

INSPECTION REPORT

GRAVENEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Faversham

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118339

Headteacher: Mrs Jane Troth

Lead inspector: Rosalind Johns

Dates of inspection: 4th and 5th May 2004

Inspection number: 256244

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	79
School address:	Seasalter Road Graveney Faversham Kent
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Graveney Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Ruth Matthews
Date of previous inspection:	9 th to 11 th March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Graveney Primary School is situated in a small village not far from Faversham in Kent. There are 40 boys and 39 girls on roll. Ten children attend full time in the Foundation Stage. Only eight pupils come from the village but others come from as far afield as Faversham, Whitstable, Seasalter and Canterbury. The socio economics of the area are average. Nineteen pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. This is above average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need which is broadly average. There are no pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and none speaks English as an additional language. Seven pupils joined the school last year and six left at other than the normal times of joining and leaving. This is higher than normal. Pupils generally enter the school at average levels of attainment.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Graveney Primary School is giving its pupils a sound education. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory so that pupils achieve satisfactorily overall and reach broadly average standards. Pupils with SEN achieve well but more able pupils do not make enough progress. In February 2002, the acting headteacher carried out a profile of ability at the school and found that there was significant underachievement by 82 per cent of pupils. The strong leadership of the present headteacher has resulted in a real sense of teamwork in the school, a determination that pupils' needs come first and a steady rise in standards in recent years. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- In 2003, standards in the national tests in Year 2 were very high in reading, well above average in writing and above average in mathematics.
- Across the school, standards in science are above average because teachers put a strong emphasis on learning through observation and investigation.
- The good leadership of the headteacher and the good management systems that she has put in place ensure that there is a relentless focus on driving standards upwards.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to work, good behaviour and very good relationships are firmly rooted in the school's good provision for their personal development.
- The quality of teaching and learning varies across the school so that pupils make uneven progress.
- The very good links with parents ensure that there is a strong partnership in learning between home and school.
- Systems for tracking pupils' progress are very good in English, mathematics and science but this information is not always being used sharply enough in planning pupils' work.
- Good provision for pupils with SEN ensures that they make significant progress but more able pupils are not always making the best use of their skills and talents.
- Pupils are not being given enough opportunities to write freely and at length to enable them to reach higher standards.

There has been a satisfactory improvement since the school was last inspected in 1998. The best improvements have been in raising standards in reading, handwriting and presentation especially in the case of younger pupils, provision for children in Reception, resources and information to parents. Information from tracking pupils' progress is still not always being used carefully enough by teachers to match work very closely to pupils' levels of understanding especially in the case of more able pupils. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly the same as those found by the team at the last inspection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E*	E*	E	E
Mathematics	E*	E*	D	E
Science	E*	E	E	E

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E- in the lowest five per cent in the country*

*Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals
These comparisons should be treated with caution because of the small number of pupils involved.*

Achievement is satisfactory overall. It is good for pupils in Years 5 and 6 and satisfactory in other year groups. The youngest children in the school are on course to reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception in all areas of learning judged by the inspection except in personal, social and emotional development where they are above average. In Year 2, standards are above average in science and average in reading, writing, mathematics and in all other subjects where judgements could be made. In Year 6, standards are above average in science and average in English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and history. Not enough evidence was gathered to make reliable judgements about other subjects. Standards were found to be lower in Year 2 than in the 2003 national tests because of different abilities in the year groups. Standards were higher in Year 6 as a result of booster classes, improved tracking systems and the new ICT suite. Such small numbers in different year groups mean that comparisons should be treated with caution.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils' sensible attitudes and very good relationships mean that they live and work together in a happy atmosphere. Attendance is unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teaching is good in the Years 5 and 6 class and satisfactory in Reception and in Years 1 to 4. Teachers treat pupils sensitively and with respect so that they are not afraid to ask questions and say when they do not understand. This makes for a happy partnership in the classroom. Teachers also ensure that ICT is a natural part of pupils' learning. Sometimes, there is not enough urgency in teaching and pupils relax into a comfortable rate of working. Occasional over direction by teachers limits pupils' ability to think things out for themselves. The curriculum is well-organised and interesting and is brought to life by a good range of visits and visitors. Very good levels of care result in a happy, orderly school. Very strong links with parents and good links with other schools and the community mean that the school can draw on outside resources and expertise to increase its effectiveness.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The committed leadership of the headteacher provides the driving force behind the school's quest for constant improvement. She has put good management systems in place to diagnose weaknesses and build on strengths. Governors use their interests and expertise well to support staff and pupils and work hard to keep abreast of developments. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very happy with the school's work. They feel that their children are receiving a well-rounded education and especially like the sense of responsibility that older pupils have towards younger ones. Pupils are also very positive about the school. They said how much they liked their teachers and different subjects and some said that there was nothing they wanted to change.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue to raise standards especially in English and mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good in all classes.
- Use information from tracking pupils' progress much more precisely so that all pupils, but especially the more able, are given work that has the right level of challenge for them.
- Create more opportunities for older pupils to write at length in order to build up their skills and confidence as writers.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, achievement is satisfactory. It is good for pupils in Years 5 and 6 and for pupils with SEN across the school. More able pupils do not always achieve as well as they should. Overall, standards are average in Year 2 and Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' results in reading in the end of Year 2 national tests in 2003 were in the top five per cent in the country.
- In the national tests in 2003, pupils in Year 2 reached standards that were well above average in writing and above average in mathematics.
- Standards in science are above average in Year 2 and Year 6 because pupils are encouraged to find answers to scientific questions for themselves.
- There is an upward trend in results in the national tests.
- The school has put robust tracking and recording procedures in place to address pupils' past underachievement.
- Overall satisfactory teaching and learning mean that standards are not rising quickly enough.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress but, sometimes, more able pupils are not being sufficiently encouraged to forge ahead and use their initiative.
- Assessment information is not always being used precisely enough in the classroom to raise standards.

Commentary

1. By the end of the Reception year, indications are that most children will meet the expected standards for children of this age in all areas of learning except in personal, social and emotional development where standards are above average. Children's good achievement in personal, social and emotional development is linked to the quality of teaching and learning. This is similar to the last inspection except that improvements in resources and more opportunities to follow the curriculum for that age group have resulted in higher standards in creative and physical development.

2. Across the school, standards in national tests and assessments remained consistently low until the rise in Year 2 results in 2003. In February 2002, the acting headteacher at that time carried out a profile of ability of pupils in the school. Eighty-two per cent of pupils were found to be underachieving by at least one whole National Curriculum level and some by more than two levels. Some of the Year 4 pupils, who are now in Year 6, were not achieving the levels they reached in the Year 2 national tests. No pupils were achieving higher levels in the national tests. On her appointment in April 2002, the present headteacher introduced a rigorous monitoring and evaluation programme into the school as a springboard to improved standards.

3. In the end of Year 2 national tests and teachers' assessments in 2003, standards were very high in reading, well above average in writing and above average in mathematics compared with all schools and with similar schools based on the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. In reading, standards were in the top five per cent in the country. The trend in the school's results is above the national trend. Standards improved significantly in 2003 because of better assessment procedures, a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics and the use of additional teaching assistants in the class.

