

INSPECTION REPORT

HERNE BAY JUNIOR SCHOOL

Herne Bay

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118852

Headteacher: Mr T Littlewood

Lead inspector: Margaret Dickinson

Dates of inspection: 17 – 19 May 2004

Inspection number: 256402

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	486
School address:	Kings Road Herne Bay
Postcode:	CT6 5DA
Telephone number:	01227 374608
Fax number:	01227 741055
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr Ian Ritchie
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Herne Bay Junior School is a very large Foundation junior school which draws most of its pupils from the town itself. A small number of its pupils are looked after by the local authority, some of whom come from outside the catchment area. The social and economic circumstances of the pupils are below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Few pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual times. The majority of pupils are of white British origin with a very small minority of pupils from Asian or Black Caribbean or Chinese origins. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language speak English well. When pupils start school, their standards are below average. This applies more to literacy than numeracy, and especially to writing. There are 139 pupils with special educational needs, which is above average. Their special educational needs include specific, moderate, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Five pupils have Statements of Special Education Needs, which is broadly average. The school received an Achievement Award in 2002, and an Active Mark Award in 2003 - as recognition of its commitment to promoting physical activity and keeping active for life.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
12373	Margaret Dickinson	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Music
14324	Michael Hudson	Lay inspector	
28009	Ruth Allen	Team inspector	English Geography History
26203	Jo Curd	Team inspector	Science Physical education Special educational needs
27523	Graham Jones	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Religious education English as an additional language

The inspection contractor was:

Serco QAA
Herringston Barn
Herringston
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 9PU

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS	17
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	24

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Herne Bay Junior School's **effectiveness** is **satisfactory** and the school gives satisfactory value for money. Pupils achieve satisfactorily as a result of sound teaching and learning and reach average standards by Year 6. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' reading standards are above average by Year 6 but standards in writing are not as high as they should be;
- Pupils do well in information and communication technology (ICT);
- Standards are above average in physical education (PE);
- Pupils are confident, open and friendly. They like school and behave very well;
- More of the teaching could be good or better, particularly in English and mathematics, and higher attaining pupils could be learning more effectively;
- The headteacher, deputy headteachers and subject leaders monitor the work of the school but this could be more rigorous and evaluative, with a greater focus on how well all pupils achieve;
- Pupils' assessments could be used more effectively to help pupils move on in their learning, particularly the higher attaining pupils.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. It has responded particularly well to the key issue in ICT and satisfactorily to weaknesses in spiritual and cultural provision. Teaching and learning and pupils' achievement are now satisfactory rather than good, as a result of the school not monitoring its work as effectively as many schools do now.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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 satisfactory. By Year 6, standards are average in English, mathematics, science and religious education and above average in ICT and PE. Insufficient evidence was gathered to judge standards in art and design, history and music. Design and technology and geography were not inspected. Pupils start school with slightly below average skills, with writing the weakest area. During each year, they make steady progress and there is no significant difference between the relative achievement of boys and girls. Pupils do better in some aspects of English than others: achievement in reading is good but in writing it is unsatisfactory. Higher attaining pupils, in particular, could be making more headway in writing, mathematics and science. Test results were not as good in 2003 as they had been previously. They are likely to be similar this year for the same reason - a greater proportion of lower attaining pupils in Year 6. English results were below the average of similar schools last year: a very low proportion reached the higher Level 5 in writing. This lowered the average points score. The school has wanted to improve standards in writing and the proportion likely to attain the higher level this year looks better. There is still some way to go, though, in raising standards in writing across the school, both in English and in other subjects.

Pupils develop good personal qualities. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' attitudes are good and behaviour is very good. Attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**. The range in quality was similar across year groups, but there were more good or better lessons in Year 4. Teaching was good in ICT and PE, with teachers' good subject knowledge a strong factor. Teachers are well prepared and organised. They set clear expectations for behaviour so that pupils can concentrate. In some lessons, teachers have high expectations of what the pupils will learn. Teaching assistants are sometimes used well to help pupils learn but this is not always the case. Not all staff have enough confidence and trust in using assessments constructively, to help gauge where pupils are and to determine their next steps in learning. Tasks are therefore not always well matched to the needs of the higher attaining pupils. They frequently do the same work as other pupils, which they sometimes find easy. They make steady progress overall but could do more.

