

INSPECTION REPORT

**STELLING MINNIS CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Canterbury

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118681

Headteacher: Mrs B. Norman

Lead inspector: Mr G R Logan

Dates of inspection: 2 – 4 February 2004

Inspection number: 258028

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	77
School address:	Bossingham Road Stelling Minnis Canterbury Kent
Postcode:	CT4 6DU
Telephone number:	01227 709 218
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs B Skilton
Date of previous inspection:	30 March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Stelling Minnis CE Primary School serves the villages of Stelling Minnis and Bossingham and the surrounding area. Much of the housing in the villages is privately-owned and expensive. A small number of pupils live in social housing. Opened in 1784, the school is small in relation to many primary schools. Almost all of the 77 pupils are from White European backgrounds, with around two per cent of pupils of mixed-race background. No pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language. An above average proportion of pupils (25 per cent) have special educational needs, for mainly moderate learning difficulties. Two of these have statements. Around 19 per cent of pupils left or joined the school during the last school year. This was an unusually high proportion. In most years, there is much less pupil movement. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals (two per cent) is well below the national average (19 per cent) and is declining. The profile of pupils' attainment when they enter the school is average in most years, though there is considerable variation within each year group. The school belongs to a voluntary Rural Action Zone, which is a cluster of small rural schools.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11810	Mr G. Logan	Lead inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Physical education English as an additional language
9163	Mr G. Humphrey	Lay inspector	
29695	Mrs J. Lance	Team inspector	English Geography History Music Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **increasingly effective school**, with some very good features, which has improved significantly since it was last inspected. It has a very supportive, caring ethos and successfully includes all pupils in its activities. Pupils' achievement is good. Teaching is good overall, with significant strengths in the middle years. Currently, standards are above the national average overall. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and works effectively with governors to secure further improvement. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are above average in mathematics, science and ICT. Standards in English are average with some strengths. Pupils achieve well overall. Those with special educational needs receive good support.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and behave very well. Their personal development is very good. The Christian ethos of the school is a strength.
- The curriculum is good. Extra-curricular and enrichment activities are good.
- Pupils are cared for very well.
- The partnership between the school and its parents is very good.
- The leadership of the headteacher is good. The governing body is effective.
- Although good overall, there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school.
- Subject co-ordinators are not yet as effective as they might be. The delegation of management tasks needs review.

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection. All issues have been successfully tackled. Standards have risen and pupils' achievement is now much better. The proportion of good teaching has risen significantly. Assessment is now good. Leadership and management have improved. Governors are effective and have a close knowledge of the school. Good systems are in place for monitoring its work. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved significantly and are now very good. There have been major improvements to the school accommodation and this now provides an attractive and comfortable learning environment. There has been considerable investment in resources. The school is much valued by its community.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Children in Reception have made a satisfactory start and are on the way to achieving the goals set for the end of the Foundation Stage. Published results in Year 6 in 2003 were significantly affected by the proportion of pupils with special educational needs. At present, standards in Year 6 are above average in mathematics, science and ICT. Standards are well above average in art and design.

Although progress through the school is uneven at present, pupils achieve well overall. Those with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they receive.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are very good. Their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.** Relationships and behaviour are very good. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good.

Teaching is good overall and has improved significantly. Teaching is best in Years 3, 4 and 5, expectations are high and progress here is particularly good. Occasionally, in other year groups, inexperience means that teachers' expectations and the pace of lessons are less secure and this affects the rate of progress. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good across the school. Good assessment procedures are used effectively in most classes. Pupils learn to evaluate their work accurately – this is a strength. They have a mature approach and work well, both independently and with others. Planning to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs is effective. Learning support staff are, overall, well prepared and effectively-deployed. **The curriculum is good and provides a broad range of experiences for pupils.** Extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities are good. **Pupils receive very good care and support.** Very good induction procedures help the youngest children to settle quickly. Child protection procedures are very good. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. **The school has a very good partnership with parents. Links with other schools and with the community are very good.**

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good.