4. The findings of the inspection are that, in Year 2, standards are above average in science and average in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics, ICT and history. Not enough evidence was gathered to make valid judgements in music, DT, geography, PE, RE, PSHCE and art

and design. Achievement is good in science because pupils are acquiring basic knowledge and understanding and are developing good investigative skills. It is satisfactory in all other subjects where it reflects the quality of teaching and learning. Standards in English and mathematics were generally found to be lower than in the 2003 tests and assessments because a different group of pupils is involved, some of whom have needed additional learning support. The very small year group in 2003 also makes valid comparisons difficult.

5. Standards in the end of Year 6 national tests in 2003 were well below average in English and science and below average in mathematics compared with all schools nationally. Compared with similar schools based on the number of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards in all three subjects were well below average. The small number of pupils involved means that care should be taken when analysing the results of this year group. In these tests, standards in both English and mathematics have risen steadily since 2001 and in science since 1999. This general upward trend in results is because the school now has a much more critical and analytical approach to its performance and has used the information gained about these subjects to sharpen its focus on raising standards. The school did not meet its targets in English and mathematics especially at the higher Level 5.

6. The findings of the inspection are that, in Year 6, standards in science are above average and pupils achieve well. In English, mathematics and ICT in Years 3 to 6, standards are average and overall achievement is satisfactory and is linked with the overall quality of teaching and learning. However, in Years 5 and 6, achievement in these subjects is good. Good teaching in this class is only starting to compensate for pupils' past underachievement and is not yet reflected in standards. In history, standards and achievement are satisfactory. There was not enough evidence gathered to make valid judgements about other subjects. Standards were found to be higher than in the 2003 national tests because of strong subject leadership and the impact of initiatives such as booster classes, improved tracking procedures and the use of the new ICT suite. Pupils with SEN achieve well because targets are very specific and they receive close and effective support in class. Although results show that girls achieve less well than boys in the national tests, no differences were noted during the inspection.

7. Standards in reading, handwriting and presentation which were below average in Years 1 and 2 at the last inspection have improved significantly as a result of the systematic approach to the teaching of phonics, the adoption of a fully cursive script from Year 1 onwards and the creation of the central library. The school has responded well to this key issue for action. At the last inspection, standards were average in speaking and listening, writing, mathematics, science and all other subjects except geography where they were above average. These findings are broadly similar to the present inspection. Although many good strategies have been put in place since 2002 to improve standards, it is still too early for some of them to have had a full impact. In addition, standards have also not risen because of the satisfactory overall quality of teaching and learning in the school. In addition, the very good assessment information which the school has gathered in English, mathematics and science is not always being used precisely enough, especially in English, to match work accurately to pupils' levels of understanding and need. This is particularly true in the case of more able pupils. The school is developing its programme for the more able and gifted and talented and good provision has been made in music and mathematics although this is mainly outside the classroom.

8. Literacy skills are being developed satisfactorily across the curriculum. Numeracy skills are being developed well in other subjects. ICT is also being used well and pupils are very enthusiastic about the new suite. Discussion with pupils and their views in the questionnaire show that they feel that they have to work hard and are generally doing as well as they can. Parents are also happy with the progress made by their children.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance is unsatisfactory. Pupils' moral, social, spiritual and cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils show a high level of interest in learning, concentrate well and show enthusiasm.
- Their behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils who have SEN work hard and behave well.
- Relationships between pupils and among pupils and adults are very good.
- Pupils are very willing to take responsibility and to support one another.
- Pupils show good respect for others' feelings and beliefs.
- Attendance is below average.

Commentary

9. In response to their questionnaire, pupils showed strongly that they liked school and enjoyed their lessons. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and want to do well. For example, in a Years 5 and 6 mathematics lesson on remainders, because the teacher made the lesson interesting and enjoyable, pupils were enthusiastic and keen to answer questions. Some pupils are articulate and most of them listen well to the views of others. They co-operate very well and are very trustworthy. All pupils respond very well to teachers' high expectations of them: for example, in a Year R, 1 and 2 music lesson where pupils were learning the recorder, they concentrated very well and tried very hard. Pupils are confident, friendly and polite.

10. Behaviour is good throughout the school in assemblies and playtimes. This was particularly noticeable in a celebration assembly, where all pupils were attentive and glad to celebrate the achievements of others. This reflects the views of the parents who responded to the questionnaire or attended the meeting. In the majority of lessons, behaviour is good and often very good. Occasionally, however, where behaviour management is unsatisfactory, pupils become restless and they lose valuable learning time.

11. The school has effective systems for promoting good behaviour. Parents considered that there were no bullying issues and pupils in their questionnaire felt that other pupils generally behaved well. Pupils know and understand the school rules well. Older pupils act as good role models for younger ones. All pupils are well aware of how they should behave and fully understand the difference between right and wrong. No bullying or harassment was observed during the inspection and pupils knew what they should do if it should occur.

12. Pupils are enterprising and respond very well to the many opportunities for taking responsibility. Relationships between pupils and adults and among the pupils themselves are very good and this makes a harmonious climate for learning. Pupils respond to their teachers' high expectations and show good maturity, thoughtfulness and independence. They are very keen to take part in school activities.

13. The family ethos and the social and moral development of the pupils are good. Pupils behave with consideration for others and have a well-developed sense of how their behaviour might affect others. Older pupils support younger ones well. Pupils are keen to volunteer for positions of responsibility, such as playground buddies, the library committee and wet playtime monitors. In their questionnaire, pupils particularly liked the friendly atmosphere of the school and felt confident that they could ask for help at any time from any adult in the school. Staff are good role models, presenting a calm and thoughtful approach to life and the school and discussing issues with pupils during the school day. Pupils are encouraged to think of others and regularly raise money for charities. In the Foundation Stage, children achieve the goals underpinning their personal development well. The PHSCE programme makes a good contribution to pupils' social development and their emerging understanding of citizenship.

14. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Pupils have good opportunities to reflect on their own beliefs through RE and during collective worship. This was evident in an assembly during

the inspection on the theme of 'Living Water' where pupils were quiet and reflective. Pupils show good self-knowledge in discussions and are encouraged to think for themselves by their teachers. Grace is said before meals and pupils recite the school prayer in assemblies. They are well supported by their local church.

15. The school provides well for pupils' cultural development. Pupils have the opportunity to study their own community through the many visits and activities provided for them. Good numbers of pupils learn musical instruments and take part in music festivals. All pupils learn French as part of the curriculum and correspond with pupils in a French school. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to learn about different ways of life in modern multicultural Britain.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	7.2	School data:	0.0
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.5

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

16. Attendance is below average and unauthorised absence is well above. This is due to unavoidable lengthy absences on medical grounds of a small number of pupils. Attendance among the rest of the school is good. Staff monitor attendance very carefully and are well supported by the educational welfare service. Punctuality is satisfactory.

17. There were three exclusions last year of two pupils who have now left the school. Appropriate procedures were followed.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Exclusions in the last school year	
		Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	64	3	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The strongest features are good teaching and learning for the oldest pupils in the school, provision for pupils with SEN, a well-planned and varied curriculum, very good levels of care, a close partnership with parents and good links with the community and other schools. Areas needing development include some aspects of teaching and learning, using assessment information more carefully to adjust planning in some subjects and ensuring that all pupils, especially the more able, receive equality of opportunity.