The curriculum is satisfactory. A broad range of opportunities enrich pupils' learning. Pupils enjoy the good range of clubs, particularly the sporting activities. Pupils receive very good support and guidance from adults. They contribute well to school life through the School Council and acting as school 'reps'. There are good links with parents and the community. These strong aspects of care, welfare and support have a beneficial impact upon pupils' positive approach to school life.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides satisfactory leadership. There is good emphasis on a caring and inclusive ethos, which is reflected in pupils' good attitudes. The deputy headteachers have well defined responsibilities: the curriculum and pastoral care are monitored well. There is a firm commitment to improvement from senior staff and governors. A weaker aspect is the school's monitoring of achievement. This is not sufficiently focused on standards and how well all pupils are doing in relation to their capabilities. The school development plan is long and complicated and does not focus well enough on the most essential priorities. Governors are very committed and supportive. Statutory responsibilities are met well. There is good expertise amongst governors and they are in a good position to help the school improve.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with the work of the school. They feel that their children are making good progress, are expected to work hard and are encouraged to become mature and independent. They find it easy to approach the school and like the way their opinions are sought. Pupils like their school. They particularly appreciate the school's grounds. Not all children behave well and some say their teachers do not listen to their ideas. Inspectors saw no inappropriate behaviour but do agree that some teachers do not give them enough chance to speak in lessons.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in writing;
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in English and mathematics, and make sure higher attaining pupils make enough progress;
- Improve the rigour and impact of monitoring at all levels, keeping pupils' learning at the forefront;
- Ensure that assessments are used to help pupils across the attainment range achieve well.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Achievement is a measure of how well pupils are doing, taking their progress and their capability into account.

Standards are average overall and pupils achieve satisfactorily over their time in school. Standards are average in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. There is no significant difference in achievement between boys and girls or other groups represented in the school, including children who are looked after by the local authority.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good attention to reading and pupils do well as they move through the school. This means their reading is above average by Year 6;
- Pupils do well in ICT because the school has worked successfully to improve all aspects of this subject since the last inspection;
- Standards in PE are above average and pupils make good progress in this subject, including those who have particular talents;
- Standards in writing are not as high as they should be because this is not always taught effectively and pupils do not develop their skills in a steady enough way;
- Higher attaining pupils do not achieve quite as well as average and below average attaining pupils because they sometimes are given work that is well within their capabilities.

Commentary

1. The 2003 results were average for English, mathematics and science. Inspection findings show that standards this year are similar. Prior to 2003, pupils' performance in the tests had been above average for two years in all three of these core subjects and the school had received an Achievement Award in 2002 as recognition of this. The average standards in 2003 meant the trend in the school's results over the last five years fell below the national trend. There are clear reasons for this. For the last two years, the school has had a higher proportion of lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, in Year 6. This affected the results in 2003, due to the higher than average proportion of pupils working at lower levels, and it is likely to be the same this year. The headteacher and governors are not complacent and are striving to bring the standards back to where they were, and to improve pupils' performance in writing in particular.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.6 (27.7)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.0 (27.7)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.2 (29.7)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 123 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Reading is encouraged across all classes and pupils enjoy reading. Many of them read widely and have established good reading habits, such as reading several books by their favourite authors. They show interest in texts and express their opinions about sections they like or the type of characters that are portrayed. Pupils use non-fiction books well and other sources, such as the Internet, to retrieve information.

3. Pupils achieve well in ICT and standards have risen since the last inspection and are now average. The school has put a lot of effort into improving teachers' skills, developing a well-equipped ICT suite and expanding resources. These developments have had a positive impact upon pupils' learning. Pupils have regular access to computers. The curriculum is well planned so that teachers are aware of when other subjects, such as history, art and design and science, can be used to develop ICT skills. A strong aspect is the school's skilled technician who supports teachers and pupils very effectively.
4. The school has particular expertise in teaching PE, including dance. Some very effective teaching was seen during the inspection and pupils were benefiting considerably. The school organises a wide-ranging programme of activities. It has made good use of its Active Mark award to raise the profile of PE and encourage pupils to become involved and keep active. Parents are pleased with the provision for PE and the pupils enjoy their activities and do well.
5. Writing has rightly been identified as an aspect that could be improved and the school has been working on this over the last year and continues to do so. In some classes, pupils spend too much time on comprehension exercises and technical skills at the expense of writing at more length. In some lessons, pupils do not have enough time to write and work is sometimes left unfinished. Pupils are not getting enough experience of writing at length, across a range of forms. Another factor is that teachers do not take enough account of the standards that pupils have already reached in writing when they enter their class. This means pupils are given tasks that demand too little of them and restrict their ability to write freely. Despite writing being a target on the school development plan for the last year, subject leaders have not identified how their subjects can provide good opportunities to extend pupils' writing skills and help to raise standards in writing.
6. Pupils with above average attainment levels make steady progress overall but they could be doing better. Discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their work show that they often do work that is identical to the rest of the class when they are capable of more. Not all teachers take sufficient account of what these pupils can already do and the level they are comfortable with. Teachers do not use the information from assessments on an ongoing basis. This would help the school to increase the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 on a more consistent basis because higher attaining pupils would be tracked more effectively as they moved through the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes are good and behaviour is very good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Moral and social development is good, and spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good relationships between staff and pupils encourage pupils' positive attitudes;
- The school has an effective code of behaviour, which supports pupils' good moral development and very good behaviour;
- Pupils respond eagerly and confidently to the wide range of responsibilities given to them;
- Over half the pupils are involved in the wide variety of clubs and activities at lunchtimes and after school. These encourage them to develop broad interests and skills.

