

INSPECTION REPORT

COXHEATH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Coxheath, Maidstone

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118588

Headteacher: Mrs C Robinson

Lead inspector: Mrs H Bonser

Dates of inspection: June 14th - 16th 2004

Inspection number: 255896

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	230
School address:	Stockett Lane Coxheath Maidstone Kent
Postcode:	ME 17 4PS
Telephone number:	01622 745553
Fax number:	01622 746986
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs K Birbeck
Date of previous inspection:	July 1 st - 4 th 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school draws most of its pupils from the village of Coxheath, although some come from further away. They come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Children's attainment on entry to the school is broadly average, but a significant minority have special educational needs. Thirty-eight per cent of the pupils across the school are identified as having special educational needs, as a result of a variety of learning, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. This is above the national average. At present, one per cent have a Statement of Special Educational Needs, which is below average. Four per cent of pupils come from Traveller families and one per cent of pupils come from ethnic minority groups. None are at an early stage of acquiring English. The movement of pupils in and out of the school during the school year is above average, although this varies between year groups. There has been a very high turnover of teachers in the last two years. The headteacher was appointed in September 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22870	Hilary Bonser	Lead inspector	English; geography; history; English as an additional language.
9646	Geraldine Osment	Lay inspector	
8139	Barbara Johnstone	Team inspector	Religious education; art and design; music; Foundation Stage.
30705	Graham Stephens	Team inspector	Mathematics; science; information and communication technology; design and technology; physical education; special educational needs.

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school's effectiveness is now good and it gives good value for money. This rapidly improving school no longer has serious weaknesses. Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching, although it is too soon to see the full impact of this on standards, which are average overall. This is partly due to a very high turnover of teachers since the last inspection. The headteacher, who has been in post since September 2002, leads the school very well.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are improving at a good rate because pupils are taught well across the school.
- Achievement is now good in English and science overall, but is not yet as good in writing and mathematics because of some inconsistencies in the teaching of writing and because there are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- The very good teamwork between the headteacher, governors and all staff has helped to bring about effective improvements in many aspects of school life in the last two years.
- Improvements in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) mean that pupils now achieve satisfactorily, although standards at the end of Year 6 remain below average.
- Very good provision for pupils' personal development is reflected in the very good relationships throughout the school and the very positive attitudes that pupils develop to their work. This makes a considerable contribution to their good achievement.
- A very good range of interesting activities, the attention given to the needs of individual pupils and the very good support of parents all contribute significantly to pupils' learning and enthusiasm for school.

The school has responded well to the serious weaknesses identified in the previous inspection in 2002, resulting in good improvements in standards, the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils in all year groups, including those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils. The overall leadership and management of the school are now good and pupils' progress is tracked and monitored rigorously. Much better use is made of assessment information to support pupils' learning. The curriculum is planned and monitored well and meets all requirements.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	D	E	B	B
mathematics	E	E	D	D
science	E	E	C	C

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Achievement is good overall. In Reception, standards are average in relation to the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the year and achievement is good. In the current Year 2, standards are below average in English, mathematics and science. This is mainly due to a high number of pupils with special educational needs in this year group. All pupils are achieving well in relation to their previous learning. Standards of the current Year 6, where there is also a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, are average in English and science and below average in mathematics. Nevertheless, boys and girls are achieving well overall, with some

achieving very well, especially as they have had to overcome gaps in their earlier learning arising from the unsatisfactory progress in Years 3 and 4 noted in the last report.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good overall. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and the school helps pupils to show a very good level of maturity by the end of Year 6. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

Teaching and learning are good overall. They are now good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 6. Teachers match work well to pupils' needs, planning interesting and challenging lessons. This helps pupils of all abilities to try hard and learn well. The approach to teaching is remarkably consistent in this new staff team, although a few variations remain in, for example, the way they assess pupils' work.

The curriculum is enriched very well, through visits and visitors and a very wide range of additional opportunities. This motivates pupils very well and makes them eager to learn.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The very effective, rigorous leadership of the headteacher is ensuring that the school successfully pursues its well-planned programme for continuing improvement in spite of the recent high turnover of staff. She is supported well by the deputy headteacher and other staff. The day-to-day management of the school is good. The work of the governing body is also good and all statutory requirements are met. Governors are now much more involved in all aspects of the school than at the time of the last report.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents: parents are very satisfied. For example, they feel their children enjoy school and are helped to settle in well, taught well and helped to become mature and independent. Some feel that they do not receive enough information about their children's progress. The inspectors found the amount and quality of information for parents to be very good.

Pupils: pupils expressed very positive views about the school. They know who they can go to if they are worried and feel that teachers are fair to them, trust them and listen to their ideas. They feel that other children do not always behave well. The inspection team found that behaviour was very good overall.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Continue to raise standards in mathematics and writing across the school.
- Raise standards further in ICT and extend its use to support pupils' learning across the curriculum.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is now good overall for pupils of all levels of attainment. It is good in Reception and in Years 1 to 6. This year, standards are average in English and science and below average in mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Boys and girls of all levels of attainment now do well overall throughout the school.
- Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science have risen at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 since the last inspection, when performance in the national tests was well below average.
- Standards in writing, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) remain relatively weaker.

Commentary

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.4 (14.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.6 (13.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.4 (15.6)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.5 (25.5)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.3 (25.4)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.6 (26.4)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 46 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Results in the 2003 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 were average overall, with little difference in the performance of boys and girls, except in science where girls did less well. Results showed very good improvement from the previous year, although this was less marked in mathematics than in English and science. Pupils achieved satisfactorily overall in relation to their attainment on entry and to their performance in the Year 2 national tests. Over the last 5 years, results have not kept pace with those nationally. Results at the end of Year 2 in 2003 were well below average overall and in comparison to similar schools, although a quarter of the pupils in the year group were identified as having special educational needs. Nevertheless, these results show unsatisfactory progress compared to pupils' attainment on entry to the school, especially in reading and for higher attaining pupils generally, as very few reached the higher Level 3 in any subject.
2. In the current reception class, children are on course to reach the expected goals by the end of the year in all areas of their learning where judgements could be made. In Year 2, standards have improved from last year, especially in reading and with more pupils reaching the higher Level 3 in all three subjects, as a result of effective school action. Standards are still below

average in English, mathematics and science. This is mainly because there has been a significant turnover of pupils in this relatively small year group since the reception class, resulting in a high proportion of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Standards in the current Year 6 are average in English and science and remain below average in mathematics, where there are too few planned opportunities for pupils to apply their skills across the curriculum and marking is inconsistent. Standards are lower in writing than in reading, partly because some teaching is not focused enough. Standards overall are a little lower than last year. There are several reasons for this. There has been disruption in the previous learning of many of these pupils, reflecting the unsatisfactory progress noted in the inspection report two years ago. There has also been a higher than usual turnover of pupils in this year group and there is now a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. It is a tribute to the effectiveness of the action taken by the school, that in spite of these factors, performance this year in the national tests is likely to exceed the statutory targets set for mathematics and English.