Teaching and learning

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Assessment is good overall. The use of assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good relationships in the classroom mean that pupils work in happy cooperation with their teachers.
- Skilful questioning helps pupils to build on previous learning.
- ICT is becoming an integral part of pupils' learning.
- The pace of some lessons is not demanding enough.
- Occasional over direction by teachers means that pupils lose opportunities to think for themselves.
- Assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science are thorough and easily accessible.
- Assessment information is not being used precisely enough in some cases to give pupils, especially the more able, the right blend of help and challenge in lessons.
- Marking gives pupils constructive comments on how they can improve their work.
- Targets do not ensure that pupils know what they are working towards.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 20 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	0	7	13	0	0	0

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

18. Across the school, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and satisfactory in all subjects where judgements could be made. The exceptions are science in all classes and ICT in Years 3 to 6 where they are good. In science, all pupils are being taught to think and work as scientists and in ICT, the new suite has given great impetus to the subject. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 4 and good in Years 5 and 6 so that all pupils achieve well at the top of the school. Pupils with SEN also achieve well which is linked with the quality of teaching and careful and sensitive support in class. The quality of teaching and learning is not as high as in the previous inspection when it was good throughout the school and one lesson in three was very good. However, two of the three class teachers now in the school are in their first year of teaching. Teaching across the school has common strengths including good teamwork with teaching assistants, a relaxed and natural use of ICT, lively interaction with pupils, detailed planning, well-prepared resources and clear guidelines for work and behaviour. This takes place within a colourful and organised learning environment in which displays stimulate ideas and language effectively. Ninety-three per cent of pupils in their questionnaire said that they mostly found lessons interesting and learned new things. All parents in their survey thought that teaching was good and that their children were expected to work hard.

19. The teacher provides a caring environment for the children in the Foundation Stage, which helps them to feel secure and happy. The teacher and all adults within the class form an effective team, which ensures that the activities engage the interest of the children. This enables the children to acquire new skills, knowledge and understanding and to develop their capacity for concentration. The teacher provides many opportunities for the children to work and play independently and collaboratively. The inside and secure outside areas for the children are used well. Overall, the use of on-going assessment procedures is satisfactory and this enables the teacher to track children's progress in each area of learning.

20. Very good relationships among all members of the school community create a happy, positive work ethos in the school. Within this supportive atmosphere, pupils are not afraid to ask questions, express their feelings or say when they do not understand because teachers value their contributions and treat them with sensitivity. In PSHCE lesson involving the youngest pupils, the

teacher's warm, encouraging comments helped pupils to say what they liked about themselves and to remember the rules of 'circle time'. Teachers are also skilful at asking questions which help pupils to think carefully and to make connections between different aspects of their work. When pupils in Years 5 and 6 were reading *Danny the Cat* by Benjamin Zephaniah, the teacher's searching questions enabled them to predict the outcome of the poem in the style of the original poet. Teachers are also careful to focus on the language of a subject to enable pupils to understand important concepts and to learn to use technical terms quickly and naturally.

21. In a Years 5 and 6 history lesson, the teacher kept up a crisp pace and pupils quickly became engrossed in identifying the towns that make up the Cinque Ports. However, there is a slow start to some lessons and a general lack of urgency in teaching. This means that pupils relax into a comfortable rate of working and do not cover as much ground as they could. Another weakness is over direction by teachers which limits pupils' independence to choose and experiment. Teachers sometimes spend too long on introductions and explanations so that pupils become passive. Although teachers have high standards for pupils' behaviour, some of them do not reinforce this consistently and a fringe of restlessness develops in the classroom including some unnecessary calling out which remains unchallenged.

22. Teaching and learning for pupils with SEN is good. The quality of assessment is good. They are given work that is carefully matched to their needs and the support they receive from teachers and support staff is effective. There are good procedures in place to support pupils with SEN and their targets are concise and measurable.

23. The school's assessment procedures have been improved very significantly since the last inspection when they were identified as a key issue for action. Assessment information in English, mathematics and science is now very good although, in other subjects, it is insufficiently developed. In recent years, there have been in depth and recurring evaluations based on detailed analysis of data from national and internal tests and comprehensive tracking procedures. These systems are rigorous but manageable and are used to build up an accurate profile of pupils' past and present performance. In this way, pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses are noted for action. However, in some subjects, teachers do not always use formal and informal assessments analytically enough to adjust planning, adapt teaching styles and provide work that has the right degree of challenge for individual pupils in the mixed age classes. This is especially true in the case of more able pupils. Extension work for these pupils, especially in English, is not always sharply defined or imaginative enough to allow them to take more risks in their learning.

24. Teachers mark work regularly and add perceptive comments which help pupils to learn from mistakes and develop ideas. Response partners are used well at the top of the school to help pupils appraise their work. However, pupils are insufficiently aware of their targets and how they can focus on specific skills needed to move on to a higher level. This means that they are not being used effectively to give pupils an incentive for higher achievement.

The curriculum

Curricular provision is good. Provision for pupils' learning outside of the school day and the development of their interests is good. The accommodation and resources provide satisfactory support to meet the needs of the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school plans its curriculum well and adjusts it successfully in order to cater for the changing needs of the pupils and national requirements.
- PSHCE aids the pupils' development well.
- There has been a good improvement in the range of curricular activities for the youngest pupils.
- The pupils' learning is enriched well through the good range of visitors and educational visits and the wide variety of out-of-school clubs provided by the school.

- Provision for pupils with SEN is good and targets are matched well to their individual needs.

Commentary

25. The school provides a good curriculum, which enhances pupils' learning well. It keeps the effectiveness of its curricular provision under constant review and implements changes well. The school has introduced French to the curriculum, which is taught for half an hour each week to all pupils. The school combines aspects of the curriculum wherever possible in order to make the different subjects more meaningful for pupils, such as drama being used in history lessons to extend pupils' learning about the invasion of the Romans. The school's provision for PSHCE is at the heart of its ethos and results in a strong sense of community and pupils' awareness of responsibility for one another and for the environment.

26. The curriculum for children in the Reception class is varied and interesting and planning is clearly linked to the statutory curriculum for children of this age. This is a good improvement from the judgements in the previous inspection. The accommodation is satisfactory for the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the children and includes a secure outdoor area, which has a satisfactory range of resources. There is an attractive outside area, although the lack of cover limits its use during bad weather.

27. Pupils who have SEN are fully included in the school's curriculum and receive good provision. They are given work that is pitched at appropriate levels for their development. Targets are well matched to pupils' individual needs. They are only withdrawn from classes for specialist help where appropriate.

28. The school extends pupils' learning well through a good range of visitors and educational visits. Visitors from Kent War on Waste, St John Ambulance, Demelza House Children's Hospice and Barnardo's provide good support for PSHCE. A visitor from an oil company and a visit to Reculver Field Study Centre similarly support other topics and subjects, such as science, geography and art. This judgement supports the parents' view that the school provides a good range of extracurricular activities. There is a good choice of out of school clubs, most of which are open to pupils in all year groups and are supported well. These include board games, cooking, craft, computer, gardening, recorders, and football, squash, netball and swimming and athletics clubs.

29. Some older pupils attend booster classes to help to improve their standards of attainment in English and mathematics, some of which were held during the Easter holidays. Pupils are to take part in an inter-schools athletics competition in June and in inter-schools football and netball activities. Pupils take part in the Swale music festival, which is very good for their self-esteem, when they perform before an audience. Many pupils are going to see a live performance of *The Lion King* at a theatre in London in June.