Commentary

7. There are good relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves. This contributes to the pupils' confidence, friendliness and eagerness to please and help others. Pupils are confident, keen to learn and well integrated into school life. Most are eager and confident in lessons, often putting their hands up to answer teachers' questions. Pupils respond to teachers' requests immediately, for example, quickly getting into groups, and giving books

out sensibly and efficiently. They have a good attitude to learning, listen well and get on well with work given to them. Their positive approach to school supports their satisfactory achievement.

8. At playtimes and lunch times pupils play well together and willingly take up a variety of responsibilities such as serving in the tuck shop and helping younger pupils. Elected School Council representatives from each year are proud of their role and of the School Council's achievements, such as planting trees, creating a school newspaper and helping design the outdoor adventure trail.
9. Staff have worked hard to develop a comprehensive behaviour code and pupils are clear about what happens if this is broken. This helps to maintain an orderly community as any misbehaviour is dealt with quickly and effectively.
10. Pupils' moral and social development is good. Visits from members of the community, such as representatives of the Police, Rotary Club and the Salvation Army, contribute well to these aspects. Various activities during fund raising week also help pupils to be aware of those less fortunate than themselves. Planning for spiritual, social and cultural development is now included on all lesson plans and has improved since the last inspection. Some aspects of cultural development are good, particularly through extra-curricular activities and religious education. However, on occasions opportunities are missed in assemblies and in lessons for recognising the diversity of cultures represented within the school and the wider community.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	458	3	0
White – any other White background	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Black or Black British - Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British - African	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	4	0	0

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

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.6	School data	0.0
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. Attendance is satisfactory. Authorised absence is in line with the national average and unauthorised absence is below average. The school monitors attendance well. Punctuality is

satisfactory. Two pupils have been excluded in the past year but these are isolated incidents in the school's recent history.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and lead to pupils' overall satisfactory achievement. The curriculum is satisfactory with good opportunities for enrichment. Pupils are cared for very well and there is a strong emphasis on pastoral care. The school has good links with parents.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school and are good in ICT and PE. Assessment is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers manage pupils well and have high expectations of behaviour, which means that lessons proceed without any interruptions and pupils are able to concentrate;
- Half the lessons seen were good or better. Teaching was brisk, interesting and effective so pupils made good gains in learning;
- More teaching should be good or better, particularly in English and mathematics;
- Assessment is not used effectively enough to establish what pupils already know and to plan work that is pitched at the right level, particularly for the higher attaining pupils.

Commentary

12. The teachers manage pupils well and use a range of strategies to encourage pupils to listen and concentrate. None of the lessons seen were interrupted by pupils misbehaving yet there are some pupils in the school with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school's approach to managing and supporting behaviour is effective and this is carried through consistently by teachers. Many teachers have good relationships with the pupils in their classes. They use humour well to encourage them and offer plenty of praise when it is due. This helps pupils to know that their work is valued and prompts them to try hard.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 44 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	6 (14%)	15 (34%)	22 (50%)	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.

13. Examples of good, very good and occasionally excellent teaching were seen across a range of subjects, particularly in ICT and PE and in Year 4. In these lessons, the teachers ensured there was a good pace to pupils' learning and they were very clear about what they wanted the pupils to achieve within the lesson. They asked a good variety of challenging questions to initiate interest, draw out pupils' thinking and extend their learning, which they enjoyed. They gave pupils time to give answers or express their views and modelled good listening behaviour themselves. Good teaching is typified by careful planning, ensuring that pupils of differing capabilities are well catered for and that all are working to their potential. Teaching assistants are used well so that the pupils with whom they are working receive targeted and worthwhile support. Some of the most effective teaching occurred in PE when pupils were benefiting considerably from the teachers' good expertise and subject knowledge. The teachers had a keen eye for detail when developing skills, or encouraging fluency and gesture in dance, so the pupils responded by working extra hard. All pupils were involved in these particularly good

lessons and no time was wasted at all. Another subject where teachers' good subject knowledge is strong is ICT. Teachers plan interesting tasks and use the equipment such as the data projector well, to teach pupils new skills. They give good focused attention to pupils when they are working on tasks at the computers. Pupils also receive very good support from the ICT technician and learning support assistants in ICT lessons. Over time, this good teaching is helping pupils to achieve well in ICT.

