concentration. The children make good use of the space both indoors and in the outdoor area and show an awareness of others. Their quick response to instructions results in lesson time being used well. When they use tools, the children demonstrate good control. For example, scissors are used safely and correctly and tools such as spanners in construction kits are used skilfully. In sewing, children use needles with considerable dexterity when forming different stitches.

## Creative development

90. By the end of the reception year, most children achieve at least the levels expected by the Early Learning Goals. In some activities, the children reach levels beyond those expected. For example, in sewing the standard of design, use of different stitches and colours is very high for this age. A parent takes this particular group and, without doing the work for the children, has taught them very well. Other examples of good quality work are prints made with different materials either to create repeating patterns or, linked to their mathematical development, symmetrical designs. Very effective water and crayon pictures indicate a good understanding of line and colour. Well made musical instruments indicate imaginative choices of materials. In music, during reception class assembly, children sang tunefully and with clear diction. They followed the taped song well and sang with careful attention to rhythm. The children showed enjoyment when they listened to a visiting African drummer. When they use the role-play areas the children are imaginative, take on roles and create or re-enact stories they know. For example, children using dressing up clothes in the outdoor area based on the theme of the Harry Potter stories were eager to explain which character they were and what their part was in the role play.

## ENGLISH

91. Standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly average. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make good progress so that by the end of Year 6, standards are above average. This is a similar finding to the previous inspection. The performance of boys has been significantly lower than that of girls over recent years, and remains the case in Years 1 and 2. However, by the end of Year 6, this year, the gender gap has decreased and is the same as that found nationally. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress. They receive good support from the learning support assistants.
92. By the end of Year 2, there is a wide range in the levels achieved in pupils' speaking and listening skills. This year, more pupils gained the higher level (Level 3) than last year, but there was a higher proportion of pupils who did not reach the expected level (Level 2). Pupils in the Year 1 classes enjoy good opportunities to contribute to class discussions and are learning to take part in conversations which demonstrate their understanding of taking turns and choosing appropriate vocabulary, such as 'beautiful', 'pretty' and 'kind' to describe Cinderella. In the Year 2 classes, teachers talk for too

long in lessons and there is insufficient participation by pupils. This results in lower attaining pupils becoming bored and misbehaving and higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are engaged in a wide variety of opportunities to develop their spoken language skills so that by the time they leave Year 6 the majority of pupils speak confidently and engage the listeners' interests well.

93. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in reading and this is supported by homework where parents offer valuable support. Pupils benefit from guided reading sessions where, in small groups, teachers and support assistants question pupils well, and introduce and use new vocabulary in meaningful ways. Teachers challenge pupils well to use the text to support their opinions. In a Year 5 reading session, where the changeover from literacy to reading time is managed very well, the texts were deliberately chosen to interest boys as well as girls and were appropriate to pupils' ability levels. From their reading, pupils show their understanding of similes when they identify, for example, the action of a blade as 'swift as a striking snake'. Pupils learn to access information confidently from web sites and use their improving reading skills to skim and scan for the relevant information in the new junior library. Most pupils read aloud confidently and with good expression. Pupils' progress accelerates in Year 6 where the teaching is at a very good and often excellent pace and higher attaining pupils use inference and deduction with ease.
94. Standards in writing at the end of Year 2 are variable. A high proportion of pupils have not attained the expected levels in writing although more pupils have attained the higher level (Level 3) than last year. Overall, standards are below those expected nationally for the age group. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is good. Lower attaining pupils in Year 3 learn to use conjunctions to join two simple sentences while higher attaining pupils know the meaning of a sentence may be changed by replacing a conjunction such as 'and' with 'but'. Teachers constantly remind pupils of the importance of making their writing as lively and exciting as possible and great care is taken in the writing of their stories or in role play. For example, in a Year 4 class, pupils produced interesting sentences and knew how to write critically about a dilemma and showed empathy for the character of Gran: "She looked proud, happy and curious". Most pupils take pride in the presentation of their work and in Years 5 and 6 especially; teachers make evaluative comments in their marking which help pupils to know how they may improve their work. By the end of Year 6, pupils enjoy writing extended stories, and incorporate elements of suspense and tension in detailed and imaginative accounts: "Staggering across the sand, they came to a boulder, carved like a scorpion". They attain at least the levels expected nationally for 11 year olds.
95. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Teachers share the intentions of the lessons well with pupils and this helps them to remain on task. At the end of lessons and sometimes during lessons, teachers revisit the objectives with pupils to check that everyone is aware of their targets. This ensures that they have a good understanding of their individual progress and identifies areas for further development. In the best lessons, there is a very brisk pace, teachers have prepared well and have high expectations of pupils. For example, higher attaining pupils are asked more demanding questions and teachers expect a high quality of answers from them. In return, pupils concentrate well and are keen to work hard. This results in a good rate of learning.
96. In almost all classes, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and this contributes very favourably to their rate of learning. Where the quality of teaching was less than satisfactory, pupils were insufficiently involved in the learning by the teacher. As a result, the behaviour of the lower attaining pupils and those with behaviour problems

deteriorated and none of the pupils was able to benefit from the lesson. The class did not make satisfactory progress in the lesson.