3. Records of children's assessments on joining the reception class show that standards on entry to the school are broadly average, although a significant minority of children have special educational needs. Children currently in their reception year are achieving well as a result of good overall teaching. Individual progress is now tracked very thoroughly across the school from baseline assessments through the national statutory and optional tests and other annual assessments. This information, together with past work and lesson observations, shows that most boys and girls, including those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils, are now achieving well overall in all year groups. This is a significant improvement from the last report, when pupils' rate of progress through the school in the core subjects was judged to be satisfactory overall but unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4 and for higher attaining pupils in all year groups.
4. It is too soon to see the full effects on standards of the very well planned school action taken in the last two years. However, the good improvements in the quality of teaching and learning are reflected in pupils' good achievement and, for example, in the very good progress made by many pupils in Year 6 this year in making up gaps in their previous learning. The rigorous tracking of pupils' progress has enabled the school to identify and focus support on particular groups of pupils who were not making the expected progress. For example, a number of successful measures have been taken to improve pupils' reading skills, especially those of younger, lower attaining boys. These include the introduction of a reading club, improvements in range and use of reading resources, more focused individual assessments of reading and the use of a structured phonics scheme. Higher attaining pupils receive more challenging work in class but also additional support outside lessons.
5. The very good behaviour and very positive, mature attitudes that boys and girls have towards their work by the time they reach Year 6 also contribute significantly to their achievements. Pupils with special educational needs and most pupils from Travellers' families achieve well throughout the school. Their wide-ranging needs are now identified at an early stage. Carefully planned programmes of work and good support and teaching from class teachers and skilled teaching assistants help them to do well.
6. Standards in ICT at the end of Year 2, which were below average at the last inspection, have improved to average. They are still below average in Year 6, although pupils are achieving satisfactorily. This is mainly because older pupils are still making up previous gaps in their skills arising from the unsatisfactory provision for the subject noted at the time of the last inspection and not enough opportunities are provided to consolidate pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum. Standards have also improved in religious education. They now meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by Year 6 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. The attendance rate is good and most pupils arrive at school on time.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' personal development is promoted very effectively and as a result their confidence is high.
- The school expects high standards of behaviour and the pupils' response to this is very good.
- The pupils like coming to school and their interest in lessons is having a positive impact on their learning.

Commentary

7. The school cultivates pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. This is an improvement since the inspection of 2002 when provision for spiritual and cultural development was judged to be not good enough. Reception children are supported well in developing their personal, social and emotional skills and most are on course to reach the expected goals in that area of their learning. In lessons, teachers really value the contributions that the pupils make. They encourage pupils to answer questions even if they are wrong. Teachers' sensitive responses build confidence and self-esteem. This was clearly seen in a good literacy lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, when the class discussed how to appraise text quickly and effectively.
8. The very good attitudes and behaviour of the oldest pupils show that they are gaining in maturity through the many opportunities that the school offers. Through assemblies, the wide range of extra-curricular activities and personal, social and health education lessons, the pupils are learning to value themselves and others. Serving on the school council, acting as peer mediators and the many other responsibilities that pupils have in classrooms are all helping them to understand what living and working in a community means. A good range of visits and visitors, the use of French in some classes, religious education and art lessons are helping to make pupils more aware of life in multicultural Britain.
9. The school expects high standards of courtesy and conduct from the pupils, who are happy to do all they can to follow the very good example set by adults. Parents were very positive about the high standards of behaviour in the school and inspection findings support their view. Behaviour is very good overall at break and lunch times, in the dining hall and in the classroom. As reported at the previous inspection, there are some pupils in the school who have difficulty in controlling their behaviour. This is particularly so in Year 2, but the teacher plans and teaches interesting lessons to keep them involved and on task. This was evident in a very good science lesson, as the pupils sorted information about living creatures that they had found on the school field. The school's procedures to deal with pupils with behavioural problems have improved since the previous inspection and teaching assistants play an important role in supporting these pupils. There is early identification and intervention so that the learning of other pupils is not disrupted and teachers do not have to waste time in lessons sorting out behaviour problems. The headteacher and her staff work hard to keep all of the pupils in school and exclusions are handled appropriately as part of a successful behaviour management strategy.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Black or Black British – African
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
107	1	0
3	4	0
98	0	0

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

10. In responses to the pupils' questionnaire and in discussions during the inspection pupils showed that they have very positive attitudes to school. They are very polite to visitors, teachers and each other and they smile a lot! Pupils take part in clubs in high numbers, they take responsibilities very seriously, enjoy their lessons and are willing to work hard. There is a high degree of co-operation between pupils that helps them to learn well from each other. For example, in a Years 5 and 6 numeracy lesson, the pupils worked very well in pairs, supporting each other as they made three-dimensional shapes from two-dimensional drawings. All of the very good opportunities that teachers provide are impacting positively on pupils' improved standards of achievement and learning.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.8	School data	0.3
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

11. Parents co-operate well with the good systems the school has in place to promote regular attendance and punctuality. Where support is necessary, the school works well with the education welfare and Traveller services.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good overall. It is good in teaching and learning and the curricular provision is satisfactory. The attention given to the care and welfare of pupils is good and the partnership with parents is very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. They are good in the Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6. The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The commitment and very good teamwork in this new staff team is reflected in the consistent approach to most aspects of teaching and learning, which is helping many pupils to do well.
- Teachers use a good variety of methods and interesting contexts for learning, which contribute to pupils' very positive attitudes.
- There has been a good improvement in the use of assessment information since the last inspection, although the effectiveness with which policies are implemented varies.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	6 (18%)	16 (47%)	11 (32%)	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