14. Although some good teaching was observed in English and mathematics, teaching and learning in these two core subjects are satisfactory overall. Some of the elements which led to a satisfactory judgement in English and mathematics, as well as in other subjects that were judged satisfactory, were as follows:
- Teachers do not allow the pupils to contribute enough in lessons. They ask questions that require one-word answers rather than more open-ended questions. Some teachers interrupt pupils when they are answering. Teachers talk for too long, particularly in introductions. This means the pupils have to listen for a long time, often without having much chance to join in, so they lose interest and motivation. The pace of their learning slackens and they do not achieve as much as they could in the lesson. In English lessons, pupils sometimes have limited time to complete their tasks and very little writing gets done. In the pupils' questionnaires, about a quarter of pupils said teachers do not always listen to their ideas. This was very evident in some lessons during the inspection.
 - The teacher plans work that is the same for all pupils, irrespective of their capability. Occasionally the pupils with special educational needs find it too hard. However, more often it is the higher attaining pupils who miss out as they complete tasks that they find easy. Discussions with the higher attaining pupils in each year group show that they frequently do the same as the other pupils and they feel they could tackle harder work.
 - Teaching assistants are not used effectively to provide focused support for targeted pupils. They are passive during teachers' introductions when they could be helping pupils by clarifying and explaining things they do not understand and encouraging them to think and respond.
15. Some teachers are setting targets for individual pupils and some for groups but these targets are not used well or consistently across the school, to help all pupils move on in their learning. The school holds a lot of assessment information on pupils but this is not used by teachers. In fact, some teachers were not familiar with some of the tracking sheets that were available for inspectors. There are teachers in the school who do not have full confidence and trust in using National Curriculum levels as a means of tracking pupils' progress. They make limited use of the information that shows the levels that pupils were working at when they came into their class. This means they cannot be sure that they are always planning work at the correct level for pupils across the attainment range.
16. Lessons and pupils' books are monitored regularly by the headteacher, deputy headteachers and subject leaders but their reports tend to be more descriptive than evaluative. There is insufficient focus on the specific aspects that could be improved. More attention needs to be paid to how well pupils are *learning*, as opposed to what they are *doing*, in order for the proportion of good or better lessons to increase and, in turn, for pupils' achievement to move from satisfactory to good.

The curriculum

The breadth and range of the curriculum are satisfactory and good opportunities are provided for its enrichment. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities which generate an enthusiasm for learning and school life;
- Planning does not always include sufficient detail about extending the learning of all groups of

- pupils;
- Support staff are not always deployed to best effect.

Commentary

17. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets all statutory requirements. Sufficient time is allocated for each subject and religious education is taught according to the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. There are policies and schemes of work in place that promote progression and the national strategies for English and mathematics have been successfully adopted. However, although pupils do make satisfactory use of their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, opportunities are missed for taking this further, for example by providing planned opportunities for extended writing in subjects such as geography and history.
18. In their planning, teachers do not always cater for the different levels of attainment of the individual pupils in their classes in order to provide appropriate tasks for all pupils. In turn, this will give greater scope and guidance for more consistent use of classroom assistants to take responsibility for supporting small groups according to their needs, rather than being used as general classroom helpers.
19. Pupils benefit from a good range of clubs and other out-of-school activities that enrich their education and generate enthusiasm for learning. Good use is made of visitors to the school and excursions outside, for example to the National Gallery and the War Museum. In particular pupils also enjoy very good opportunities to participate in sport out of school and the school has been awarded an 'Active Mark' by Sport England. This recognises its commitment to promoting physical activity and an environment which encourages pupils to stay active for life. In discussion, the pupils praised the quality of extra-curricular activities and said that they are well attended, of high quality and always interesting. The good provision is one reason why standards are above average in PE.
20. Although accommodation is satisfactory overall, the hall is not large enough for all of the pupils to come together at one time and to meet as a whole school community.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good overall. The provision of support, advice and guidance for pupils is satisfactory. Pupils' involvement in the school's work is good and their views are sought and valued.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pastoral care and welfare are very good and medical provision is good;
- Child-protection procedures are good;
- Health and safety procedures are very good and closely monitored;
- Relationships between pupils and staff are good;
- Involvement of pupils in the school's work is good;
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported and cared for effectively but their individual plans are not specific enough;
- Whilst pastoral care is a strength, pupils' academic progress is not sufficiently well monitored.

Commentary

21. Staff know pupils very well and pastoral care and welfare have a high priority. Pupils feel nurtured and secure. Provision for accidents, illness and medicines is good. Sufficient numbers of staff have up-to-date first aid qualifications. Child protection procedures are good and well understood by all staff.

22. Health and safety procedures are very good and school staff are fully mindful of requirements. Risk inspections are well structured and regularly carried out and evacuation procedures are practised. The school premises are clean and hygienic. Equipment inspections are up-to-date.
23. The provision of support, advice and guidance for pupils is satisfactory overall, but some aspects are unsatisfactory. The social and personal development of pupils is closely monitored and any who have difficulties are given good additional support as they progress through the school. However, the monitoring of pupils' academic achievement, especially that of higher attaining pupils, is unsatisfactory and target setting and assessment information are not used effectively to check and improve pupils' achievement.
24. Pupils are closely involved in the school's work and development. Their views are sought through discussions, assemblies, and class and the School Council. Pupils' views are valued and where appropriate acted upon, creating a butterfly garden being an example. Pupils delight in the responsibilities they are given and the part they play in school life. Relationships between pupils and staff are comfortable and trusting and most pupils indicate they are happy to confide in their teachers if they are worried or upset.
25. The care and welfare of pupils with special educational needs are also good. They are cared for well socially and physically. Lessons in small groups, with specialist teachers, help them develop a good level of confidence and self-esteem. Relationships between these pupils and staff are good. Contacts and support between home and school are good. Procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs are well established and class teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator meet regularly to review the register and overall achievement of pupils on the register. However, there is insufficient focus on individual needs and progress. Individual educational plans and assessments are too general to help these pupils make the small steps they need to make and little is recorded that relates to individual pupils' progress.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and carers and the community are good. Links with other schools and colleges are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Information given to parents, including that on pupils' progress, is good;
- The school regularly consults parents and their views are valued;
- The school is well integrated into the local community.