30. Overall, the school has a satisfactory range of resources and accommodation to support the curriculum. The school realises the need to update further the resources in the library and plans are in place. The new classrooms are attractive and are used well. The good new ICT suite is being used well to promote pupils' learning of the subject. However, the school hall is small and it is difficult to accommodate pupils for PE lessons. To overcome this problem, the school is linking with two local secondary schools to use their facilities for PE lessons. The good curriculum meets all statutory requirements.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' achievement is good. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good induction arrangements for pupils joining the school at all ages.
- There are very effective procedures for health and safety, child protection and first aid.
- All adults know pupils well and provide good levels of care.
- Systems for monitoring pupils' academic standards and progress are good.
- Arrangements for monitoring pupils' personal development are effective.
- The involvement of pupils in the school's work is good.

Commentary

31. The school has good links with the pre-school group. The headteacher and the class teacher visit most of the children in their own homes before they start school. This enables the children to get to know their teacher in their own environment, which helps them to feel secure. Parents are invited to bring their children into school for three visits in the summer term prior to the children starting school. Good relationships are built up at an early stage with the children's parents, which help them to know how well their children will be looked after in school. There are good procedures for monitoring the children's achievement on a day-to-day basis. There are also good induction packs for other pupils arriving mid year.

32. The school has very good health and safety procedures. Regular risk assessments are undertaken and the administrative officer is involved effectively, with the governors, in health and safety procedures. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection and for pupils in public care. Procedures are effective and the headteacher has received training recently. Training is given to all staff and logs are kept of concerns. Staff are very aware of child protection issues and there are good guidelines for all staff. Local social services are very supportive.

33. Arrangements for the administration of first aid and for monitoring pupils' medical conditions are very good and very good numbers have been trained. Security is good.

34. There is a strong bond of trust between pupils and all adults who work in the school. Nearly all pupils who responded to the inspection questionnaire felt that there was at least one adult to whom they could turn for advice. Adults know the pupils very well and monitor their personal development and academic achievement on an effective basis through the review and monitoring system. Marking is used well, especially in English, mathematics and science, to help pupils know how they can improve.

35. Pupils' views are sought consistently through 'circle time', assemblies and PHSCE: for example, class and playground rules are agreed with pupils at the beginning of each year. A school council is planned for the next school year but pupils in their questionnaire were confident that their views are already heard and acted upon.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents are very good. Links with other schools and the community are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have very positive views of the school.
- The school provides parents with very good information.
- Good links with other local schools provide many benefits for the pupils.
- The school has good links with its local community.
- Parents of pupils with SEN have good links with the school.

Commentary

36. In a high return to the questionnaire, parents and carers expressed very positive views on all aspects of the work of the school. Information provided for parents is very good which is an

improvement from the previous inspection. The prospectus is very attractively presented, informative and easy to read. The governors' Annual Report to parents is clearly written and informative. Details about the work pupils are to cover are provided each term and home/school books are used well as a means of dialogue between school and home. Regular, lively newsletters keep parents well informed of events and teachers are always available for informal consultation at the end of the day. At review meetings each term, targets and concerns are shared with parents. Attendance at these meetings is very high. All parents have signed the home/school agreement. The school ran a questionnaire last year for parents to ascertain their degree of satisfaction with the school. As a direct result of this survey, the school has changed the pattern of review meetings and monitoring reports. Written annual reports and termly monitoring reports to parents are good: they give helpful information on the levels gained in English, mathematics and science against national levels, together with information on what their children need to do to improve. Targets are shared with parents and children at meetings.

37. Parents support the school very well through attendance at assemblies and performances. A good number of parents help in school on a regular basis, in class and with extracurricular activities. The Parent Teacher Association supports the school well through a variety of social and fundraising events, which have enabled the school to buy ICT and playground equipment. A number of parents are involved in an ICT course set up by a tutor from the local Further Education college.

38. There are good links with the pre-school group and with parents, which help the children in the Reception year to settle well into school. Parents are welcomed into the school and good relationships are quickly established through the good induction programme. There are good links with other local primary schools: for example, pupils are taking part in the Solar Car project and take part in athletics coaching with a member of the United Kingdom athletics team. There are also good links with local secondary schools, especially through sport. Links with the local church are good and the curate is a regular visitor. The school has good links with the local community: for example, local firms sponsor sports equipment and pupils visit local farms. The school's links with parents of pupils with SEN are strong and they are invited to attend school based reviews. There is regular contact both through formal meetings and informal meetings with teachers at the end of the school day.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher is good. The leadership of key staff is satisfactory. Management of the school is good. Governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a constant focus in the school on raising achievement.
- There is a real sense of teamwork and a determination that pupils' needs come first.
- The headteacher leads by example in tackling the school's barriers to achievement.
- The school has built up a perceptive and revealing picture of its own performance.
- The leadership and management of the provision for SEN are good.
- Governors are committed and use their skills and expertise to help the school.
- In some aspects of their work, governors rely too much on the headteacher.
- Careful financial planning and monitoring mean that resources are used well to further pupils' learning.

Commentary

39. The thoughtful but determined leadership of the headteacher provides a definite momentum for change and a clear focus on self-driven improvement in the school. She leads by example in all aspects of school life and has high and consistent expectations of herself and of all members of the school community. This has resulted in a very unified staff who are critical and reflective about their teaching in order to raise standards. These high aspirations have also been communicated effectively to governors, parents and pupils. Since her appointment in April 2002, the headteacher has put numerous initiatives in place to tackle the barriers to achievement outlined in the school's profile of ability in February 2002 which highlighted that there was significant underachievement by 82 per cent of pupils in the school. From that time, the emphasis on raising achievement for all learners has been central to the school's work. All staff and governors are fully committed to including every pupil in its work. However, more able pupils do not have equality of opportunity as they do not always make as much progress as they should.

40. Fundamental to the school's drive for improvement is the self-critical analysis of its performance. This self-evaluative approach means that there is a climate of openness and willingness to learn and a keenness to draw on the expertise of outside resources. Since her appointment, the headteacher has carried out an in-depth evaluation of the school's work based on very thorough assessment procedures and a detailed analysis of data from national and internal tests. Data are scrutinised very carefully to check and to identify pupils who would benefit from extra help such as booster classes. Careful scrutiny of pupils' responses in national and internal tests helps to ensure that gaps in skills, knowledge and understanding are pinpointed and measures put in place to tackle them, for example, strategies were put in place to tackle pupils' difficulties in word problem solving in mathematics. All this information is interpreted in a very systematic and analytical way to build up a frank and objective picture of the school in order to guide its work. However, overall judgements in the school's self-evaluation lack rigour.

41. The systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning are also regular and careful. Strengths are recognised and built on and problems addressed through professional dialogue and support for the two newly qualified teachers from the deputy headteacher in her role as mentor. Their induction programme is good and best practice is modelled by the headteacher and through links with other schools. There is a strong commitment to the continuing professional development of staff which is related to teachers' areas of expertise as well as need. The cycle of Performance Management for those staff involved is an integral part of the development of the whole school. Targets which are linked to raising standards are very specific and are rigorously monitored. This links well with the school improvement plan which is at the heart of the school's work. This provides staff and governors with a good agenda but some of the criteria to judge the success of developments are not sharp enough.