97. Subject managers have analysed teacher assessment and test results well and are aware of the gap between boys' and girls' achievements. They have purposely chosen literature that is likely to interest boys and have invited male authors into the school to promote boys' enthusiasm for writing. This is having a positive effect on their learning. Teachers are moderating pupils' work and in some classes, this is raising awareness of the importance of planning the teaching and learning for all levels of ability. The subject managers have had some opportunities to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in English through, for example, classroom observation and work scrutiny. These opportunities have been used well to improve the curriculum and the quality of teaching. The subject managers recognise that regular, systematic and formal monitoring and evaluation are useful tools in raising standards.
98. Years 3 to 6 enjoy using a new library which has a satisfactory stock of books. A number of texts have been carefully graded for the higher attaining pupils to ensure that they are suitably provided for. Good use is made of the neighbouring information and communication technology suite where pupils have regular opportunities to develop independent research skills. All books in the junior library are catalogued on the Dewey system and are checked in and out on the computer system that all pupils are trained to use. The provision is further enhanced by the full-time Library/information and communication technology assistant. She manages the room very well, supports groups of pupils in both subjects and is having a very positive impact on their learning. This is a major improvement since the last inspection. Books for pupils in Years 1 and 2 are now stored according to topics and arranged alphabetically. This helps to develop pupils' dictionary and reference skills. However, the library for this age group is still too small for whole classes to make good use of it: a replacement is planned as funds allow.

## **MATHEMATICS**

99. Standards at the end of Year 2 are average and pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make good progress so that by the end of Year 6, standards are above average. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were average in Year 2 and in Year 6. Overall, standards are improving, but currently there are not enough opportunities for pupils to take part in investigations and activities that allow them to develop and apply their numeracy skills. However, there is a very strong commitment from staff to improve and further develop teaching and pupils' learning and raise standards further.
100. By the end of Year 2, pupils demonstrate a growing understanding of place value. They use their knowledge of number bonds well to help total three numbers within 100. In one Year 2 class, the teacher modelled mathematical language well using and reinforcing odd, even, doubling and halving digits and as a result, pupils used correct terms to explain and answer questions. In another Year 2 class, the discussion about ways of recording multiplication and division linked to doubling and halving helped pupils to make progress. Pupils were beginning to organise and interpret data effectively in Year 1. During a discussion with six and seven year olds, pupils were enthusiastic and willing to talk articulately about their mathematical knowledge and understanding. They all added ten to any two-digit number and counted forward and back in tens, but were less clear about what to do when stuck. When prompted, they talked about aids to support mental calculation, for example, number lines and digit cards, but were less

familiar with using informal jottings and recordings. These pupils have a developing understanding of the concept of standard units of the measurement of length. For example, they identify objects that are about one metre long. They identify and name correctly common two and three-dimensional shapes and talk about the properties of regular polygons. Year 2 pupils could begin to explain division as the inverse of multiplication and tell stories to illustrate grouping as division. The Year 2 pupils tell the time using hours and minutes and convert this to digital time. These pupils are working to the expected levels for their age with some examples of higher attainment. However, in lessons, many pupils, especially the more able, did not achieve as well as they might because tasks did not always provide sufficient opportunity for them to use and apply what they knew already and make independent decisions about what they need to do next. Presentation skills are not well developed by the end of Year 2; calculations are legible but the quality of pupils' work lacks consistency.

101. By Year 6, pupils successfully use their knowledge of the place value of digits to support their mental calculations of multiplication and division and apply this to calculations using fractions and percentages. In the Year 5 lessons where the quality of teaching is very good, pupils establish rules for regular and irregular polygons. For example, they identify and draw a shape from criteria such as 'a shape with at least one right angle and at least one line of symmetry'. Whiteboards are used well to involve all pupils in answering questions during whole-class sessions. There is also very effective use of self-assessment at the end of the lessons to enable pupils to evaluate their own learning and set targets for the next lesson. In a good Year 4 lesson the teacher extended pupils' learning with challenging questioning to make them think about the different ways that a Carroll diagram can be used for sorting data. The quality of teaching and match of task to ability means that pupils' attainment is good, especially as they progress from Year 3 to Year 6. The mathematics teaching in Years 5 and 6 is a particular strength. An examination of a sample of pupils' work shows that well planned and differentiated tasks enable pupils to make good progress. Teachers' written comments relate well to the learning intentions for Year 6 pupils and enable them to have a greater awareness of their own learning and progress.
102. The vast majority of pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning. They listen well, concentrate hard, and are eager to learn. The behaviour of the majority of pupils is very good and this too contributes to their learning. Learning support assistants are deployed effectively to support both individuals and groups of pupils. They represent a valuable resource, which have a positive influence on pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, as the work set matches their capabilities well, and the quality of support they receive in class ensures they achieve as well as they are able.
103. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good overall and this is having a positive effect on standards: there has been a trend of improvement since the last inspection. Teachers' planning and organisation of lessons are good and follow the national recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is usually satisfactory or good with a few very good examples. In the lessons seen in Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching is good overall. There are examples of very good lessons and a few that are outstanding. In one lesson, the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory. Where the quality of teaching is good or better, teachers have very good subject expertise and plan appropriate activities well matched to their pupils' needs. They use time in lessons well and during the introductory sessions they ensure that pupils are quite clear about what they are to learn. Instructions are precise and previous work is reinforced before being extended. The correct use of mathematical language is emphasised. Expectations in these lessons