Commentary

26. The quality of information the school gives to parents is good. Regular newsletters are issued and teachers are always available to speak to parents after school. School reports are good with clear subject summaries and targets for pupils' improvement. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are attractively presented and meet statutory requirements.
27. The school regularly seeks parents' views through telephone calls, discussions, questionnaires, the home-school association and parent governors and helpers. Their views are valued. Parents who responded to the questionnaire and attended the pre-inspection meeting were very pleased with the school's provision for their children. If parents have any suggestions or concerns, they find these are dealt with quickly and appropriately.
28. Community links are good and the school premises are used for local activities. It receives good publicity in the local press. Several businesses fund sports and adventure training equipment and this is giving pupils access to good resources and boosting their standards. Pupils compete in many inter-school and local sporting events. The choir sings at care homes

and pupils donate to national charities and local appeals. All these benefit pupils' personal development and help to build their awareness of how they can contribute to their local and wider community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, senior staff and subject leaders provide satisfactory leadership. Governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body is effective in reviewing the school's effectiveness and ensuring that all statutory duties are met;
- The headteacher and senior staff are not fully effective in identifying the school's key strengths and weaknesses and focusing on the most essential priorities for improvement;
- Whilst a lot of monitoring takes place, the outcomes have limited impact upon improving pupils' standards and achievement;
- Finances are well managed and the school reviews its spending carefully.

Commentary

29. The governing body is very supportive of the school and is committed to its further improvement. Governors are well informed about the work of the school and its performance through school visits, studying school data and curriculum reports. They have a good knowledge of areas for improvement. The governors influence the work of the school well through their contributions to aims and policies and through reflecting on test results. The governors are now well placed to help the school to move forward.
30. Leadership of the school by the headteacher, deputy headteachers and other staff with responsibilities is satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership in his commitment to the caring and inclusive ethos of the school and this is reflected in the pupils' good attitudes and very good behaviour. He is supported well by two deputy headteachers with clear roles and responsibilities. Subject leaders are given full responsibility for the implementation, delivery and standards of their subject across the school. There is some confusion, however, over who has ultimate responsibility for standards and achievement in subjects.
31. Although the headteacher and one of the deputy headteachers analyse school data in some detail they have not yet focused on the effective and continuous progress that should be made by all pupils. The senior team and subject leaders do not all understand and use data effectively to set appropriate and challenging targets for all pupils to raise standards and improve achievement, particularly in writing. The school development plan is too long and complicated and lacks a clear focus for improvement. There is no indication as to how main targets such as improving writing, which has been a priority for over a year, are monitored, reviewed and evaluated.
32. Management of the school is satisfactory. The two deputy headteachers meet frequently with the special needs co-ordinator and subject leaders to ensure the appropriate delivery of all areas of the curriculum. The pastoral care of all pupils is handled well and they are very clear who to go to with any problems and concerns. There is a clear commitment to including all pupils in all aspects of school life, although provision for higher attaining pupils requires improvement. There is a climate of trust within the school but all staff now need to use this effectively to raise the quality of their teaching and pupils' learning, so that the pupils benefit even more.
33. The governors and the headteacher manage the budget carefully to ensure satisfactory provision for the pupils. Financial arrangements are efficient and the administrator plays an important role in this. There has been some considerable expenditure on ICT equipment and

the setting up of a new computer suite. This has reaped benefits and enhanced pupils' learning. The school pays due regard to the principles of best value.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,060,940
Total expenditure	1,104,758
Expenditure per pupil	2,273

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	64,933
Balance carried forward to the next	21,175

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in reading and pupils achieve well;
- Standards in writing are below average and pupils do not achieve well, particularly the higher attaining pupils;
- The quality of teaching in English should be better with more consistently good teaching;
- Assessments and targets in writing are not being used effectively to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress between Years 3 and 6;
- Good use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning.