Commentary

12. The overall quality of teaching and learning has improved from satisfactory to good since the last inspection, although almost all of the teaching staff have changed since then. At that time, teaching in Years 3 and 4 and in ICT across the school was judged to be unsatisfactory. In the lessons seen, there was no unsatisfactory teaching and the amount of teaching that was good or very good has increased considerably. Very effective action by the headteacher and senior management team in the last two years, especially through very rigorous monitoring and evaluation, has helped to bring this about. Well-planned, ongoing training and support for teachers and teaching assistants and the very successful promotion of good teamwork have also made a strong contribution. It is a tribute to the enthusiasm, hard work and co-operation between all staff that in spite of the high turnover of teachers in the last two years there is already a clear, common sense of direction among them and a determination to improve further.
13. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage, which gives children a good start in their learning. In Years 1 to 6, teaching is good overall, with a significant amount that is very good, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. As a result, many pupils are making rapid progress in their learning this year, although it is too soon to see the full impact of this on standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. It is clear from pupils' work and lesson observations that the school's action to address variations in the effectiveness of learning of particular groups of pupils, such as younger boys in reading, older girls in science and higher attaining pupils across the school, is already improving their achievement. One of the key factors in this, apart from improvements in provision, is the way, especially in English, but also in mathematics and science, that teachers match work well to meet the differing needs of their pupils. For example, in a whole class introduction to a Year 3 literacy lesson, the teacher used her good knowledge of the pupils to give carefully matched questions to different groups to answer as she read an extract from a Harry Potter book. This meant that boys and girls of levels of attainment were fully involved, concentrating and learning well. The subsequent tasks were equally well matched, challenging each group at an appropriate level and moving pupils' learning on well.
14. There were strong features in many of the lessons seen. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good. Close liaison between teachers and the learning support assistants, good planning and assessment contribute to this and help these pupils to do well throughout the school. Teachers are skilled at asking questions that include them well, enabling them to take a full and active part in discussions and activities. Teachers use the good links with the local community and other schools, visits, visitors and links between subjects very well to make learning interesting and relevant to pupils. They also use a good range of resources well for this purpose and make very good use of role play and drama techniques to deepen pupils' understanding of what they are learning. Teachers organise and manage their teaching groups well and homework is used well as pupils get older to support their work in class.
15. Teachers are successful in helping both boys and girls to develop very positive attitudes to their work. The enthusiasm, keenness to improve and very good concentration of the Year 6 boys and girls alike and the way they work together well are very good illustrations of this. This

makes a significant contribution to their good achievement. The very good relationships between staff and pupils throughout the school also motivates pupils well and helps them to meet the high expectations teachers have of their behaviour and concentration. Parents agree with their children that they are expected to work hard. There was also considerable agreement among pupils in the questionnaire and in talking to them that teachers listen to them and value their ideas. This was evident in lessons throughout the school. In an English lesson for Year 5 and 6 pupils, the teacher changed her planning to take up the pupils' suggestion that they should write to J.K. Rowling to give their ideas for a new Hogwart's character. This provided a very good sense of purpose in the lesson and made pupils keen to improve their writing.

16. Teachers make much better use of assessment information to support pupils' learning than at the time of the previous inspection. This has contributed to the improved achievement. They now use the information from a good range of tests and assessments well in the core subjects to track pupils' progress so that they can intervene at an early stage to help pupils who are in need of additional help or challenge. Good examples were seen of teachers adjusting what they taught in the light of pupils' responses in the previous lesson.
17. However, there are inconsistencies in the effectiveness with which teachers use their good knowledge of their pupils to improve their learning. For example, teachers use their assessments of pupils' work to set individual and group targets for improvement in writing, mathematics and science. Although most pupils are familiar with these, little evidence was seen in lessons of teachers focusing pupils' attention on these as they worked. Some very good examples were seen of teachers making useful comments when marking work so that pupils knew exactly what to do to improve their work but this is not yet consistent. Sometimes teachers do not leave enough time at the end of lessons to review and assess pupils' learning effectively and to involve pupils in this.

The curriculum

The breadth and balance of the curriculum is satisfactory and helps pupils to build on previous learning. It is enriched very well by additional activities. Accommodation and resources for learning are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school caters very well for the needs of all pupils and makes sure they all have equality of access and opportunity.
- There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities, with excellent provision for sport.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The school is working hard to broaden the curriculum further.

Commentary

18. There has been a good improvement in the curriculum since the last inspection. The provision and time allocation for ICT and religious education are now in place. The curriculum for Years 3 to 6 is organised appropriately and higher attaining pupils receive a good level of challenge in lessons. The curriculum now meets all the requirements of the National Curriculum and is regularly monitored. There is good provision for the Foundation Stage. The literacy and numeracy strategies are well established and pupils in Years 5 and 6 are taught in ability groups in these subjects and in science. This helps teachers to match work very well to pupils' needs and contributes to their good achievement. Religious education is taught in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Schemes of work and lessons are well planned and this ensures that there is progression in pupils' learning. The school is investigating other ways of developing the curriculum, for example, by planning more cross-curricular links. Opportunities have been introduced for pupils to speak French, and good use is made of drama and role-play.

19. Overall provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and as a result the pupils achieve well. Procedures have improved since the appointment of the current co-ordinator. She has responded well to the views of teaching assistants and, for example, learning targets on the individual education plans are now more specific. The co-ordinator monitors provision well to ensure that teaching and support are focused fully on meeting the pupils' needs. These needs are not only related to learning but also emotional and behavioural factors that might impact on the pupils' ability to learn. The co-ordinator is ably supported by an assistant, who deals very well with all administrative procedures. Good on-going support and guidance from both teachers and teaching assistants ensure that pupils have full access to the whole curriculum.
20. Pupils experience a very wide range of extra-curricular provision. These activities include art, dance, drama, judo, reading and sewing clubs. The excellent provision for sporting activities, with a wide range of clubs for pupils to join, enables them to develop both individual and team playing skills. There is also a very wide range of visitors, including local artists, visits and residential trips.
21. There is a good level of staffing, with a good balance between newly qualified and experienced staff. They are well deployed across the school. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning. The accommodation is good. It is bright and clean and well-maintained. The grounds provide an attractive environment for pupils and are used effectively as an additional learning resource. Resources have improved considerably since the last inspection and are now good overall. There is a new ICT suite, library provision has improved and the toilets have been refurbished. New resources have been purchased to aid pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Procedures to ensure the care, guidance and welfare of the pupils are effective. Achievement and personal development are monitored well. The involvement of the pupils in the school's work and development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good relationships that enable the pupils to feel safe and secure.
- Pupils' feel valued because their views are sought and acted on.
- Good induction procedures enable all of the children and pupils to settle happily into school.
- The use of assessment is good and enables teachers to respond to individual needs.