The recently-appointed headteacher is working effectively to consolidate and build upon the significant progress achieved by her predecessor. The school evaluates its work diligently and makes good use of available data, although there is scope for greater rigour in the evaluation of teaching quality. Middle management responsibilities in this relatively new team are not yet fully developed. Governors manage the school very efficiently and are both committed and effective. Statutory requirements are met. School administration is very efficient.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very happy with the school. They are very pleased with the improvements made and feel that the school is well led. The level of parental involvement in the life of the school is good. **Pupils enjoy school very much.** They enjoy lessons, appreciate the care shown towards them and feel that adults are readily available to help them if things go wrong.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Build upon current strengths in the teaching to ensure greater consistency in teaching quality and in the progress pupils make;
- Review the allocation of management tasks and subject responsibilities to ensure that these are discharged effectively; provide opportunities for co-ordinators to provide consistent leadership for their subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is good. Currently, standards are above average in mathematics and science and average in English by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 in 2003 were affected by the high proportion of pupils with significant special educational needs. Standards in the current year, particularly in mathematics and science, show signs of recovery and are above average.
- Pupils are making good progress, as a result of good teaching, although there are some inconsistencies between year groups.
- Standards in art and design are a significant strength.
- Higher attaining pupils are provided for well in most classes.
- Pupils with special educational needs do well because of the good support they receive.

Commentary

- 1 At the last inspection, standards by the end of Year 6 were no better than average in English, mathematics and science – or, indeed, in any other subject. Standards were unsatisfactory in three foundation subjects, including ICT. Given that children were considered to have above average attainment on entry, it is evident that there was significant underachievement through the school. Much has happened in the intervening period. Changes in staffing and improved teaching quality, raised expectations, better subject documentation, a sharper focus on the needs of able and talented pupils and improved assessment procedures have had a positive effect on standards and on pupils' achievement, which is now good. From 2000, the changes made began to show through in improved performance in Year 6. Over a three year period, national test performance was well above average or very high in all subjects. This was achieved in spite of the variations likely in a school where year group sizes can be as low as seven pupils – and the performance of one pupil can have a profound effect on the overall performance profile.
- 2 In 2003, there was an apparent decline in the published results of the national tests at the end of Year 6. These indicated that standards in English and mathematics were average, and in science they were below average overall. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the challenging Level 5 in English and mathematics was well above average, while in science it was above average. The explanation for this apparent decline lay in the nature of the year group, more than half of which had identified special educational needs. Two pupils were not in a position to take the tests and this diluted the achievements of the remainder, so adversely affecting the overall results. Had those pupils been discounted entirely, the overall performance of the remaining pupils would have been at a similar high level to previous years. All higher attaining pupils attained the expected levels.
- 3 Standards in Year 2 have been less consistent than in Year 6 over the same period. Performance in reading and writing has, overall, lagged behind that in mathematics. Standards in 2003 were average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. As with Year 6, this represented a slight dip on the previous year, again because of the number of pupils with special educational needs. However, this did not significantly affect the proportion of pupils achieving at the higher Level 3 - indeed, this improved in writing. Standards did not compare favourably with those achieved in similar schools, other than in writing.
- 4 Attainment on entry to the school is currently average. Although some children are very able, there is wide variation within these small year groups and this is exacerbated by the

relatively high proportion of pupils across the school with varying levels of special educational need. There has been some mobility of both pupils and staff in recent years and this makes it difficult reliably to track individual progress from year to year. However, available evidence indicates that the progress pupils make is now good overall – and particularly in the middle years.

- 5 On balance, girls have, over time, tended to perform better than boys at both Years 2 and 6. However, there was no indication during the inspection that this was a significant issue at present. Both groups make similar rates of progress during their time at school. Achievement for pupils with special educational needs is good because of the quality of support they receive and the work that is planned to meet their needs. The school is successful in raising achievement for the majority of pupils who enter the school with low literacy skills. Most make better progress than expected. The school provides well, overall, for the needs of pupils identified as Gifted or Talented offering a range of sporting and musical opportunities in addition to mainstream academic subjects.