Commentary

34. Standards in English are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Standards in reading are above average by the end of Year 6 and pupils make good progress throughout the school. An enjoyment of books is encouraged in all classes and pupils read widely. They show a good understanding of texts and express opinions about the effectiveness of various sections of the story and the type of characters that the authors are portraying. One Year 4 class, for example, discussed in some depth how an author portrays different characters in a bullying situation and why they liked her style of writing. Many were eager to read more of her books. By Year 6 pupils read fiction and non-fiction with good understanding, fluency and accuracy. They have well developed skills and can locate and use information from a range of sources. Higher attaining pupils read avidly. They 'read between the lines' and formulate their own ideas and views about key features, themes and characters in their books.
35. Standards in speaking and listening are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Where teaching is good, pupils are given opportunities to discuss and give opinions, which they do confidently. In some lessons, when the teacher over-directs the lesson and talks too much, pupils have little opportunity to express their thoughts or give opinions. Pupils are confident around the school and talk enthusiastically about their likes and dislikes. Pupils listen well in lessons and, when teaching is good, pupils are listened to and their ideas are appreciated and built upon. Teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs well in encouraging them to talk about what they are doing.
36. Standards in writing are below average and pupils do not achieve well enough by the end of Year 6, particularly the higher attaining pupils. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in the 2003 standard tests was particularly low, although this is likely to improve this year. Pupils use a range of forms appropriately including stories, letters, reports and poems. There is, however, too great an emphasis on comprehension exercises and technical skills, particularly in Years 3, 4 and 5. Some pupils present their work poorly and leave work unfinished. Pupils are not being given the opportunity or time to extend and develop their ideas in any depth. This holds back pupils who are capable of devising much lengthier pieces of work. Teachers set targets and assess pupils' progress but the information from assessments is not used well and the targets are not sufficiently challenging for many pupils. This means too many pupils make limited progress in writing between Year 3 and Year 6.
37. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In order to improve standards and achievement in writing this needs to be better. One good feature of the teaching is the very

clear marking which consistently shows pupils how they can improve their work. There is little evidence, however, of teachers expecting pupils to act upon their comments and suggestions. Teachers' planning of lessons is sound but there is insufficient planning to extend the higher attaining pupils' learning in any depth and the majority are working at the same level as other pupils in the class. Higher attaining pupils in all year groups say that they are not given enough harder work.

38. In the two lessons where teaching was good the lesson moved at a fast pace and the expectations for pupils were high. They were encouraged to work hard and achieve well. In the majority of classes though, the pace is slow and the teacher spends too much time directing the class. This means pupils have little time to organise their thoughts and write enough before the end of the lesson. In discussion with pupils in all year groups it is clear that they find this frustrating.
39. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall. The subject leader has attended training and monitors her subject in a variety of ways. A number of new initiatives have been introduced, such as 'Brain Gym', to support pupils' learning. This has a varied impact on pupils' learning because it depends upon how effectively it is handled by the teacher. The subject leader does not focus sufficiently on how well pupils are making progress as they move through the school, ensuring assessments and targets are used well to help pupils achieve well. Although reading standards have been maintained, standards in writing have fallen since the last inspection and pupils are not making as much progress.

Language and Literacy across the curriculum

40. Pupils' literacy skills are satisfactorily promoted through English. There are some examples of pupils' skills being well developed: in Year 4, for instance, pupils write 'grumpy' poems and Year 5 pupils write an account of their Tudor workshop visit. In history pupils write up their research on Victorian England and in geography pupils record their findings on the River Stour management. However, many subjects could be making a stronger contribution to developing pupils' writing skills.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good;
- Teachers ensure that pupils behave well in lessons;
- More teaching in mathematics should be good or better;
- Assessment is not yet used effectively to track and set targets for individual pupils;
- Teaching assistants are not always deployed to best advantage.

Commentary

41. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are average by the end of Year 6. Standards since the last inspection have been maintained. All pupils are set by ability for mathematics. The school does not make enough use of the assessments that it carries out in order to improve standards further. At present the school uses assessment information to identify areas for improvement for quite large groups. It does not identify individual pupils' weaknesses and then set them appropriate personal targets for improvement, keeping a check on their progress by tracking the impact and success of these targets over time. In general, the higher attaining pupils within sets are capable of working at a faster pace; they could achieve more.

42. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is satisfactory. Examples of very good and good teaching were also seen. Pupils enjoy mathematics. They are used to working hard and are usually very interested, listening carefully to the instructions that they are given and concentrating well. Their positive attitudes are largely the result of teachers' expectations that pupils will behave themselves and their strong emphasis on routines which promote good order and attentiveness.
43. In the best lessons teachers are brisk and enthusiastic and challenge pupils with searching question and answer sessions. In one lesson in Year 4, for example, a stimulating and lively 'Brain Gym' session was followed by a quick-fire episode of counting in different numbers to the beat of a tambourine. This warm-up developed into oral work on number sequences. The teacher directed questions and praise at the pupils, which showed detailed understanding of their individual needs and levels of attainment. As a result, the pupils were completely involved in what was going on and strived to give of their best. On the other hand, however, too many lessons tended to be rather pedestrian and lacking in pace, with either too little extension work for higher attaining pupils or too little support and guidance for those in need of assistance. In particular in these lessons, there was unfocussed use of teaching assistants, who were not used specifically to work with particular groups, but rather as general classroom back-up. There was little evidence of computers being used systematically to support teaching and learning.
44. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leader has a good understanding of the subject and works hard and there is a firm commitment to improvement. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented. The coordinator monitors the quality of teaching and learning across the school but individual written feedback to teachers can be bland and lacking in clear and specific targets for improvement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

45. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to reinforce and extend their numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 work on mathematical problems based on rations in the Second World War, as well as recording results from investigations graphically in ICT. However, these are not systematically planned throughout the school and some opportunities to use and apply pupils' mathematical skills are therefore missed.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong focus on scientific investigations which is providing a strong foundation for pupils' scientific learning;
- Some teachers have very good subject knowledge and an imaginative approach to teaching;
- Work is insufficiently varied to meet individual pupils' needs, particularly for lower and higher attaining pupils;
- Learning support and teaching assistants are not always used effectively in lessons to support pupils' learning;
- Assessment is not used well to support pupils' achievement.