Commentary

22. Parents are correct in their judgement that their children like school. It was obvious during the inspection that the pupils are happy in school, they are kind to each other, play together very well and work co-operatively. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils. During a meeting with the school council, pupils said they like their teachers who also help them if they have problems. There is good provision for first aid and child protection procedures are thorough. These have improved since the inspection of 2002. The governors have put a good system of health and safety procedures in place. The previous inspection report showed that toilet facilities for the juniors were unsatisfactory but these have been improved substantially over the past two years.
23. The pupils feel able to express their opinions, whether positive or negative, because the headteacher and teachers are very good listeners and respond to their comments. The school council has representatives from Years 1 to 6, who meet fortnightly. Any pupils can put forward ideas for discussion through the school council suggestion box. For example, there is new play equipment for the infants due to a school council idea and funds from the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Pupils' views are also canvassed through questionnaires and the school council is currently analysing the responses from its most recent questionnaire. Another forum

for listening to pupils is through peer mediation. Year 5 pupils are trained as peer mediators and they help sort out friendship and other problems that occur at lunchtimes. All of these opportunities are promoting pupils' personal development very effectively.

24. There are good links with local pre-school groups that help the youngest children to settle easily into the Foundation Stage. Induction procedures for older pupils new to the school are also good and help them to quickly become part of the school community.
25. Although the school does not have formal procedures in place to monitor pupils' personal development, the teachers know the pupils in their classes very well and are able to pick up concerns quickly. The tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress in the core subjects is now rigorous and used well now to support pupils who are not doing as well as they might. Teachers respond to pupils' academic needs well during lessons. They adjust their teaching methods to keep all of them interested and involved. All of this is contributing to pupils' improved achievement.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a very good partnership with the parents. Links with the community and other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents and carers have very positive views of the school and are happy with the improvements that have taken place over the last two years.
- Parents are very well informed about what is happening in school and how well their children are progressing.

Commentary

26. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly supportive of the school and far more positive than those of parents at the time of the previous inspection. At meetings held for parents and carers, both before and during the inspection, parents were complimentary about the impact of the headteacher since she took up her post two years ago. The school works hard to involve parents as partners in the education of their children. They are invited to achievement assemblies, to help in school and to the Share group. The PTA is to be extended to include friends of the school so that families who no longer have children in the school and members of the community can also take part in organising activities.
27. In response to the Ofsted questionnaire, some parents did not feel they are well informed about the progress their children are making. However, the inspection team does not support their views. In the autumn term, they are invited to meet their child's new teacher and in the Spring, parents and teachers discuss children's progress towards their targets. Pupils' targets are sent home termly so that parents can see what their children need to do to improve. Parents receive the annual reports in the Summer term and they show how well the child has acquired new skills and what they need to do next to develop their work in English and mathematics. Parents are also invited to discuss the reports if they wish. At the pre-inspection meeting for parents, they said that teachers are very approachable and willing to talk to them about their children at other times as well. Parents are sent curricular information each term; newsletters are written in a friendly style and contain details of what is happening in school and of pupils' achievements, and parents are also offered the opportunity to receive newsletters by e-mail. Parents' views are sought in questionnaires and this has resulted in additional times for parents to visit the school. Information for parents has improved since the inspection of July 2002.
28. There are good links with the receiving secondary schools that enable the oldest pupils to make a smooth transition to the next stage of their education. Through sports and music activities, pupils also work closely with other schools and this greatly enriches their curriculum. All of

these experiences provide many benefits for the pupils' learning and their personal development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and that of other key staff is good. The management and governance of the school are also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very strong leadership with clarity of vision and an analytical approach to raising standards.
- The management of the school is now firmly focused on further improving pupils' achievement.
- The governing body takes a much more active part in the life of the school than at the time of the last inspection.

Commentary

29. The headteacher, who was appointed after the last inspection, has helped to bring about a very good improvement in the leadership and management of the school, which was judged to be a serious weakness in the last report. Her very strong leadership has been instrumental in establishing effective teams of teaching and support staff that are already having a positive impact on teaching, learning and achievement throughout the school. This has also helped to minimise the effect of the high turnover of teachers in the last two years. The headteacher has a clear vision, shared with all staff and governors, and a determination to establish rigorous strategies to ensure that objectives are achieved within time-scales set. She is supported very well by the deputy headteacher and both work within a senior management team that monitors the quality of all aspects of provision closely and works diligently to achieve the goals of the school. All staff are well-motivated, support each other and work together very well. This contributes very well to the shared sense of purpose in the school.
30. The headteacher and her deputy present very good role models in curriculum leadership and this is reflected in the overall leadership of subject managers, including the co-ordinator for special educational needs, which is good. The headteacher also has very high expectations regarding equality and issues of inclusion. Consequently, all staff, through both their planning and the way in which the progress of individuals is tracked, including that of pupils with special educational needs, the gifted and talented and those from Travellers' families, ensure their needs are met.
31. The headteacher has ensured that the accurate identification of key areas for school improvement is firmly rooted in very good, rigorous self-evaluation in which all staff and governors are involved. There has been a very good response to the previous key issue relating to the monitoring of pupils' progress. A good range of performance and assessment data is now used effectively to track the progress of individual pupils and different groups of pupils and used so that additional help or challenge can be given to any not making the expected progress. The systematic use of the performance management process has been developed effectively to provide focused support for key priorities on the school development plan. It has had the added benefit of keeping all staff focused well on whole school priorities and is carefully linked to well-planned training. Performance data is also used very well to identify any weaknesses in the curriculum, such as reading and the achievement of older girls in science, which are being effectively addressed. The headteacher, together with the senior management team and local education authority advisors, carries out very rigorous monitoring and evaluation of classroom practice. All of these factors are contributing significantly to the rapid improvements in teaching and learning and pupils' good achievement.