Foundation Stage

- 6 Almost all children in the Foundation Stage have had some pre-school experience, although their preparation for entry to school varies. They benefit from effective induction procedures and settle well into school routines. Sound teaching ensures that children make steady progress and achieve satisfactorily, though both pace and rigour could be improved. Children in the current group are on the way to achieving the Early Learning Goals in all areas, with a few exceeding expectations.

Key Stage 1

- 7 Inspection evidence suggests that standards by the end of Year 2 in 2004 are likely to be around the average in reading and writing, with above average attainment in mathematics and science. Around one third of the pupils in this small year group (nine pupils) are achieving at the higher level. The school has made reading a priority in the current year and the benefits of the input to phonic development are now coming through. The whole-school focus on practical activities in science has had a positive effect on the quality of pupils' learning in the subject. Pupils attain above average standards in information and communication technology. The provision for personal, social and health education is a strength, enabling pupils to think carefully about relationships, rights and obligations. This contributes significantly to the positive climate for learning.

Key Stage 2

- 8 Attainment in Year 6, while average in English, is above average in mathematics and science, representing a likely improvement on 2003. There are, again, several pupils with identified special educational needs, though around half of the group are considered to have the potential for higher attainment. Standards in English are likely to be affected because handwriting and presentation are less good in Year 6 than in some other year groups. The overall rigour currently evident in Years 3 to 5 is less apparent in Year 6. Standards in the foundation subjects are well above average in art and design (a strength of the school), and above average overall in information and communication technology, where pupils' skills are developed well. Pupils achieve well overall in the core subjects, though the brisk progress in Years 3, 4 and 5 is not consistently sustained in Year 6.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (32.0)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.0 (29.0)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	28.0 (32.0)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 9 Pupils' literacy skills are promoted well across the curriculum. Pupils have good skills in numeracy and their mathematical skills are applied satisfactorily across the curriculum. In science practical and investigative activities are well-established and this boosts standards significantly. Pupils' skills in ICT have developed rapidly since the inauguration of the new suite. Staff are competent users of ICT and this has underpinned the rapid progress. There is very good cross-curricular use of ICT.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance and punctuality are **good**. Pupils' behaviour, their attitudes to their work and engagement in learning are **very good**. Their personal development is promoted **very well** with particular strengths in the provision for their spiritual, moral and social development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The spiritual ethos of the school is very good.
- Relationships are very good.
- Moral and social values are very well taught.
- Pupils' cultural awareness is good but the multi-cultural dimension is insufficiently developed.

Commentary

- 10 Attendance and punctuality are good, reflecting the school's effective monitoring and a spirit of mutual co-operation with parents. Pupils say they enjoy school and find the work challenging and because of this their attitudes towards work and engagement in learning are very good.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.5	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 Behaviour in the classroom and around the school is very good. Pupils are polite, courteous and welcoming towards visitors and the quality of relationships between all members of the school community is one of its strengths and creates a very good environment for social inclusion and racial harmony. There have been no recent exclusions.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – any other mixed background
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
72	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0

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

- 12 There are good opportunities for pupils to take the initiative and show responsibility. The members of the School Council take their responsibilities very seriously. They consult with the wider pupil body on important issues such as the enhancement of recreational facilities.

Pupils support the smooth running of the school by helping in lessons and with the organisation of the house system. In Reception the new 'child initiated learning' approach is encouraging children to become more self-sufficient in their learning, helping them to achieve the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development.