42. Two members of staff are in their first year of teaching, so the headteacher and deputy have undertaken the leadership of a wide range of subjects. They are carrying out these roles effectively and are building up colleagues' confidence and expectations well. The two new teachers are 'shadowing' key subject responsibilities and the roles will be reversed when they take up full subject leadership next year. The leadership of the SEN coordinator (SENCO) is good. She knows the pupils well and uses her expertise to ensure that they make good progress. Her use of assessment procedures is effective in raising standards for these pupils. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The Reception year teacher and the two teaching assistants form an effective team.

43. In the previous inspection, it was reported that governors were supportive of the school but did not have robust systems in place to enable them to steer the direction of the school or challenge its work. Governors now work closely with the headteacher and staff and help to shape the vision and direction of the school. They bring a good range of professional expertise to their role, for example, SEN and health and safety, and carry out their responsibilities effectively so that all statutory requirements are met. They have a good structured programme of visits with an agreed protocol for reporting their findings to colleagues. They obtain further understanding of the school through analysis of assessment data and have attended bespoke training carried out by the headteacher which focused on tracking and target setting. This enabled them to challenge the headteacher and staff, for example, about the 2003 national tests results in Year 6, while supporting and valuing their

efforts. However, they do not compare results with similar schools locally. Governors are actively involved in discussing priorities for the school improvement plan and reviewing progress towards the school's objectives. They have a sound insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the school but rely too heavily on the headteacher in some instances, for example, analysing the impact of all financial projects on the potential for pupils to improve their learning. They do not have procedures to evaluate their performance objectively and to plan their future development as a governing body.

44. Financial planning was judged to be 'only just satisfactory' at the last inspection as long term financial planning was not in place. Expenditure is now carefully linked to priorities in the school improvement plan which gives strategic direction for several years. Governors' monitoring of the school's spending patterns has been sufficiently rigorous and there is prudent financial management and administration. They are keenly aware of the need to obtain value for money and consider a number of options before making firm decisions, for example, in building works and leasing equipment for the computer suite. The budget surplus is above that recommended but is earmarked to finance the new separate Foundation Stage class to be introduced into the school in September 2004.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	206162	Balance from previous year	37274
Total expenditure	202501	Balance carried forward to the next	40936
Expenditure per pupil	2700		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

45. Children are admitted to school on a part-time basis during September in the year in which they become five. They are gradually integrated into full-time attendance, usually by their first half term in school. This year they entered a class that also has a group of seven Year 1 pupils and thirteen Year 2 pupils. There are currently ten children in the Reception year. Induction procedures are good and this means that the children quickly get used to the school routines. Overall, their attainment on entry is average. By the end of the Reception year, most children achieve well in personal, social and emotional development and satisfactorily in all other five areas of the statutory curriculum for their age.

46. Overall provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Although the children share the class with pupils in Year 1 and 2, which places some restrictions on the range of activities for them, the teacher provides the children with interesting and varied experiences, which are appropriate to their needs. She ensures that there are good opportunities for them to develop their independent learning by allowing them to select activities and use their imagination in free play activities. The teacher and the two teaching assistants work well together to form an effective team. The quality of teaching is good for personal, social and emotional development and satisfactory for the other areas of learning. The school has worked hard to improve the key issues identified in the previous inspection relating to the provision for children in the Reception class by providing an appropriate curriculum and more opportunities for free choice in imaginative play. The school will have a separate class for children in their Reception year in September 2004.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children are confident and happy in school.
- Relationships between adults and children are good.
- Good induction procedures and good provision for children's personal, social and emotional development.
- Good links with parents, which support children's learning.
- A limited range of large wheeled toys for outdoor play.

Commentary

47. By the end of the Reception year, most children are likely to exceed the expected standards for children of this age in their **personal, social and emotional development**. The school places a great emphasis on the children's personal, social and emotional development and sees this as central to the children's overall development in all aspects of their learning. The children are happy to come to school and settle easily into their activities each day. They work and play well together and with the older pupils in the class. Relationships between adults and the children are good and this helps to promote the children's confidence and self-esteem. Children are respectful of others' needs and this is promoted well by encouraging them to think about sharing. The provision for children to choose activities for themselves is good. The teacher provides many opportunities during each day for the children to initiate their own ideas through play. The children are very well behaved and respond well when requested to stop their activities and be ready to listen. All adults in the class set clear expectations of behaviour and give praise and encouragement to reinforce these guidelines.

48. The children make satisfactory progress in developing new skills in **communication, language and literacy**. Most achieve the standards expected by the end of the Reception year. Most children have good listening skills and clearly express their ideas. However, many start school with below expected levels for their age in their literacy skills. Great importance is placed on developing all aspects of these skills. The teacher and other adults within the class speak clearly and are good models for the children. They are involved well in the role-play activities, such as *The Lighthouse*

Cafe, to extend the children's vocabulary and speaking skills. The children are encouraged to extend their vocabulary by expressing their ideas when dramatising stories. The teaching of initial phonic sounds is linked well with early writing skills and the children are provided with a good range of writing activities to develop these skills further. Children's own mark making and emergent writing are accepted, which is good as this enables them to become confident writers. They read their own writing to an adult and are praised for their efforts. The children enjoy listening to stories and most know about books and how to use them. They take books home to share with their parents and are provided with a book in which the teacher and parents share valuable information about the progress of the child.

49. The children are provided with many practical experiences to extend their **mathematical development**. Most make satisfactory progress and achieve the standards expected for children of this age. They enjoy singing number rhymes and playing games, which help to develop their counting skills. All adults in the class encourage the children to develop their mathematical understanding by using open-ended questions, such as 'How many more do we need?' 'How many will be left if we takeaway?' A small group of more able children work with a group of Year 1 pupils to extend their mathematical learning. They are able to add and subtract numbers to ten when practically working with small cubes and counters. The children enjoy playing with water, which helps them to learn about quantities.

50. The children make satisfactory progress in their **knowledge and understanding of the world**. They help to tend the seeds and plants in the plant troughs. They know that the plants need water and light to grow. Children's awareness of religious and cultural traditions is appropriately enhanced through stories. As part of their work on the seaside past and present, children were able to talk about and draw items to put in their holiday 'suitcase'. There were no **physical development** lessons during the inspection. However, during break times the children had satisfactory control of their bodies when they ran in the playground. They enjoy clambering and climbing on the new apparatus in the outside area. As there is only one tricycle for outside play, this limits their physical development. They are provided with a wide range of experiences to help improve their manipulative skills by handling modelling materials, scissors and brushes and most have satisfactory pencil control. Most children achieve satisfactorily in their **creative development**. They have created abstract paintings in the style of Kandinsky. In their role-play, the activities enable the children to explore and use their imagination well as in activities linked with the seaside past and present.

51. Assessment procedures are good and are used satisfactorily to plan the next step in learning for each child. The teacher and teaching assistants observe and note the children's progress during each day. Good provision for children who have SEN ensures that their needs are appropriately provided for.

52. The Reception class teacher provides effective support and guidance for staff, ensuring that, together, they provide an effective education for the children.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good in Years 5 and 6.
- The school has responded well to the key issue for action from the last inspection.