32. Governors are very supportive of the school and carry out their statutory duties well. Since the last inspection, the membership of the governing body has changed considerably. It has increased in size and become much more actively involved in shaping the direction and vision of the school. Governors are committed to the principles of inclusion and good achievement for all, irrespective of ability, gender, background or culture. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Good communication with staff, a well-planned programme of classroom visits and training, for example, in the interpretation of performance data, all contribute to this. Governors take a more active part in monitoring the school development plan now, especially through their strengthened committee structures and direct links with subject managers. The open relationship they have with the headteacher and staff means they are prepared to question and discuss issues with them. This helps to inform their clear view of what is needed to continue to take the school forward.
33. The governing body is very clear about obtaining value for money. It works well to ensure that any available funding is used well in support of school priorities and pupils' learning, taking judicious and balanced account of a fall in the number of pupils and consequent funding and the needs of the school. As a result, financial planning and management are good. The efficient administrative staff contribute well to this.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	613,136
Total expenditure	637,899
Expenditure per pupil	2,773

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	51,579
Balance carried forward to the next	26,817

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

34. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. When children enter school their attainment is broadly average, but a significant minority have special educational needs. Children, including those with special educational needs and higher-attaining children, make good, sustained gains through the year and are achieving well. The provision is led and managed well and this has a positive impact on children's attainment. Assessment procedures are good and each child's progress is carefully tracked so that teachers can intervene quickly to give additional support or challenge where needed.
35. For this year, reception children are in classes with Year 1 pupils. However, they are taught as a year group for lessons in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. By the end of the reception year, most children are likely to reach the early learning goals in all the areas of their learning, where judgements could be made. A few are likely to exceed them. This is due to very good planning and the provision of a range of activities that are well matched to individual children's ability, as well as the good overall teaching. Not enough teaching was seen to make a secure judgement about standards and achievement in physical development. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The school has been successful in enhancing the quality of the provision. Provision for ICT is now in place and the language development provision for children with special educational needs has improved.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A caring and supportive atmosphere enables children to feel secure.
- Activities are planned so that children have opportunities to share, take turns and work together.
- Teachers know their children very well and help them to gain confidence.

Commentary

36. Most children are on course to reach the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development by the end of their reception year. Children's achievement is good as a result of good teaching and learning. They quickly settle into the routines of the classroom and feel secure. They play sensibly together both in and out of the classroom. They use the role play corner well, pretending, for example, to be pirates and take turns amicably at dressing up. Good opportunities are given for children to express their own thoughts and to discuss their ideas and learn from each other. Teachers regularly praise children and this results in children feeling confident to say what they think. This was evident in a lesson when the teacher talked about bullying. One girl suggested that the bully's name should be written on a piece of paper so that the headteacher could tell the child off! Children generally behave well. They are familiar with clearly established rules which teachers ensure they understand. Circle times, for example, are used well to reinforce the way that children are expected to behave.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision for communication, language and literacy is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide good opportunities for developing children's speaking and listening skills.
- Children show enjoyment and confidence in reading.
- The school is aware of the need to further develop children's writing skills.

Commentary

37. By the end of the reception year, most children are likely to meet the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy and they achieve well. Children speak confidently to each other and to the class. They are eager to talk about books and to retell a story. Some children read well and begin to use expression to make the reading come alive. They use picture clues and sound out words to aid their reading of new texts. A few children are less fluent at reading simple texts. However, they can identify some short, well-known words and use the pictures to predict what is happening in the story. Most children show good pencil control and form many letters correctly. Some children begin to put spaces between words and make good use of a word's initial sound. A few children attempt to spell simple words and occasionally use a full stop. Most children can write their names accurately. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers ensure that lessons are well prepared, with clear learning objectives. The end of lessons is used well to reinforce children's understanding. The school is currently focusing on improving young children's writing skills.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have secure knowledge of the stepping stones leading to the early learning goals in mathematical development.
- Tasks are planned well and cater for the different abilities of children.
- Other adults in the classrooms make a significant contribution to children's learning.

Commentary

38. Most children are likely to reach the early learning goals in mathematical development by the end of their reception year and their achievement is good. Most children are confident in using numbers to ten and beyond and begin to recognise different coins. Some children show a good understanding of different shapes. Teaching and learning are good. In a group lesson held outside, children drew circles, squares and rectangles on the playground, with the help of an adult. This enabled the children to see clearly the difference between the shapes. The teacher worked effectively with another group of children finding different named shapes on the hall floor. Children's written work is carefully marked and used to judge progress. Learning is made fun for children and as a result, they want to do their best. Good provision is also made for children to increase their mathematical understanding in other ways during the school day. Attractive displays in the classroom further promote children's understanding.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of the outside environment to stimulate children's learning.
- Effective use is made of resources in lessons.
- Children enjoy using ICT in the computer suite.

Commentary

39. By the end of the reception year, most children are in line to meet the early learning goals in knowledge and understanding of the world. Children's achievement is good. Children know the names of some animals and can identify those that are found in a zoo or can be kept at home as pets. They understand that different clothes have to be worn according to the weather and can sort the clothes into groups. Children use a simple computer program well and know how to use a mouse and how to log off. In one lesson seen, children visited the pond and wild area. They talked about the insects they had seen and put them into different categories according to where they were found. The children realised why some insects are found in certain places. Children know what happens at Christmas and make a drawing of what they would like for a present. They understand how they have grown from being a baby and know about some of the healthy foods that they should eat. Teaching and learning are good. Activities are carefully chosen to help children to build on previous learning. Teachers enable children to ask questions about the world around them and give clear explanations to extend their understanding.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

40. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision or standards in this area of learning. However, good opportunity is provided for children to develop their skills in the outside play area and there is a good range of equipment for children to use. In the one very good lesson seen, children controlled their bodies well, when creating simple movement patterns to show waves on the sea.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources are carefully chosen to interest and stimulate the children.
- Good opportunities are provided for children to use their imaginations.