- 13 The school promotes a very good spiritual ethos within which pupils are given opportunities to explore their own values, beliefs, feelings and emotions. The school provides a clear moral code and promotes equality successfully. There is a strong sense of community within the school that encourages pupils to support each other, express their views with confidence and respect the needs and interests of others. Pupils are learning to act according to their principles and to challenge such things as injustice, intolerance and all forms of harassment, including bullying. Pupils say that when incidents of bullying or harassment occur they have the confidence and trust to talk with members of staff because they know that they care and will take appropriate action.
- 14 Pupils' awareness of their own cultural heritage is good. They have opportunities to visit many of the places of cultural and historic interest that lie within reach of the school and to participate in music and drama. They study other religions through the religious education syllabus and, in history, the ancient European cultures, but they gain little experience or knowledge of African, Asian and other historic cultures in the wider world. The multi-cultural dimension of the curriculum is not sufficiently developed. The weaknesses in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, identified at the previous inspection, have been effectively remedied and the provision is now good with some very good features.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are **good**. The curriculum is **good**, with good extra-curricular provision. Pupils are cared for very well. The partnership with parents is very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good overall, but best in Years 3, 4 and 5. In the best teaching, expectations are high, pupils are challenged well and learning proceeds at a good pace. Teachers make increasingly effective use of assessment information to plan future work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Much of the teaching enables pupils to make consistent progress and achieve well.
- Teachers' use of assessment information to plan future work is good. Lessons are generally planned effectively to meet pupils' needs. Very good links are established between subjects. This ensures that pupils learn efficiently.
- Deployment of teaching assistants supports pupils with special educational needs well.
- Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work and to become independent learners.
- In some classes, teacher expectations could be raised and the pace of learning increased.

Commentary

- 15 At the last inspection, teaching was satisfactory, but with only a small amount of good or better teaching observed. Pupils were managed well. Assessment was a weakness across the curriculum, so that planned activities were not always matched well to the needs of the pupils. The poor state of the accommodation and the limitations in resourcing were significant constraints on effective teaching. Since that time, the school has undergone considerable change, with almost all of the staff, including two headteachers, having moved on. The school has, therefore, experienced relatively high mobility in staffing. However, this is now settling down and, even with two appointees at the beginning of this school year, there are indications that the current team is purposeful and committed. Even taking into account the very advantageous working conditions in this school, with extremely small

classes and very co-operative and compliant pupils, the quality of teaching and overall provision have improved significantly, although some areas for development remain.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4	11	7	1	0	0

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

- 16 Staff in the Foundation Stage have a secure understanding of the areas of learning and work well in partnership with parents to enable children to learn well. Lessons are well prepared and planning takes good account of individual needs. Teaching and learning in the lessons observed were satisfactory overall, enabling children to make at least satisfactory progress. The Reception class enjoys a very good ratio of adults to children. Staff have successfully embraced the child-initiated learning initiative and this is working well. Relationships are good. Children's progress is carefully assessed and recorded. However, the environment is very relaxed and the pace of activities, and consequently of children's learning, is slow. There are missed opportunities to extend children's understanding, particularly in literacy and numeracy activities. This is exacerbated because the support staff have a special educational needs remit and lack the level of awareness which is likely to come with early years' training.
- 17 Mainly good teaching supports good achievement overall for pupils in the main school. Teaching is particularly good in Years 3 to 5. Here, pupils are challenged very well. The teaching is rigorous and thorough and motivates pupils particularly well. Several very good lessons were observed. However, the pace of learning slows in Year 6, where teaching is satisfactory overall. While the curriculum is being satisfactorily covered, there is not the zest for learning and commitment evident in some other classes. In most year groups, pupils show maturity and a good capacity to work independently or collaboratively. This was especially evident in Year 5. Higher attaining groups in particular are expected to be able to get on with tasks. This promotes independence well and encourages pupils to show initiative and to be self-sufficient in their learning. Teachers question pupils well and in the best lessons encourage them to think strategically to devise ways of approaching a problem which can be applied, or creatively adapted, on other occasions. This approach is used well, for example, in mathematics lessons in Year 5. While planning is generally well-focused on individual needs, there is a tendency within the mixed-year classes and noted occasionally during the inspection, to target work planned for higher attaining pupils to the needs of the able younger pupils, rather than the able older pupils. This is an area for development.
- 18 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall and very good for pupils with a statement of specific educational need. As a result of assessment, pupils are given an individual education plan and a variety of effective measures to support them both in and out of the classroom. Work is well matched to meet pupils' needs and basic skills are taught effectively. The school employs a number of teaching assistants, with relevant expertise, to give pupils extra support, mostly in literacy and mathematics. Teaching assistants carefully track progress and targets for improvement are reviewed regularly. The school has developed very good links with outside agencies for additional support and advice.
- 19 Teachers' methods are chosen well to assist pupils in gaining knowledge and developing understanding. There is, for example, a high level of first-hand learning in science, where pupils experience an investigative approach from an early stage. ICT is skillfully integrated with a number of other subjects. History and geography curricula are well-supported by visitors and the local environment. The school has developed good planning structures with plenty of guidance for staff to draw on. Curriculum links are clearly identified and well-established, so that teachers can work efficiently. Clear objectives are set for learning, and