are high and relationships are very good. Pupils are confident to ask for help, and they are encouraged to evaluate their own understanding at the end of the lesson by indicating whether or not they have fully understood the learning intention for the lesson. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' work is marked but there is no evidence of developmental marking or targets being set for pupils, nor is there any evidence of pupils' own reflection or evaluation of their work. This suggests that expectations could be higher for some pupils at the end of Year 2. Throughout the school, assessment information is not consistently used to establish what pupils have learnt or adjust future lesson plans. Where the information is used well, teachers adapt the plans for lessons and the work is well matched to the pupils' rate of progress. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their well-developed basic mathematics skills to solve problems and work independently in mathematics lessons or in other subjects.

104. Mathematics is jointly managed by a Year 6 teacher and a reception class teacher. They are effective leaders and managers of the subject and have worked co-operatively together for two years to implement and manage the National Numeracy Strategy. They have a clear vision of what needs to be done to raise standards further and are focusing on improving the teaching of using and applying mathematics. They have revised and updated the school's mathematics policy and are now developing a calculations policy to support both teachers and parents with strategies for helping pupils make progress from mental to written calculations. There is regular monitoring of planning and teaching and they have developed good data analysis systems to enable them to identify priorities for development. The subject managers are now about to take this further to focus on formative assessment strategies and pupil tracking procedures so that the information on pupils' strengths and weaknesses will help teachers to plan more appropriate independent work for pupils, particularly the higher attaining pupils. The availability of resources is satisfactory but opportunities are missed to use them in supporting the development of pupils' visual and mental learning. There are a number of effective displays of pupils' work to celebrate their achievements and create a mathematics-rich learning environment.
105. Overall, standards are improving, but currently there are not enough opportunities for pupils to take part in investigations and activities that allow them to develop and apply their numeracy skills. However, there is a very strong commitment from staff to improve and further develop the quality of teaching and learning and raise standards further.

## **SCIENCE**

106. Inspection evidence indicates that by Year 2, pupils' standards are in line with national expectations, and that they are above national averages by the time they are in Year 6. This is a good improvement for pupils in Years 3 to 6 since the previous inspection. Work to improve the performance of girls in science has been particularly successful. Recent national test results for pupils in Year 6 show that the girls now perform as well as the boys. There are a number of strengths in the school's provision that account for pupils' good progress. The planning framework has been recently revised so that it more closely meets the specific needs of all the pupils. Teachers are very positive about it.
107. By the age of seven, pupils understand that we need exercise to stay healthy, and that maintaining a balanced diet is good for the body. They describe the changes occurring during the 'life-cycle' of various animals and plants. Pupils are introduced to the skills of scientific enquiry. They make simple predictions, are encouraged to use appropriate

scientific language when describing finds and understand the rudiments of 'fair testing'. Knowledge and understanding of electrical circuits are in line with that expected.

108. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is higher than average. This is because of good, confident, knowledgeable teaching, where expectations are high and pupils are very well managed. Pupils have a good level of understanding of a wide range of topics, including why we have skeletons, how sound is produced, physical changes in materials and the factors that affect the growth of micro-organisms. Teachers are now working hard to provide opportunities for investigative work. In experimenting to 'understand the variables that change the speed of a solid dissolving' or 'to find what happens to light bulbs when you increase or decrease the number in a circuit', many pupils are secure in making predictions. They say whether a test is fair or not and why. Pupils are beginning to think 'scientifically'. In a lesson where pupils examined the absorbency qualities of different materials, some pupils speculated that perhaps it would have been useful to introduce a 'timing' element, and others wondered whether it was appropriate to 'press' on the materials whilst they were in contact with water. However, teachers sometimes direct their classes too much by telling them exactly what to do, and how to do it, when conducting an investigation. Pupils, especially the more able, have insufficient opportunities to make their own decisions and plan how they might carry out and record their own investigations. Teachers introduce pupils to a good range of scientific language, and numeracy skills are developed through measuring and recording observations using a variety of graphs, tables and charts. Information and communication technology skills are well used to support this work. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported both at the planning stage and as part of classroom practice.
109. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6, with some particularly good practice observed in Years 5 and 6. Where teaching is strongest, the significant strengths include teachers' good subject knowledge which enables them to ask probing questions that make pupils think. This is evident from scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work where some teachers, when marking, are continually looking for ways to extend pupils' learning. Such comments as "What can you see from your graph? Does it match your findings?" or "Can you add more detail about how ice, a solid, changes into a gas?" help initiate further steps in learning. Teachers plan well in year group teams and share ideas about what works well. The most successful teachers highlight clear learning objectives, set challenging work, use varied teaching strategies and know that pupil activity and involvement is crucial to good learning. One pupil commented during his science lesson, "I enjoy how the class teacher makes it lively and fun". Teachers are working hard to develop more opportunities for pupils to undertake science investigations. However, teachers over-direct many of these investigations. There are consequently insufficient opportunities for pupils, especially for those with the potential for higher attainment, to utilise their knowledge in posing questions, and to decide how answers can be found, presented and evaluated. Teachers who have the confidence not to be over prescriptive and engage pupils as active learners capture and sustain interest and learning is good. Teachers throughout the school use a good range of resources that capture and hold pupils' interest. Because of the good teaching, pupils have a very good attitude towards science.
110. The joint subject managers display enthusiasm, good subject knowledge and set a good example through their own teaching. They appreciate the importance of giving a high profile to science through such initiatives as participation in 'National Science Week', where pupils use 'crazy custard' and 'fly helicopters', and join in the 'Grow a sunflower' competition. Priorities for subject development are appropriate and are