Commentary

41. By the end of the reception year, most children are likely to reach the early learning goals in creative development. Children achieve well as a result of good teaching and learning. They enjoy painting and talk to each other about their work. They select different colours well to make interesting patterns and make simple drawings of the things around them. They explore the feel of different materials and begin to make appropriate choices. In one lesson, for example, a child made a boat out of soft wood and formed a sail out of tissue paper. A 'holiday shop' captured children's interest as they looked at the different brochures and talked about going to the beach. Children sing tunefully in assemblies and know the words of well-known rhymes and songs. Teachers and other adults support children well during their tasks. They enable children to gain the necessary confidence to develop their creative skills.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils now achieve well in all aspects of the subject because teaching is good across the school and pupils are keen to learn.
- Effective school action since the last inspection is continuing to raise standards.
- Standards are lower in writing than in reading across the school.

Commentary

42. Standards are average this year at the end of Year 6. There is a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than last year in this group of pupils. This is reflected in slightly lower standards of writing, although the improved reading standards have been sustained. However, boys and girls of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well in all aspects of the subject compared to their prior attainment at the end of Year 2. Many have made very good progress since September with the increasing impact of the improved provision of the last two years. In the current Year 2, there is also a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Nevertheless, although standards remain below average at the end of Year 2, they have improved since last year especially in reading overall and in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 in reading and writing. Boys and girls are achieving well in relation to their individual starting points at the beginning of the year.
43. A number of factors have contributed to this good improvement in pupils' achievement since the last inspection, when it was unsatisfactory for higher attaining pupils throughout the school and unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4. The most significant is the improvement in the quality of teaching and learning, which is consistently good across the school in spite of the short length of time the present team has been together. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning has contributed to this, together with the very thorough tracking of pupils' progress through the National Curriculum levels and frequently reviewed individual targets in relation to these. This has helped to raise teachers' expectations for pupils of all abilities. Teachers now plan work very well and match it very effectively to pupils' needs, which helps all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to do well. The way that pupils are grouped for literacy lessons in Years 5 and 6 supports this very well. Teachers question pupils well to help them to develop their ideas. In a very good lesson for Year 1 pupils, very skilful questioning extended pupils' understanding of the differences between stories they were comparing and enabled them to recall each in sequence. The school also now uses assessment information well to identify any pupils who are not making the expected progress and takes well-focused action to ensure that they receive additional support.
44. The subject manager leads and manages the subject well. Particular areas of concern in reading are being addressed successfully. Measures include the use of initiatives such as the early literacy strategy for younger pupils and the additional and further literacy strategies for older pupils. The introduction of a lunch-time reading club run by teaching assistants has successfully increased the interest and skills in reading of some of the older boys. Very good improvements in the way that teachers track and assess pupils' reading mean that the choice of books and reading activities are now well matched to their needs. The whole school focus on raising the quality of guided reading work is also helping pupils to improve their skills. The profile of reading has been raised throughout the school by events such as Book Week, reading competitions, regular visits to the local library and the recent improvements to create inviting, well-resourced infant and junior libraries. This has contributed to pupils' very positive attitudes

towards reading. As a result, by Year 6, many pupils now read fluently from a wide range of texts. They have preferred authors such as Meg Cabot and Jacqueline Wilson, whose books they discuss with enthusiasm. Appropriate attention and opportunities are also given to developing pupils' reference skills. They have a clear understanding of how to locate and select information from books and the Internet.

45. The school has also taken effective action to raise standards in some aspects of writing. A new handwriting scheme has already improved the neatness and presentation of pupils' work, especially where teachers are insistent upon its use across the curriculum and model the style well themselves. Teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to explore a variety of writing styles, acquire new skills and develop their ideas. They take care to choose interesting and relevant contexts for pupils' writing that motivate them well. Teachers also make very good use of a successful whole school focus on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills through the use of role play and drama, to stimulate pupils' ideas in preparation for writing activities. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, the teacher captured pupils' full interest and enthusiasm as they took part in a 'Breakfast Show'. Using questions they had thought up in pairs, they interviewed a character from the story they had just read, (played with great aplomb by the teaching assistant!), to find out more about her personality. This promoted good learning, enabling pupils to tackle the subsequent writing task of describing other characters confidently and successfully. Teachers also make very good use of opportunities for pupils to order, extend and express their ideas before writing through frequent paired, group and class discussion.
46. However, there are some inconsistencies in the teaching of writing mean that improvements in standards and achievement have not been as rapid as in reading. While there are very good examples of teachers making pertinent comments when marking work so that pupils know precisely what to do to improve, and of making effective use in lessons of individual and group targets to move pupils on, this is not yet consistent through the school. Teachers do not make enough regular, effective use of focused guided writing with their different groups of pupils to help them improve their skills. These inconsistencies partly arise from the high turnover of staff in the last two years.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

47. Teachers make good use of opportunities, in history and geography particularly, to create interesting and relevant contexts for pupils to develop and apply their literacy skills, which help to motivate pupils very well. Examples include higher attaining Year 2 pupils writing as eyewitnesses to the Fire of London – 'I am woken at exactle 1 o'clock by the smell of burning' – and brochures advertising the attractions of Dublin. Teachers also extend pupils' vocabulary well across the curriculum by ensuring that they understand and use subject terminology correctly.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching has improved to good overall since the last inspection, leading to improvements in standards and achievement and to the very positive attitudes to the subject that pupils are developing.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Placing pupils in classes of similar ability in Years 5 and 6 is very successful in meeting their needs.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to apply their mathematical skills and knowledge in other subjects.
- Marking is inconsistent and does not always inform pupils of what they need to do in order to improve.