- More able pupils are not being sufficiently encouraged to develop their talents more fully.
- Pupils are attentive and responsive listeners.
- Pupils read accurately and fluently but they are not reflective enough about their reading.
- Older pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their scope and imagination as writers.
- Marking is constructive and challenges pupils to improve their work.

Commentary

53. Standards in all aspects of English are average in both Year 2 and Year 6 and most pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils in the Years 5 and 6 class achieve well but past underachievement means that this is not yet fully reflected in standards. Pupils with SEN also achieve well because they receive well-planned support in class and because their needs are further met by the Early and Additional literacy support programmes. However, at times, the work given to more able pupils lacks challenge so that they do not always achieve as well as they should. Overall, standards are similar to those found at the last inspection but the school has made a good response to the key issue for action to improve reading, handwriting and presentation especially in Years 1 and 2. Standards are also improving steadily in national tests in recent years. Improvement has, therefore, been good.

54. Across the school, pupils are attentive and careful listeners and this helps them to grasp new ideas and information and apply it to their work. In an assembly on the theme of Living Water, pupils listened very closely to the story of *The Woman at the Well* and gave thoughtful responses as a result. There are wider variations in their skills and confidence as speakers. Some pupils in Year 2 speak clearly and audibly and offer opinions freely in well-formed sentences but others have a limited range of language structures and words and are unable to develop their ideas in any detail. Similarly, some pupils in Year 6 put forward ideas in a well-judged and thoughtful way while others find it more difficult to choose precise language to talk about their responses or to analyse a text. Teachers place a good emphasis on technical vocabulary and make good use of talk partners. However, they do not always have effective strategies to encourage more reluctant pupils to contribute their views and allow the more articulate to take over discussions.

55. The school library has given great impetus to pupils' enjoyment of books and most are enthusiastic readers. Pupils in Year 2 have a sound range of strategies for tackling new words using their knowledge of sounds and letter combinations appropriately and their understanding of the context. By Year 6, pupils read with confidence, fluency and accuracy and are well aware of how to use their voices expressively to convey emotion and build up a sense of drama. The school's strong focus on the teaching of phonics is establishing a very secure foundation for pupils' reading skills. However, pupils in Year 2 are reluctant to talk about stories they have enjoyed or to identify favourite books and authors. Pupils in Year 6 also find it difficult to consider wider themes in their reading and predict how the story may develop. Older pupils read a comfortable rather than challenging range of books so that they do not learn to approach books with increasing insight and maturity. This was also noted at the last inspection. Guided reading is now separate from the literacy hour. In one class, activities were well-planned and purposeful but, in the other, there was too much silent reading and some pupils were distracted or passive. Pupils have sound research skills and enjoy carrying out project work.

56. In Year 2, pupils express simple ideas in a series of sentences and have a growing understanding of the structure of a story. They can write in a variety of ways including simple instructions, invitations, rhymes, story beginnings and explanations. Some fill their stories with lively images to add interest and excitement and confidently use a good range of words. Others can write simple phrases and sentences but they use a narrow range of words and their stories lose momentum. Many show a sound understanding of the importance of capital letters and full stops. Handwriting is clearly shaped and consistent although some have less control over the size and shape of letters. In Year 6, pupils write in an interesting and challenging range of styles and show increasing confidence in exploring ideas and experimenting with words and content. Some successfully adapt styles of writing and are beginning to use language in an innovative and adventurous way. In the case of others, output is small and their ideas are not efficiently organised.

Work on grammar is good and pupils have a sound grasp of spelling and punctuation rules. Handwriting is well-established and fluent and some pupils try hard to make it neat and legible. Poetry acts as a good stimulus to encourage pupils to be creative users of language. However, they are not given enough opportunities to write freely in extended pieces of writing. This means that they do not build up their skills and stamina as writers to enable them to reach higher standards.

57. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 to 4 and good in Years 5 and 6. Lessons are well-planned with clear learning objectives so that pupils know from the outset what is expected of them and can measure their own learning. Presentations are lively and confident and, in some classes, there is a real sense of fun and enjoyment in language. In Years 5 and 6, pupils were fascinated by the teacher's use of memory images in recognising hidden letters in words and were bold and inventive when writing a poem based on the style of the original poet, Benjamin Zephaniah. Teachers are also good at asking questions which make pupils think more carefully about what they are going to write and how to frame their ideas. In the Years 3 and 4 class, the teacher's well-pitched questions enabled pupils to work well together on descriptive words in the text based on stories from other cultures. Teachers also interact well with individual and groups to extend their responses and anticipate problems. In a lesson for younger pupils who were talking and writing about the characters in *The Lighthouse Keeper's lunch*, the teacher used the opportunity to enrich vocabulary and experiment with ideas. Teachers generally create a positive, supportive atmosphere in the classroom so that pupils work in happy cooperation with them. However, some misbehaviour remains unchecked and a few pupils become restless and distracted. The pace of some lessons is too leisurely and output is not good enough. Over direction by teachers also means that pupils, especially the more able, cannot use their own initiative in learning. Extension tasks for more able pupils are not always sharply defined enough to enable them to expand their imaginations and develop a strong individual style.

58. The subject is well led and managed. The subject leader has a good overview through regular classroom monitoring and analysis of work and planning. Assessment is very good but information is not always being used accurately to meet the wide range of needs in the mixed age classes. ICT is integrated well into the subject. Marking is good and gives some challenging comments to help pupils improve their work. Older pupils are not sufficiently aware of their targets for them to act as an incentive for higher achievement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

59. The development of language and literacy in other subjects is satisfactory. For example, pupils' recording skills are sound in science and they label designs and describe materials carefully in DT. They use specific language naturally in subjects like numeracy, geography, music and science. However, writing in subjects like history and RE is not extensive and does not sufficiently broaden pupils' experiences of the purposes of writing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An improvement in standards in Year 6.
- Very good procedures for assessment.
- Good inclusion for pupils with SEN.
- The subject manager provides good leadership.
- Pupils do not know the level of their attainment.

Commentary

60. Overall, standards of attainment are average in the current Year 2, with fewer pupils attaining the higher Level 3 than last year. The use of very good assessment procedures revealed that many pupils in the Years 1 and 2 class did not have a secure understanding of the place value of numbers. This has enabled the teacher to provide pupils with a more practical approach, which is helping to give them a greater understanding this aspect of their mathematics. Standards in Year 6 are average. This is a good improvement from the 2003 national test results. This is due to the use of very good assessment procedures at the end of each half term. The school has implemented a series of booster classes, both before school and during the Easter holidays to enable pupils in the Years 5 and 6 class to reach higher standards especially at Level 5.

61. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory although it is good in Years 5 and 6. Teachers provide interesting tasks, which are suited well to the individual needs of pupils. The teachers have a secure understanding of the mathematics curriculum for their pupils and most pupils make satisfactory progress. Good, imaginative teaching in a Year 6 lesson enabled pupils to achieve well. The teacher explained the learning intention of the lesson, which enabled the pupils to be aware of what they were to learn. This was to find out what to do with remainders that do not always make sense. The teacher started the lesson with a brisk, quick-fire question and answer session for pupils to calculate such as 'How many fifteen pence cakes can be bought for one pound?' and 'If there are two cars and eleven footballers, how many in each car?' which engaged pupils' interest well. The teacher asked pupils to explain their calculations and their clear explanations showed that they had a good understanding of rounding numbers up or down to make sense of a situation. The main activity for the lesson was adapted well to the needs of individual pupils. The level of challenge was appropriate to each group of pupils and the teacher and teaching assistant provided good support. Pupils enjoyed the mathematics lesson and positively responded to the task. ICT was used well to reinforce pupils' mathematical skills.