being carried forward successfully. The school has a programme of assessment and record keeping which gives a clear picture of pupils' attainment over time. However, the approach to assessment is not sufficiently developed to give teachers a clear understanding of what pupils know and next need to experience in subsequent lessons.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

111. It was possible to observe four art lessons in Years 3 to 6 during the inspection. Judgements about teaching, attainment and progress are based on those lessons seen, along with the scrutiny of work around the school, an analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning. Pupils at all stages of learning make good progress in art and design by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. By the time they leave school, the quality of their work in this subject is typical of that expected for pupils of this age and indicates that standards have been maintained since the last inspection and that there has been an improvement in three-dimensional work.
112. There are some examples of very good work and attitudes to learning in art and design. Pupils' work shows evidence of progression of skills from Year 1 to Year 6 with a wide variety of media being used; for example paint, pencil, chalk, wax, textile, print and pastels. There is also some evidence of artistic skills, such as the use of colour mixing and working with clay, being taught systematically in Years 3 and 4. Pupils have not had sufficient opportunities to make choices and work independently. This limits their involvement in their own learning but they are now being encouraged to review, appraise and modify their work. Sketchbooks are used throughout Years 3 to 6 but there are missed opportunities for pupils to practise techniques such as shading or line to create tone and form. Evidence of three-dimensional work around the school demonstrates that this is an area that is being developed. Displays are of good quality and enhance both the learning environment and the standing of art throughout the school. There is evidence that pupils use a good range of tools and materials. Pupils are given opportunities to study the work of a range of artists and crafts people. For example, Year 1 pupils linked their cut paper designs to the work of David Thorpe while in Year 5 they worked with precision, clarity and understanding to produce their own paintings in the style of the Impressionist school. There are good curricular links in Year 2 to their work on habitats in science and literacy, where displays incorporate three-dimensional maps, jungles, sunflowers and pond life. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good. This owes much to good planning and very good use of learning support staff and resources.
113. The quality of teaching in art is good in Years 3 to 6. Teachers plan from the school's scheme of work that is linked to national guidance and this ensures that pupils have opportunities to develop the subject skills systematically. The quality of learning is good. Pupils work with interest and motivation and when they are given opportunities to make their own choices, they respond very well. However, in some lessons, pupils were over-directed by the teacher. For example, pupils were told which tool, media, style and form to use, and opportunities to develop independence were missed. However, Year 3 pupils explore texture through sculpture using clay and in Year 4, they work from their own designs to select and mix an appropriate colour scheme for clay door plaques. This produced high quality discussion and decision making during the main part of the lessons and the pupils made good progress. In lessons in Years 5 and 6 where the quality of teaching and learning was very good, pupils made links with their study of ancient Egypt and produced three-dimensional masks from two-dimensional designs. Here there was good reinforcement of observational skills and pupils could explore ideas, choosing visual and other information from past ideas, as well as investigating a range of stimuli including clay masks and their own faces. Pupils

evaluated the work of the class by walking quietly around the room and then sharing praise and comments about the materials used and the effects created. They made sensitive suggestions how their friends might improve their work. There was evident respect for each other's work. The lessons finished with good links to future learning in the next lesson.

114. The subject is well managed by an enthusiastic manager who supports teachers effectively and places a strong emphasis on developing art across the curriculum and using the local environment for inspiration. The resources available have been improved since the last inspection and effectively support the good teaching observed. Although there is no formal or systematic approach to assessing and recording pupils' progress throughout the school, the subject manager currently evaluates standards through observing pupils' finished work and compiling a photographic portfolio of pupils' work throughout the school. There are opportunities to feedback strengths and areas for development to her colleagues. The subject manager has attended useful training provided by the local education authority and has plans to provide opportunities for training for the teachers. Her aim is to help them to further develop the use of the work of local artists as well as building their confidence in allowing pupils to explore, choose and take creative risks with their learning.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

115. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are at the expected levels. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection when they were below the expected levels. All pupils including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language now make satisfactory progress. The curriculum for design and technology now meets statutory requirements.
116. In a Year 1 lesson where pupils designed a fruit salad for their family, the teacher linked the lesson successfully to learning in science, literacy and mathematics. Pupils knew the importance of personal hygiene as they scrubbed their hands to 'get rid of any germs' before handling the fruit. They sorted, compared and contrasted the fruit according to colour, size, texture and taste and described the Tayberries as having 'little tiny hairs, but no pips'. The teacher promoted their understanding of new vocabulary well describing them as 'a cross between blackberries and raspberries'. Physical and creative skills were well challenged and improved as they cut up apples, peeled kiwis and arranged the fruit according to their design. In a Year 2 lesson, where the teaching was unsatisfactory, the pace of the lesson was slow, the poor behaviour of a number of pupils was inappropriately managed and the activities set did not afford pupils sufficient opportunity to participate at a level that extended their learning. This resulted in pupils not making any gains in their learning.
117. In a good lesson in a Year 5 class, where the pace of learning was brisk, activities had been particularly well planned to maintain pupils' interests as they tested and evaluated the money containers they had made. In pairs, pupils identified whether their product met their design specifications; they detailed improvements that had been made from the original design, for example, to solve the problem of notes getting mixed up with the coins, extra compartments were added. Pupils in Year 6 have made good progress and recorded their findings in detail of the shelters they have made in a project on 'joints'. The teacher has provided very good opportunities for pupils' learning to be linked to mathematics, history, science and geography. Their design criteria took account of dimensions of height and surface area required for the building of Anderson and Morrison shelters. In a link to their study of St Lucia, pupils demonstrated their



understanding of living conditions there by building houses on stilts. They carried out tests to ensure that the covering they had made was waterproof. Pupils have evaluated bags, commenting on their good features and made sensible suggestions for improvements. Those written by higher attaining pupils are of a particularly high standard.

118. In the majority of lessons, teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. Teachers plan interesting lessons where the intentions are shared well with pupils. This helps them to see the progression in their learning and they are given good opportunities to be actively involved in a variety of activities. Pupils make good use of computers when they design a coat of many colours for Joseph. They make good use of the Internet and encyclopaedias to research their designs.
119. The subject manager has been appointed very recently. Examples of pupils' work have been collected in but are not yet analysed. There is no systematic approach to assessing and recording pupils' progress and attainment so it is difficult for the subject manager to have a picture of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum. No time has been allocated for her to work alongside colleagues or to observe them teaching in order to improve the quality of teaching. Although resources for the subject have improved, overall, they are old, unattractive and in some areas, there is an inadequate supply for the curriculum to be taught satisfactorily. Storage of resources is unsatisfactory.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

120. The standards attained by pupils in Year 2 and in Year 6 meet the nationally expected levels; standards have been maintained since the last inspection. A better emphasis is now given to the development of skills and concepts involved in fieldwork for pupils in Year 2. Pupils make good progress, including most pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.
121. Mapping skills are well taught. An analysis of pupils' work and a discussion with a group of Year 2 pupils revealed that they have a clear understanding that maps reflect a bird's-eye view. They read simple maps, know about the function of landmarks and point to the correct position of Whitstable on a map of the United Kingdom. They know where London is located; and identify Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Good use is made of the locality and teaching is thorough in its exploration of the amenities within the local area. Their local visits result in informative maps and booklets. Pupils have a good understanding about the contrasting localities of the Isle of Coll in Scotland and their own. They describe similarities and differences and the reasons for some of the differences. There are weaknesses in the presentation of written work by the younger pupils. It is untidy, with standards of handwriting and spelling that are not high enough for the age group.
122. Pupils in one Year 3 class have a sound understanding of climate changes in terms of the seasons, Year 4 pupils successfully identify similarities and differences in two maps of the area, one from 1872 and the other of the same area today and some can provide good reasons for the changes. Year 5 pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the Brazilian rainforests but are not given opportunities to use this in developing discussion and debate with each other about the current dilemmas about the effects of people's actions on the environment. Through the study of St Lucia, Year 6 pupils successfully identify how and why places change and explain how physical and human processes cause changes in environment.

123. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers prepare thoroughly for each lesson and their subject knowledge is good. There is a strong emphasis on developing geographical skills of enquiry. Teaching is systematic, each topic thoroughly explored and resources used effectively. In the best lessons, teachers carefully assess what pupils have remembered from the last lesson before embarking on the next stage. Plenty of time is given for paired and group discussion and there is a good balance between whole-class discussion and written tasks. These, however, are sometimes low-level tasks that do not help pupils to apply their knowledge and skills effectively.
124. The management and leadership of the subject are satisfactory. The policy is good and contains aims that are well supported by clear objectives. There is no formal approach to assessing and recording pupils' learning throughout the school. The use of information and communication technology has rightly been identified as a target for development.