Commentary

48. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have improved from well below average at the time of the last inspection to below average and achievement overall is now satisfactory, and continuing to improve, as a result of good teaching. The progress of boys and girls since September 2003 has been particularly good in view of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in both Year 2 and Year 6 this year, as well as the disruption to the learning of Year 6 pupils in the recent past. Arrangements to place pupils from Years 5 and 6 into classes of similar ability for the teaching of mathematics have had a very positive impact on raising the standards reached by pupils of all abilities. However, these improvements in teaching, learning and achievement have not yet had time to impact fully on standards either at the end of Year 2 or Year 6.
49. The quality of teaching varies from satisfactory to excellent. Pupils in all classes observed worked hard and are developing very positive attitudes to mathematics because, generally, work is matched well to ability. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by teaching assistants and teachers endeavour to make learning fun. In the excellent lesson observed for higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6, they were investigating the nets of shapes with a focus on accurate measurement. The lesson proceeded at a very good pace, pupils collaborated very well and were engrossed in their work. Their attitudes were reflected by the pupil, who said, 'It's really hard, but we'll do it!' Teachers track pupils' progress well and identify aspects of mathematics that require further consolidation. However, although individual targets have recently been set and a teacher in Year 4 focused the pupils' attention on them well, stressing their relevance and importance, they are not yet embedded consistently throughout the school and are rarely referred to when work is marked. Consequently, marking does not inform pupils well enough of what they need to do in order to improve.
50. The subject is led and managed very well, and this contributes significantly to the improving standards and achievement. The subject manager is a very good role model and leads by example in her teaching. She has a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject, high expectations that are shared with staff and has established very good procedures, with the support of the headteacher, to monitor the quality of teaching. As a result, teachers know what is expected and effective teamwork is beginning to be reflected in the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

51. Teachers need to seize every opportunity for pupils to apply the knowledge and skills that they have learned in subjects across the curriculum. Where this does occur, for example, producing graphs to show results in science, it is incidental and not often identified specifically in teachers' planning.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are now good overall, helping pupils to achieve well.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- The on-going revision of the curriculum is having a positive impact on teaching and learning and contributing to pupils' very positive attitudes.
- Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to apply the skills they have learned.
- The school environment is used well as a learning resource.
- Marking does not inform pupils of what they need to do in order to improve.

Commentary

52. Standards at the end of Year 2 are below average. This appears to be unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection when they were average. However, currently in Year 2, there is a high number of pupils with special educational needs and this means that fewer reach the higher levels expected. Scrutiny of work and teaching observed indicate that teaching is good overall, pupils are challenged appropriately and they achieve well. Standards at the end of Year 6 are average. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection when performance was well below average, especially as this year group also has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Lessons observed and work scrutinised indicate good teaching and good achievement for both boys and girls since September. This has been helped by teaching pupils in Years 5 and 6 in classes grouped by ability for much of this year, enabling work to be matched more closely to their needs.
53. Teaching is good overall. In lessons observed, pupils were enthusiastic, listened well and were keen to succeed. Teachers shared learning objectives with pupils and questioned well to encourage pupils to reflect, justify and explain their ideas. In a very good lesson observed in Year 2, pupils collaborated well as they sorted and classified mini-beasts that they had found on different parts of the school field, a resource underused at the time of the last inspection. Teaching assistants worked to very good effect with two pupils with short concentration spans, including them well in the lesson. The lesson proceeded at a good pace and work was very well matched to ability. The computer was used well with one group to produce a bar graph of the outcomes of the experiment. Very positive attitudes were also seen in Year 6, where the good use of resources, in this case a dissected pig's heart, motivated the pupils well and helped to consolidate their understanding of the circulatory system. Scrutiny of work across the school indicates that much of the work is directed by the teacher and consequently pupils have too few opportunities to apply the skills and knowledge they are gaining in solving problems independently. Also, marking is inconsistent and requests for pupils to explain and justify the outcomes of recorded experiments are rarely recorded.
54. The headteacher leads this subject very well. She has a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and is overseeing, with staff, the revision of the curriculum. This process, in turn, is improving teachers' knowledge and is enabling them to explore possible cross-curricular links. She has identified the need to update resources in the school library and to ensure that the range of investigations offered support girls' interests in order to develop the subject further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' learning now benefits from a well-equipped ICT suite that places the school in a strong position to develop the subject further.
- Sharing computers in the suite provides many opportunities for pupils to collaborate and work well together.
- There is still a greater focus on teaching skills rather than using ICT to support learning in subjects across the curriculum.
- The ICT suite gets too hot in the summer months.

Commentary

55. Standards are average at the end of Year 2 and pupils achieve satisfactorily, although scrutiny of work shows that their rate of progress has increased recently. Standards at the end of Year 6 are below average, although this is an improvement since the last inspection when they were described as poor. Pupils in this year group are working from a low base of skills resulting from the unsatisfactory provision noted in the last inspection. The high turnover of teachers in the last two years has led to a need to repeat some training opportunities. Some aspects of the curriculum, such as control, are at a very early stage of development. These factors mean that pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. At the time of the last inspection, the ICT suite was not completed and the school was not well equipped to teach the subject. The suite has now been in use for nearly two years and is beginning to have a positive impact on standards, although excessive heat during hot weather makes concentration difficult for teachers and pupils alike.
56. Teaching observed varied from satisfactory to good but when scrutiny of work is taken into account it is satisfactory overall. Both of the well-taught lessons observed were characterised by confident teaching, focused activities and a good pace. Routines for the use of the ICT suite are well established and all pupils, although often excited, behave well. Opportunities for pupils to collaborate and support each other are sometimes exploited effectively, as observed in a Year 2 lesson, when the teacher directed pupils to specific seats. This ensured that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding complemented each other's, with some pupils benefiting and learning well from their partners. The use of a national scheme to support teachers' planning ensures adequate curriculum coverage, although the recent acquisition of resources for control means that the current Year 6 pupils will have only limited access to this aspect of the subject.
57. Discussions with older pupils confirm that they are developing positive attitudes to ICT. They refer to some examples of how it has helped them in literacy when using a publishing program to create effective information leaflets and when using the Internet to research information on the Ancient Greeks. However, their responses lacked conviction and they were sometimes hesitant when other aspects of the subject, such as modelling, were discussed even though evidence exists to indicate that the aspect had been taught. This lack of confidence is a reflection of the disruption to teaching and lack of resources in the recent past, although work in the current year indicates that the pupils' skills have improved.
58. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The very recently appointed subject manager has made a good start by attending relevant training that she has shared with staff and also by auditing resources. The ratio of computers to pupils is now satisfactory although the school has only one interactive whiteboard that is placed in the computer suite. The subject manager recognises that changes in staffing mean that a further audit of skills is needed to help her establish priorities for further training.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

59. Teachers do not yet make enough use of ICT to support pupils' learning in other subjects. A few good examples were seen, such as the use of the Internet by Year 5 and 6 pupils to find out

about weather and climate in other parts of the world. In a Year 1 literacy lesson, the teacher used a digital camera well to provide prompts from pupils' role-play for their subsequent writing activities. In general, however, pupils do not have enough planned opportunities to consolidate and apply the ICT skills they are learning in other areas.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected in full and is reported below. Geography was sampled. History was not inspected.