62. Each class has more than one-year group and pupils are grouped according to their levels of attainment, which is effective in helping to raise standards. Pupils who have SEN are included fully in all activities and are provided with good support, which enables them to make good progress towards their own targets. The school recognises that it has some gifted and talented pupils in mathematics. It is using some of the Year 7 National Numeracy Project framework to extend these pupils' learning. The school has established good links with a local Grammar School to involve these pupils in an out-of-school hours Primary Link Project.

63. Although teachers set targets for pupils linked to National Curriculum levels, the pupils do not know at which level they are working or what they need to do to achieve a higher level.

64. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader has a clear sense of direction on how to improve the standards of mathematics across the school. She has been instrumental in implementing new assessment procedures for mathematics. She provides a good role model for other staff and monitors teaching and pupils' work.

65. Since the last inspection, there has been a good improvement in pupils' standards of attainment. Although there have been fluctuations in the school's results, overall, standards are rising above the national trend.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66. Provision for developing pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum is good. There are good links with other subjects, such as time lines in history and graphs in geography.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are reaching above average standards.
- There is a strong emphasis on learning through investigation.
- Pupils enjoy science and behave well during lessons.
- Effective use of marking supports and develops pupils' subject knowledge

Commentary

67. Standards attained in Year 2 and Year 6 are above average. This is an improvement since the last inspection when attainment was in line with national averages, with the exception of science investigations in Year 6. This aspect of the curriculum was found to be above average. The judgements are also in line with the assessments made by teachers. The results of the 2003 national tests for eleven-year-olds confirm that standards are improving. Across the school, the good teaching and learning promote the good achievement of pupils of all abilities.

68. Pupils are taught all elements of the subject as they move through the school. In Year 2, pupils are able to set up a simple circuit as a warning device and can predict, and give reasons why, they think some circuits will not light up bulbs. Pupils can recognise sources of light and can draw a diagram to show the life cycle of a butterfly. These pupils can also devise an experiment to send a car down a ramp to see how far it will travel. They understand that they need to alter the angle of the ramp to enable the car to cover a longer distance. Pupils in Year 6 know why shadows are cast, and how they can be used to tell the time. They are able to set up an experiment with tissue paper parachutes to investigate air resistance. Pupils can identify the four main types of seed dispersal and use a digital microscope to predict the methods of dispersal for a range of seeds. Most pupils are developing a good scientific vocabulary to explain their observations as they undertake investigations. As a result, by Year 6, most pupils are able to provide clear explanations and record their findings accurately when writing up experiments.

69. Teaching and learning are good, especially when specific investigations are undertaken. Teachers are skilled at developing the appropriate scientific language that pupils need to talk about their work, and pupils have lists of scientific vocabulary to aid them. Lessons are well prepared, organised and interesting. As a result, pupils are positive about their work. Much of the work set is challenging and builds well on pupils' previous learning. Pupils are provided with opportunities to plan and devise their own work. Opportunities are provided for pupils to undertake individual research through using the school library and ICT. This has an impact on the quality of written work produced by pupils.

70. The subject is well led and managed, ensuring that all teachers feel confident to teach science through the use of scientific investigations. The subject leader analyses pupils' work, monitors lessons and ensures that there are sufficient extension activities for more able pupils. Assessment procedures are very good. The subject leader has established an effective marking scheme that often includes an extension question for pupils to answer, for example, 'Why does the shadow move throughout the day?' Further marking takes place to ensure the pupil has researched and written an answer. This results in pupils making further progress in their understanding and research skills. The teaching of science provides opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills and their skills in ICT. There has been good improvement in science since the school was last inspected.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good improvement in resources and accommodation.
- Teachers are confident to teach the subject.
- ICT is used well across the curriculum.

- There are assessments for each unit of work.
- Good links with the local community.

Commentary

71. The school has worked hard since the last inspection to improve the facilities for the teaching and learning of ICT. The new ICT computer suite is greatly enhancing the teaching and learning of the subject. Pupils are taught the skills needed for them to be competent in using the good range of ICT resources. At present, most pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are achieving average standards of attainment, due to the lack of earlier provision. However, there is evidence that younger pupils are learning the skills at an earlier age and that higher standards are likely to be achieved when they are in Year 6. Pupils enjoy their ICT lessons and many have very good attitudes to learning.

72. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in ICT is satisfactory across the school. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The school has recently appointed an ICT specialist, who willingly shares his expertise with other members of staff. Teachers have also attended various courses to extend their own knowledge and are very confident in teaching the subject so that it becomes a natural part of learning.

73. Assessments are made at the end of each unit of work and recorded in individual pupils' booklets. This informs teachers of each pupil's attainment and enables pupils to know how well they are achieving in the subject. The headteacher monitors teachers' planning and pupils' work to ensure that standards are being raised and that ICT is used across the curriculum.

74. The school has good links with the local community. In partnership with Canterbury College, the school is providing adult ICT education. The school invites adults to come into school on two mornings each week to take part in courses to extend their learning of ICT. The adults are able to use the school's ICT resources. On completion of their course, the adults are invited to come into achievement assemblies to receive their certificates. This enables pupils to see their parents as life long learners, which is good, as this promotes pupils' understanding that learning is worthwhile.

75. In recognition of the school's innovative work for ICT, including adult education, the local education authority's ICT consultant recommended that the school be given a data projector. A donation from the school's parent /teacher association enabled a second data projector to be bought. Both pieces of equipment are being used well to extend pupils' learning. Improvement since the last inspection has been good as ICT is now a natural part of pupils' learning.

The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum.

76. ICT is used well across many areas of the curriculum. This enhances pupils' learning of the subjects and extends their learning of key ICT skills. Pupils are learning to use the digital camera well. Children in the Reception class used the digital camera to take photos of patterns around the school. Other pupils have used the camera to record links with citizenship, first aid and adventurous activities, as well as to illustrate their roles in school, such as library monitors, playground buddies and corridor monitors. Rules for using the Internet are clearly displayed in the computer suite, as are websites in current use and specific vocabulary. Pupils use the Internet to download information and print their findings, such as the work on transport in history. This extends their learning well of both history and the use of ICT and enhances the presentation of their work. All year groups collect data and use the computers to present their findings, such as graphs about pets, food and hair. Older pupils word-process some of their literacy work. Pupils of all ages are able to apply to participate in the weekly computer club, which extends the provision for the subject well.

HUMANITIES

77. There was not enough evidence to make overall judgements about provision or standards achieved in **geography**. In the single lesson observed in Year 3/4 where pupils were learning about the purpose and features of different maps and plans, teaching and learning were satisfactory. The

teacher had provided groups of pupils with a range of atlases, globes, maps and plans and asked them to find the Isle of Thanet, their local area of study. Pupils worked well at their tasks and when the scale of their maps proved too large, as it was with the atlas and globe, then they used other strategies to identify in which part of the United Kingdom Thanet could be found. The lesson was less successful when the class teacher encouraged each group to share with the rest of the class the methods they had used to identify where Thanet was to be found. The pupils were not fully responsive in either sharing their information or in listening to others. When the class teacher finished the lesson by using a data projector to show the area of study in a range of scales and details, the pupils become animated again and took pleasure in identifying towns such as Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs. By the end of the lesson, pupils were able to appreciate how different maps and plans are appropriate for different tasks.