## **HISTORY**

125. As in the last inspection, pupils in Year 2 and in Year 6 achieve the levels expected nationally for their age. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress.
126. By the end of Year 2, pupils' knowledge and understanding about famous people are good and they have developed a good sense of chronology. They talk knowledgeably about The Great Fire of London; know about the primary source of Pepys' diary and give reasons as to why the fire went out of control. Year 1 pupils recognise differences in past and present kitchen utensils.
127. Year 3 pupils are highly motivated to be effective archaeologists in their mini-dig about the Vikings. They know they must dig carefully to avoid destroying evidence. They make informed guesses about the age of each artefact, knowing that some things are preserved better than others such as articles made of bone or metal. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the period, but the variety of sources from which they research information is limited and some tend to copy the text instead of deducing information from the available evidence. Year 6 pupils research the significance of Egyptian pyramids, tombs and burial practices in relation to beliefs about the next world. They lack confidence in inferring from the evidence what the significance could be of the drawings they study and need a lot of prompting at first. In the best lesson, where paired and whole-class discussion was very effectively led by the class teacher, they started to look beyond observation and began to offer ideas of their own.
128. The quality of teaching is good overall. Strengths include the good use of artefacts to engage pupils' interest and to help them to develop enquiry. The teachers' good subject knowledge and expertise enable them to plan lessons that challenge and interest the pupils. Teaching is thorough and well planned within a sequence of study objectives. The best teaching conveys interest and enthusiasm for the subject by the provision of activities that depend on practical application and pupil discussion is encouraged. The quality of resource material is not always wide enough for pupils to develop research skills well and to enable them to study how differently events can be interpreted depending on the source. Some tasks are of little value in adding to pupils' understanding. For example, pupils in Year 1 learning about the Victorian kitchen placed kitchen artefacts from Victorian times and the present day on a timeline. They showed a good understanding of the similarities and differences. They were then

asked to sequence a series of black and white line drawings of kitchens in the Middle Ages, Tudor, Victorian and present times. These were of poor quality and were not sufficiently linked to the learning intentions for the lesson and so, added little to their understanding.

129. Progress in the subject throughout the school is enriched by visits to places of historical interest in the locality and beyond and by visitors enacting historical roles such as Vikings. Where at all possible, the school uses people as living witnesses to an era and pupils devise questionnaires with which to find out relevant information about a particular period such as life in Britain during World War Two. The subject manager provides satisfactory leadership. A long-term curriculum plan has been devised but this does not show clearly how much time is to be spent on each topic that is to be taught or indicate which topics are to be taught in depth and which in outline. There is not a formal or systematic approach to assessing and recording pupils' progress which means that strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum cannot be identified. The use of information and communication technology to support the curriculum is at an early stage.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

130. In the last inspection, standards in information and communication technology were similar to those expected for pupils in Year 2 and in Year 6. Since then, the school has made good progress in updating its provision so that all pupils now have access to a well-equipped computer suite and computers for use in the classrooms. Teachers have received training through the New Opportunities Fund. The training has raised confidence and the school is now in a position to improve and develop what is already in place. The impact of these improvements is beginning to be seen throughout the school and as a result, the school is keeping abreast of national improvement trends. Pupils make good progress in relation to their prior attainment and the majority of the pupils who are now in Year 2 are on course to attain standards, which are at least in line with national expectations for their age by Year 6. These will be the first pupils to have had the benefit of the new computer suite for the whole of their time in the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. There was no difference in the achievement of girls and boys observed during the inspection.
131. Pupils make good progress. Throughout the school, they develop word processing skills, which they use to present work for display. By Year 6, pupils can change the print size, style and colour of text and know how to use the spell checker and print off their own work. Pupils throughout the school use data-handling programs at appropriate levels to enter and present data. For example, Year 6 pupils used a bar graph to show pulse rate after exercise. Mouse skills and colour recognition are developed from an early age and by Year 2, the use of search engines to locate information on the Internet. For example, a group of Year 2 pupils demonstrated their confidence in using the Internet to find out more about Katie Morag. This lesson had good links with their geography work. Pupils use information and communication technology for their work in design and technology, for example, exploring and experimenting with designs and developing the design to make a pattern for Joseph's 'Dreamcoat'. By the age of 11, they have an understanding of the main tool bar when using programs such as Storybook Weaver and successfully incorporate sounds into their multi-media presentations. They log on and access a program quickly and easily using the tool bar. By Year 6, pupils' skills in word processing are similar to the levels expected nationally.

132. In the lessons that took place in the computer suite, learning was usually good because the lessons were well planned with very clear learning objectives. Good classroom management and organisation allowed pupils to make good use of the time available to them to practise and develop skills. A good example of this was in a Year 6 lesson where pupils were observed responding to an end of term challenge to import pictures from the web into a presentation. By the end of the lesson, every pupil had selected and saved a picture and inserted it into a file. Pupils are taught how to use e-mail and during the inspection were observed attaching a file to a message and sending it.
133. An aspect that was criticised in the last report was the control of devices using computer technology. This has been well addressed and each year group has an appropriate programme of work built into the curriculum. Younger pupils were observed programming the Pixie to move to their instructions and older pupils were seen using a computer program to direct the screen turtle around a given area.
134. The quality of teaching was good overall and there was an example of outstanding teaching. The school's use of the New Opportunities Fund has had a significant impact on the quality of teaching and the progress the school is making in raising standards. The introduction of the nationally recommended scheme of work has been effective in ensuring clearly focused lessons and a structure to support pupils' progress through the school. The subject manager supports teachers in developing their confidence and skills in areas that have been identified as being a particular weakness. Good classroom management and clear learning objectives have ensured that teaching of the subject has improved and that good learning takes place. The employment of a person responsible for the information and communication technology suite has also led to improvement in provision for the subject and an improvement in the way the subject is taught.
135. The subject is well led and managed. There are satisfactory assessment procedures in place that enable the teachers to see any areas of learning that need reinforcing before new skills are taught. The subject manager has monitored all aspects of the subject and drawn up a detailed development plan to ensure that improvement is ongoing.
136. An area for development is in the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum. There has been some improvement since the last inspection, there are some good examples on display of using ICT for word processing, and for representing data but computer technology still needs to become an integral part of all subjects.