60. In **geography**, in a satisfactory lesson in Year 3, pupils showed an appropriate level of map reading skills, as they used local maps to find where they live and identified the location of their leisure activities. They marked with symbols they had suggested. The pupils co-operated well together as they worked in their pairs and groups and the teacher questioned them and intervened effectively to keep them focused well on their task. A scrutiny of planning and pupils' work shows an appropriate balance between the development of geographical skills and knowledge and understanding of the locations and themes studied. While planning promotes progression in pupils' learning as they move through the school, not enough account is taken of what pupils already know as the same task is usually given to the whole class. Teachers make good use of the local environment. For example, Year 2 pupils considered ways of making the area around the school safer and pupils in Years 5 and 6 studied meanders on the River Beult. The co-ordinator has a clear view for the continuing development of the subject, including additional opportunities for fieldwork.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been good improvement since the last inspection, when provision was unsatisfactory.
- Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to share their ideas with each other.
- Resources are used effectively to extend pupils' learning.
- Although teachers provide satisfactory opportunities for writing activities, the range of these experiences is occasionally limited.

Commentary

61. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards match the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily. Pupils develop a sound understanding of some of the stories, celebrations and symbols associated with different world religions. They retell some of the Bible stories and know about different religious festivals, such as Divali. They learn to understand why religious issues are important and to respect different views.
62. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good at times. Teachers enable pupils to take part in discussions and to talk about their own experiences, which deepens their understanding of the topics studied. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils learnt about a Christian baptism. The teacher made good use of appropriate artefacts to enable pupils to understand the importance of the celebration. Pupils asked thoughtful questions about the role of the godparent and what might happen during the service. Some pupils were keen to contribute relevant information about what they had seen when visiting the local church. Provision for developing pupils' literacy skills is satisfactory, but written follow-up work is sometimes limited to accounts of stories. The use of ICT to promote pupils' learning in the subject is in the early stages of development.

63. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject manager monitors planning and pupils' work regularly to ensure that the requirements and assessment procedures of the locally agreed syllabus are met. Good links are established with Holy Trinity Church and the Vicar occasionally leads assemblies. A significant contribution to pupils' religious education is made through school assemblies. Visits and visitors are used increasingly to motivate pupils and to extend their learning.
64. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Standards by the end of Year 6 have improved, when previously they were found to be below those expected. Leadership and management have improved and the time allocation in Years 3 to 6 is now in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. There are now satisfactory resources, which are used well in lessons to support pupils' learning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, music and physical education were sampled. Design and technology was not inspected.

65. The scope of the inspection allowed only one lesson in **art and design** to be observed. This, together with the analysis of pupils' work, including displays around the school, indicated that standards are average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils experience an appropriate range of different media and these enable them to develop satisfactory skills. The activities include drawing, painting, modelling, sewing and weaving. Pupils make good use of layering different textures to make collages and show an attractive use of colour. They study the work of different cultures, such as the patterns made in Aboriginal art and the designs on Greek pots. Younger pupils paint pictures inspired from looking at the work of Monet and Van Gogh. The last inspection found that there was insufficient opportunity for pupils to experience the work of other artists. This aspect of the curriculum is now fully in place. There are two art clubs and a sewing club, enabling pupils to extend their interest in the subject. The school is fortunate in having a visiting local artist who further promotes the development of pupils' skills. Later this term, the artist is to work with pupils in Years 2 and 3 to make a hanging sculpture in the school grounds.
66. In **music**, no secure judgement can be made about overall standards and provision as only a small amount of teaching was seen. However, assemblies show that pupils sing well. Pupils have a good memory for the words of hymns and many pupils sing with an accurate sense of pitch. A teacher of Kindermusik visits the school to work with younger pupils for a series of weekly lessons. Instrumental lessons are provided in brass, woodwind and guitar. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to take part in performances, both in and out of school. Performances are held at Christmas and at other times during the school year. Younger pupils have taken part in a Sing-a-long at All Saints Church, Maidstone and older pupils have played at a recorder festival. Entertainment has been provided for local senior citizens. These activities also contribute well to pupils' social development.
67. Only two **physical education** lessons were observed and therefore it is not possible to make a firm judgement about provision and standards overall. In a very well taught athletics lesson in Years 5 and 6, the expertise of the teacher enabled pupils to make rapid progress in developing specific techniques. Good teaching in a games lesson in Year 2 helped pupils to improve their ball control well. In addition to the lessons observed, inspectors spoke to the subject manager and pupils. Swimming at the end of Year 6 does not meet expectations because, despite the school's best efforts, it is not possible to organise swimming lessons after Year 3. Consequently, several pupils cannot swim the nationally expected 25 metres before they leave the school. All other strands of the subject are taught and the subject leader, as well as being very well qualified and experienced to lead the subject, oversees a very good range of clubs. These offer pupils, including younger pupils, the opportunity to gain expertise in a wide range of activities including athletics, cricket, football, netball, cross-country running and others

according to the season. The school is often successful when competing against local schools.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

This area of the curriculum was sampled.

68. All of the pupils benefit from the good personal, social and health education programme that the subject manager has put in place since the inspection of 2002. The planning and teaching of PSHE was criticised in that report and good improvements have been made since then. Teachers now plan effective circle times and well-structured PSHE lessons. Those seen during the inspection motivated pupils to participate well. Although links have still to be made with other subject areas, all of the required aspects are covered, Drugs, health and sex education are also supported by the school nurse and there are safety awareness days for the oldest pupils. The involvement of pupils in activities such as the school council helps them to understand how they can contribute to a community. The provision is now having a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and personal development and its success is reflected in the very good relationships throughout the school and the very positive attitudes and behaviour that pupils develop as they move through the school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).