Commentary

46. Standards are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In all classes, there is good coverage of the investigating and experimenting aspect of science. Pupils conduct a variety of experiments in order to develop their scientific thinking and enquiry skills. They consider how to

make their tests fair and record their findings systematically, using tables, graphs and ICT to represent these.

47. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall though there are variations in the quality. In some lessons, teaching is very effective and pupils learn very well. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, pupils benefited from the teacher's very good subject knowledge. They learned about the principles of sound and sound proofing rapidly and effectively through an imaginative investigation in which they made headphones for their teacher. Higher attaining pupils investigated sound using a sound level meter and computer outside the classroom whilst others compared the way sound travelled through different materials including cardboard, felt and bubble-wrap in order to make the headphones. Pupils enjoyed this lesson and learned a great deal.
48. Other teachers have lower expectations of pupils and most do not vary work sufficiently to make sure all pupils across the attainment range learn successfully. This is one reason why achievement is satisfactory rather than good. Several teachers base their planning on the average level for the year group, for example, requiring all their Year 6 pupils to describe parts of an eye or flower without requiring any to explain their function which would help pupils to move towards a higher level. Some introductions to practical lessons are too long. Support teachers and assistants are not always given enough guidance by the teacher to help them support pupils' learning and they are not always used well when the teacher is talking to the class. Pupils behave very well in lessons and are keen to learn. All pupils are equally involved in lessons and their learning. When given the opportunity pupils work responsibly and well, both independently and in groups. At times, overly long introductions restrict the time for pupils to complete much work.
49. Assessment is unsatisfactory. In some cases marking is detailed, helping pupils to develop their work and presentation, in other cases it is cursory and does not show pupils how well they have done or how they can improve this. Pupils' progress in science is not monitored carefully in order to identify how learning for pupils can be further improved. Prior to the inspection the science subject leader was unaware that any records of attainment in science were kept.
50. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. There are some strong features, including the subject leader's very good subject knowledge. However, his monitoring of lessons is insufficiently focused to help improve teaching and learning in science throughout the school. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory. The strong emphasis on practical investigations, which was praised in the last report, has continued. The use of ICT within science has been a notable and effective development since then.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in ICT as they move through the school;
- Teaching is good and teachers' subject knowledge and confidence have developed considerably since the last inspection;
- The ICT technician plays a key role in supporting pupils and helping them get the most out of their lessons;
- The school has effective plans for developing ICT skills through different subjects and using computers to support pupils' learning in these subjects;
- The subject is well led and managed.

Commentary

51. Standards are average by Year 6 and pupils achieve well in ICT. The school has made very good progress in improving the provision for ICT over the last six years; as a result, standards have improved from below average to average. A lot of work has gone into reviewing the curriculum and developing teachers' confidence and expertise. The pupils have plenty of opportunity to use computers on a regular basis and good use is made of the ICT suite to make sure they cover all the necessary aspects. Pupils enjoy ICT lessons; they are motivated and interested and, as a result, work hard. This means they work quickly and confidently and learn a great deal in each lesson. Scrutiny of pupils' folders and books shows that they build well upon what they have covered in previous years. The work on databases, for instance, in Years 5 and 6 is far more involved than the work they do in Year 3. This is supporting pupils' achievement effectively.
52. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan lessons carefully and make good use of teaching assistants, particularly the ICT technician. In one lesson, for example, two teaching assistants had been well briefed by the teacher. They were working in depth with two pupils who had special educational needs and they enabled both these pupils to succeed to the same extent as other pupils. Both pupils stuck to the tasks, with gentle encouragement and help, and both were proud of their work by the end of the lesson. The ICT technician is particularly adept at stepping in as soon as there is a technical problem with a computer so that pupils do not waste time. He also gives very helpful support to pupils throughout lessons, helping them to become familiar with programs and the computer's functions. In several successful lessons, teachers were very clear what they wanted the pupils to master during the lesson. The time was well used so that the pace of learning was good. This kept pupils on their toes and all were interested and motivated. In some lessons, the final part was less successful. Some pupils lost concentration once they had stopped working on computers and were a little reluctant to listen to the teacher drawing the threads of the lesson together. Pupils were much more attentive during the introductions, when sitting on the carpet and when working at the computers.
53. The subject leader has supported teachers effectively and ensured that all weaknesses from the previous inspection have been addressed. She is very clear about how the subject can be further improved. As with other subjects in the school, assessment in ICT is an area that requires further development.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

54. The school has established clearly how ICT links with other subjects. Good examples were seen of ICT being used to support learning in science, art and design, history and mathematics. There is wide evidence of similar links in pupils' folders. This helps pupils to become aware of the use of ICT in their lives, where ICT skills can be applied to a range of situations and needs.