## **MUSIC**

137. During the week of the inspection, it was not possible to see lessons in all the age groups. Judgements are based on one lesson in Year 2 and three in Years 3 to 5; a discussion with the headteacher and with the part-time teacher responsible for teaching music throughout the school. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress and attain the levels expected nationally for their age by the end of Year 6. There was insufficient evidence to support a judgement on standards in Year 2 but standards in the lesson seen matched those expected nationally for the age group. In the last inspection, standards matched those expected nationally for pupils in Year 2 and in Year 6. Standards have been maintained.

138. Pupils in the Year 2 lesson listened carefully to the instruments and showed a sense of how sounds can be used to represent moods and effects. For example, a pupil described the sound of the glockenspiel saying 'it sounds like a happy fish swimming along' and another described the sound of the maracas as 'the tide coming in and out'. They have explored the instruments to create a sound picture of the sea and have used symbols to represent different sounds and to keep a record of their group compositions. They had selected the instruments carefully and thought about the way in which they should be played to create the effect they want. When they listened to each group perform their composition, the pupils were able to make sensitive and helpful comments to help their friends make improvements. Most of the compositions included distinct beginning, middle and end sections indicating that the pupils have an understanding of simple musical structure.
139. In Year 3, pupils followed conventional music notation as they learnt a new song. Most pupils had a secure understanding of time signatures and knew the values of the notes. They made good progress in understanding that a dot behind a note means that the note is half as long again. They know the musical signs for 'getting louder' and 'getting softer' and, during the lesson they began to use the terms 'piano' and 'forte' with confidence. Some pupils were able to use chime bars to sustain a simple accompaniment. Pupils sing tunefully, with clear diction and are able to sustain their parts confidently in a round. In Year 4, pupils recognised a simple musical structure within a song and were able to use the same structure to create their own composition based on the idea of 'A holiday in Whitstable'. They know and understand the musical terms including 'timbre' and 'ostinato' and were able to record rhythmic patterns using conventional musical notation. They played rhythmic patterns, sustaining their parts well, keeping a steady beat and following the conductor's instructions. Year 5 pupils built on their skills in composition by creating a 'sound track' for a film about a journey through a rain forest. The pupils made good suggestions for the instruments to be used and had a good understanding of how the different parts of their composition needed to fit together to create the effect they wanted. They were successful in improvising rhythmic and melodic phrases within the group compositions. When they listened to recordings of their compositions, the pupils were able to comment on the good features and pinpoint where improvements were needed.
140. The quality of teaching and learning was good. The teachers' very secure subject knowledge enabled them to plan challenging work and to expect high standards from the pupils. For example, the Year 5 lesson was very well structured to build on pupils' prior knowledge and demanded a high level of individual pupil participation. This meant that every pupil was able to contribute to the group compositions and was involved fully in evaluating and improving their work. The teachers use questions well to involve the pupils in the lessons and to assess their understanding. The teachers listen carefully to the pupils' answers and make clear that they value their contributions; this motivates pupils to take a full part in the lesson. Because the lessons had a high level of active pupil involvement pupils had very positive attitudes, behaved very well and concentrated. They willingly put in considerable effort and showed enjoyment.
141. The curriculum is well planned to give pupils opportunities to develop their skills in listening, appraising, composing and performing music and there is clear evidence that the curriculum enables the pupils to systematically build on their prior learning. However, there is no systematic approach to assessing and recording pupils' progress which means that any strengths or shortcomings in the curriculum cannot easily be identified. Many pupils learn to play musical instruments. Visiting teachers provide tuition for those learning the violin, cello and woodwind instruments and school staff teach groups of pupils to play the recorder. Most of these pupils play to a good

standard, are enthusiastic and regularly attend the early morning rehearsals for the school orchestra. The rehearsal regularly attracts about 30 pupils. The headteacher is keen to encourage more pupils, including those in Years 1 and 2 to learn to play a musical instrument and plans are in place to enhance the provision. A school choir also provides pupils in Years 3 to 6 with opportunities to perform music with a group. They were successful in winning a local radio station's award for their performance of a Christmas carol in 2002. The choir and orchestra perform for two school concerts and other events each year. About 25 pupils in Years 1 and 2 attend a music club and a small number in Years 3 to 6 attend guitar club.