78. No lessons in **religious education** were being taught during the inspection so not enough evidence was gathered to make overall judgements about provision and teaching and learning in the subject. Indications from the analysis of work and displays and talking with pupils are that standards meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in both Year 2 and Year 6. Evidence show that pupils have a sound understanding of the basic concepts of world religions such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism. They are taught to appreciate and respect the diversity of religious beliefs and values. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have looked at what it is like living as a Sikh in Britain and the symbolism of the Five Ks. In Years 3 and 4, they have studied festivals like Ramadan and explored Salah and its importance to Muslims. Pupils are aware that holy books like the Bible and Torah can be sources of inspiration and learning to believers. They also learn about the traditions and beliefs of Christians such as the story of Easter and how parables like *The Good Samaritan* have universal messages of love and kindness. Younger pupils also know that a church is a special place for Christians whilst older ones have studied the significance of a synagogue to the Jewish people. There is a good emphasis on religious language. However, marking does not ensure that pupils, especially the more able, think more deeply about the subject. The amount of writing on each topic is sometimes not extensive enough.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils like being 'time detectives'.
- Younger pupils are developing a good sense of chronology.
- The local area is used well as a resource.
- Pupils' skills in interpreting how the past is represented are a weaker element.
- Displays are a good focal point for learning.
- Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Commentary

79. In Year 2 and Year 6, standards are average and all groups of pupils achieve satisfactorily. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection so that improvement has been satisfactory. Judgements are based observations of two lessons, looking at displays and pupils' books and talking with them.

80. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory across the school. Teachers strike a sound balance between giving pupils information and encouraging them to raise their own questions about the past. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 understand the passage of time when they place events like the Great Fire of London and the birth of Florence Nightingale on a time line. They have looked at different forms of transport like penny farthing bicycles and steam trains which help them to develop

a satisfactory awareness of how features of life change over time. This was also evident in a lesson about Seaside holidays when the teacher encouraged pupils to find clues and draw conclusions from old and modern seaside photographs. She stressed that they should justify their points of view from the available evidence and note differences such as clothes, vehicles and buildings. The teacher built on a topic which had already captured pupils' interest and they made relevant and thoughtful observations about the seaside past and present.

81. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have discovered how the Ancient Egyptians were dependent on the riches of the Nile valley for their survival. They have also found fame in a local newspaper article which highlighted their mummification of *Hoobs*, and making of Ancient Egyptian death masks and papyrus. They have studied the gulf between the rich and poor in Tudor times and are now undertaking a local study in Thanet.

82. The school draws well on its rich local heritage to bring history to life. In a Years 5 and 6 lesson, pupils studied the function of the Cinque Ports and Faversham's role within the confederation. The teacher's good command of the subject ensured that it was taught at the right depth and that pupils were encouraged to question the validity of evidence. As a result, pupils understood why the location of the Cinque Ports was so important to England and the benefit to Faversham in being part of the confederation. Across the school, there is a good focus on historical language but teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to identify why the past is represented and interpreted in different ways. There is also insufficient extended writing in the subject.

83. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are good links with ICT. Assessment is unsatisfactory as there are no whole school recording procedures. Eye-catching and colourful displays like the portraits of Tudors and the symbolism of the Tudor rose help to raise the profile of the subject. The subjects makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development when they look at beliefs about life and death in Ancient Egypt, discuss moral issues like working conditions for children in Victorian Britain, visit the Roman museum and Reculver together and understand the legacy of local history.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

84. There was insufficient evidence for a judgement to be made about overall provision in **art and design**. No teaching of this subject took place during the time of the inspection. Evidence from a limited amount of previous work shows that pupils in Years 1 and 2 have been given opportunities to make observational drawings and paintings based on the work of Kandinsky. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have created bold pictures in the style of Szatcka, and landscapes using perspective, as well as making observational drawings of African masks. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have created batik work on the theme of 'Fruits from around the world'. From displays around the school, it can be seen that art and design is planned into other areas of the curriculum. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are able to use the correct proportions of facial features when drawing Tudor portraits, and can recreate pictures of Tudor houses and the Tudor rose, using a range of art papers.

85. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements about standards or the quality of teaching and learning in **DT**. However, in the one seen lesson in the Year 1 and 2 class, teaching and learning were satisfactory. Pupils enjoyed learning about different types of puppets and achieved standards expected for their age. From the analysis of work, it is evident that pupils throughout the school investigate products before designing, making and evaluating products. Older pupils use ICT well to download pictures and information to extend their learning, such as when pupils in Year 6 learned about bread from different eras.

86. Not enough evidence was gathered during the inspection to make valid judgements about provision and teaching and learning in **music**. Indications from the two lessons observed, singing in assembly and talking to pupils are that standards in music in Year 2 and Year 6 are above average. In a lesson to the youngest pupils, rhythmic skills were developed well and pupils were active listeners as they were asked to pick out the instruments being played. There was a good emphasis on listening as a recording of pupils' work was played so that they could evaluate their own and

others' performance. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were able to identify walking and skipping rhythms and to play simple tunes together on the recorder. In both classes, the level of challenge was pitched at the middle of the group so that more able musicians were not encouraged to be more adventurous in their performance. Music has a good profile in the school. About a third of pupils receive individual instrumental tuition which is subsidised by the school. Older pupils have recently taken part in a 'String Taster' day and all pupils had the opportunity to play a variety of brass instruments during Music Art Drama Dance week. The school also gives pupils the chance to enjoy their music making in activities like the Swale music festival, Party in the Playground, school productions and carol concerts.

87. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements about standards or the quality of teaching and learning, as there were no **physical education** lessons during the inspection. However, documentation shows that pupils take part in all aspects of physical education and that swimming meets requirements. Most pupils are able to swim at least 25 metres by the end of Year 6.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

88. Not enough evidence was obtained to make reliable judgements about **PSHCE**. One lesson was observed, planning and displays scrutinised and discussions held with pupils. PSHCE has a high profile in the school and throughout the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to be confident, to have an optimistic approach to life and to believe in their ability to succeed. They are also made aware of their responsibilities towards others in the school, the family and the world beyond. This results in very good relationships and a strong sense of community where pupils are expected to support one another and learn together. This is especially important in such a small school where older pupils look after younger ones and there is a friendly family ethos. In the lesson observed, younger pupils played simple games like *Simon says* to encourage them to listen carefully and to show that they understand what they see and hear. Within the clear and positively formed rules for 'circle time', the teacher sensitively guided pupils to talk about what they liked about themselves as well as taking part in activities. 'Circle time' also allows older pupils to discuss issues in an open yet confidential setting. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have looked at the importance of a healthy lifestyle and how transition and change are part of life. As part of their studies in Citizenship, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have enjoyed playing the 'Making it Real' game where they create their own society. Pupils' confidence is also boosted by having their successes celebrated in assemblies and as 'leaves' on the Achievement Tree. The youngest pupils describe their ideas of a good friend on the Friendship tree. Pupils have taken part in a Citizenship Day which included learning first aid skills and have also designed posters on 'What makes a good Citizen?'

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	Grade
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
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	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).