HUMANITIES

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

55. In the satisfactory **history** lesson that was seen, pupils in Year 5 were considering how exploration varied in Tudor times as opposed to today. Standards were average in this lesson. Pictures were used to prompt pupils' ideas and this presented a good opportunity for class discussion. The teacher was enthusiastic and cajoled the pupils well to keep them to their task.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In some lessons, the subject contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual development;

- Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some examples which are good;
- The subject is well managed and led.

Commentary

56. On the basis of the few lessons seen, together with discussions with teachers and pupils and the analysis of pupils' work, standards are in line with the locally agreed syllabus, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
57. Although teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, some good teaching was also seen when pupils were challenged to think hard about what they were learning. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils explored how people's underlying values are revealed by the things that they regard as precious. The pupils were transfixed by the classroom assistant's quiet and dignified explanation of why her family photographs are so important to her. They then felt able to share their own thoughts and opinions about the special, even private, things that were precious to them. The teacher was skilful in creating a situation which permitted thoughtful and trusting discussion of often very personal beliefs and feelings. The lesson also showed how effectively religious education can support the pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
58. In most lessons, pupils show respect for other people's feelings and views. They listen carefully to others and concentrate on their work and the opportunities that are provided for them to think about and discuss the issues that are raised.
59. The subject is managed well by a knowledgeable coordinator. She has a clear vision for development based upon monitoring and evaluation in close consultation with teachers. She has drawn up guidance for improvement which has contributed to the role that pupils' work plays in the development of extended writing as well as spiritual awareness throughout the school.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

PE was inspected in full and is reported below. Art and design and music were sampled. Design and technology was not inspected.

60. In the satisfactory **art and design** lesson observed, pupils were using Aboriginal arts symbols to make a story of their own. Standards were average. Pupils were involved in evaluating other pupils' work and they did this sensitively. The teacher gave good support and encouragement to pupils, most of whom were interested and involved. In the satisfactory **music** lesson, pupils were developing their rhythmic skills by tapping some intricate patterns using hands and then two sticks. They were encouraged to improvise to a backing track and several did this well. The teacher used demonstration effectively but the lesson was largely directed and there were few opportunities for pupils to offer thoughts and suggestions.

Physical Education

Provision for PE is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do well, enjoy participating and are proud of their achievements;
- Teaching and learning are good. Some teachers have good subject knowledge and skills;
- PE is given a strong emphasis in the school. Staff provide many varied opportunities for PE including lunchtime and after-school clubs;
- The subject is led and managed well;
- Resources are good and are used well.

Commentary

61. Standards are above average and achievement is good. School teams and individuals compete and do well, coming second and third in many inter-school and area competitions. The school has been awarded an 'Active Mark' in recognition of its commitment to pupils' physical development and participation in sports.
62. Several successful lessons were seen during the inspection and the teachers' good subject knowledge and skills were very evident in these. Their enthusiasm and commitment for the subject spreads to pupils and other staff and helps pupils take the subject seriously and achieve well. A dance lesson during the inspection was inspiring. All the pupils in this Year 4 class were highly motivated and fully involved. The teacher established an atmosphere where everyone was expected to give of their best, and they did, including the teaching assistants who were taking part themselves. In another lesson, on ball skills, the teacher gave very good advice to all pupils to help them with their footwork, balance and throwing action. She never stopped scrutinising the pupils to pick up on points that they could improve. All pupils worked hard and all gained a lot from the lesson, consolidating their skills and improving their techniques.
63. The school makes good use of the additional resources it has received through the award and outside funding and these are having a clear impact upon pupils' achievement. There is a strong commitment to having as many lessons outside as possible and teachers make very good use of the spacious field and hard-surfaced playground to promote learning. Several sports clubs are held after school, led by a range of staff. Many pupils, of all abilities, participate in and enjoy these.
64. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader is committed and enthusiastic about developing the subject. He has good subject knowledge and provides useful ideas and guides for teaching aspects of PE, including swimming. Records on individual pupils' attainment are kept and generally used well to further pupils' skills. Details of particular achievements are published, which fosters individual and school pride in the pupils' sporting accomplishments.
65. The strengths of the subject identified at the last inspection have been continued and progress since then is satisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

66. Insufficient evidence was obtained to judge the overall provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. A good whole-school programme for this aspect of the curriculum has been developed since the last inspection and pupils benefit from time-tabled opportunities in class to express their feelings and develop their personal and social skills as well as their own values. They learn how to tackle difficult issues such as bullying and consider the things that are important to them in their lives. Pupils also learn about citizenship through activities such as voting in members of the School Council and offering their ideas to its members. The school promotes healthy and safe living well, through PE programmes and the wider opportunities presented by the Active Mark award.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
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	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
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	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
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	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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