142. The curriculum is further enriched by musicians who visit the school to perform for the pupils. For example, an African drummer has recently performed for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and a woodwind quintet for pupils in Years 3 to 6. These experiences, along with regular opportunities to listen to and appraise music from worldwide traditions, make a valuable contribution to the pupils' cultural development. A recent Year 6 performance of 'Nathan's Nightmare', that included singing and dancing, was very well received by parents who commented on the high quality of the pupils' performances. The performance involved all the Year 6 pupils either as performers or as technical support such as designing and managing the lighting. These events provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their self-esteem and social skills.
143. There has been no subject manager for the last two terms but the teacher resumes her post in September and plans are rightly in place to enhance staff expertise so that, eventually, more teaching of music can be done by class teachers. A part-time teacher, who works throughout the school, sets high standards in lessons and in orchestra rehearsals; she makes a valuable and enthusiastic contribution to the pupils' music education and works well with the subject manager to plan and stage concerts and other musical events. There are sufficient resources of good quality to support the teaching of the curriculum. These include some instruments from cultures other than Western European tradition.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

144. During the week of the inspection, it was not possible to see all aspects of the physical education programme. Judgements relate to athletics, games and swimming and are based on observations in lessons, discussions with teachers and examination of planning. Standards in these areas are average in Years 1 and 2 and above average in Years 3 to 6. This is a broadly similar picture to that at the time of the previous inspection.
145. Teaching of games is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Pupils work enthusiastically and co-operate well in group activities. They show increasing control when hitting and catching, with some pupils able to demonstrate good technique. When asked for 'hints that would help us bat well' one pupil said, "Hold the bat properly and be sideways to the bowler". Teachers sometimes try to give pupils opportunities to reflect, and offer views on their own and others' performance.
146. Teaching of games and athletics is good overall in Years 3 to 6. Teaching is well focused on developing skills and techniques. This was well illustrated in lessons with Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. Effective planning and very good organisation were highly influential in helping pupils learn techniques of sprinting, in improving breathing, starting and running positions. Above all, teachers made pupils work very hard and purposefully. They in turn enjoyed the 'test' and never once indicated that they wanted

to 'give up'. By skilfully using demonstration, and enabling pupils to face increased challenges, the teaching ensured that pupils' capabilities were fully extended. Some of the improvements achieved during the lessons were dramatic.

147. Year 5 pupils follow a swimming programme, and by the end of the year, approximately 85 per cent of pupils achieve the nationally required standard. Many do much more and become proficient with a variety of strokes. Other than in swimming, there is no systematic approach to assessing and recording pupils' progress and attainment; this is a shortcoming in the provision.
148. Pupils make every effort to change into appropriate clothing for physical education activities and in this, they are encouraged by the example set by teachers. The curriculum for physical education is broad and well balanced, and there is a high level of adult support and commitment in helping pupils take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities and competitive sports. Extra-curricular activities include netball, football, rugby, cricket, dance and cross-country. The subject manager has been effective in increasing the involvement of sport experts from outside the school, improving the resources for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and her enthusiasm has resulted in more staff being actively involved in extra-curricular sporting activities. The school has enjoyed considerable success in competitions involving other schools, including cross-country, cricket, rugby, netball and football. Other enrichment activities include professional coaching in cricket, hockey, dance and tennis. Activities such as 'Health and Fitness Week', held annually, make a significant contribution to pupils' physical, social and health development.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

149. Good standards of attainment in religious education have been achieved throughout the school since the previous inspection. Pupils' standards in Years 2 and 6 are above those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well integrated and make similar progress to their peer group.
150. By the end of Year 2, pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education are better than expected of this age group. They learn some of the stories from the Old Testament such as the story of David and Goliath and are able to retell it. They learn that all religions have festivals, which the believers celebrate and that Easter and Christmas are the important festivals of the Christian religion. They recall the main events surrounding the birth of Jesus and what happened at Easter. They learn about Judaism and how a Jewish family celebrates Shabbat.
151. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have a good understanding of why people of different faiths pray and that people who follow Islam or Judaism believe in only one God. They understand the importance and significance of certain religious artefacts to the Jewish people. They know that Muslims pray in mosques, that they have to face Mecca each time they pray and that this is five times a day.
152. In the lessons observed and from the quality of pupils' learning, the quality of teaching is good. In most lessons, pupils were well motivated to learn and good progress was made. The content of the lessons built well on previous learning and the tasks were well chosen to match the pupils' understanding and ability. Pupils in Year 1 were observed taking a great interest in the idea of the importance of gifts. They each made a simple gift for a member of the class and were able to tell their teacher that it made

them feel happy to give the gift and it was a good feeling to make someone happy. Pupils in Year 4 were looking at Jewish artefacts and were allowed to take it in turns to try on the *tallit* (prayer shawl) and *kippah* (the skull cap). They showed great respect for these special garments and asked interesting questions, which showed the level of their involvement in the lesson. The lesson had been well prepared so that good learning took place. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good knowledge of the world's major religions and have learnt the importance of having respect for different beliefs. They have looked at worship in Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Sikhism and understand the significance of special places and signs and symbols to believers. These studies have helped the pupils to mature so that, by the end of Year 6, they are able to discuss sensitive issues such as the after life in a sensible and informed way. Religious education makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

153. The subject manager is enthusiastic and ready to move the subject forward. She has reorganised the resources matching them to the topics being taught in the new locally agreed syllabus. Resources for the subject are satisfactory and contain suitable artefacts and other reference material. The subject manager has not been involved in monitoring and evaluating of the quality of teaching and learning. Less developed areas in the subject are the assessment of pupils' work to ensure that they make progress throughout the school. Links to places of worship in religions other than Christianity are underdeveloped.