these are often recorded by pupils and frequently referred to in lessons. Good use overall is made of assessment to support the planning of work which is appropriately matched to pupils' needs and capabilities. Pupils are given helpful comments when their work is marked to help them improve their future work, though the quality of comments and rigour of the marking tends to tail off towards the top of the school. Pupils are trained very well to evaluate their own work and that of others. For example, in ICT, Year 5 pupils looked critically at their Powerpoint presentations and assessed how fit they would be for certain purposes, such as a changed audience profile, in relation to age, reading competence or speed of response. In many lessons, pupils test out ideas with their partners. Typically, they listen intently. All these devices are very motivating to pupils.

- 20 Teachers make good use of data to track pupils' progress and identify areas of weakness. Progress is effectively tracked in writing and numeracy every half term, and this helps with target-setting. Individual targets are set in English, mathematics and ICT and pupils appear to have a good knowledge of these. Outline assessment procedures are in place for the foundation subjects. The use of homework to support pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Homework is set consistently, carefully-marked and makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good** and provides **good** enrichment experiences.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The breadth of curricular opportunities throughout the school is good.
- Cross-curricular links between subjects have been imaginatively developed.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils' personal development is well provided for.
- Good opportunities for enrichment exist through participation in the arts and other activities.
- Accommodation is generally good and subjects are well resourced. However, a few weaknesses in the accommodation affect the curriculum.

Commentary

- 21 The broad and balanced curriculum goes beyond statutory requirements, adding depth and quality to pupils' learning experiences with a wide range of well-planned opportunities that enrich pupils' education and emphasise skills as well as knowledge. The curriculum is significantly extended by weekly lessons in French and thinking skills sessions, including introductory studies in Latin. While older pupils sample different languages, younger pupils are encouraged to learn greetings in different languages when, for example, answering the register. Younger pupils have planned opportunities for child-initiated learning to develop creativity and some pupils are taking part in a creativity project promoted by the local authority. In addition to the national curriculum subjects and religious education, circle time or personal, social and health education (PSHE) is also provided.
- 22 A key strength of the curriculum is the way in which the school has interlinked subjects. ICT is strongly embedded across the curriculum. Good opportunities are planned to enable pupils to use their literacy skills in other subjects. There are, for example, imaginatively-planned links between art and design and physical education and between physical education and literacy. Investigative and practical skills are strongly promoted in science.
- 23 The small class sizes help the school make good provision for all pupils including those with special educational needs and the curriculum is appropriately adapted to meet their individual needs. Each pupil on the special needs register is screened and has a good quality individual education plan (IEP), which helps teachers to plan work at the right level. Planned provision for these pupils is good because it makes use of accurate prior assessment and so tasks more closely meet individual needs. There are very good links

with outside agencies and all statutory requirements are met. Gifted or Talented pupils are identified from an early stage and the school makes the best provision it can across a range of academic, sporting and musical opportunities.

- 24 Pupils' personal development is good because the school has introduced lessons to encourage pupils to develop. Classes have circle time or PSHE and the school is a Christian environment with staff acting as good role models. A School Council has been formed, which encourages pupils to have a voice and think about their school community. The school's focus on the development of creativity supports personal development well.
- 25 The school provides a good range of activities to promote participation in the arts and other activities. Extra-curricular provision is good. Opportunities to dance, sing, play an instrument or learn a second language, as well as some more unusual clubs, such as calligraphy, are well attended at lunchtime and after school. Pupils have had access to first aid training. There are good links with other schools, including local secondary schools, as part of a Rural Action Zone initiative which further enriches the curriculum. The planned use of visits and visitors to extend pupils' experiences is incorporated well into the curriculum.
- 26 Since the last inspection the building has been significantly improved and it is now generally good. All classrooms, administrative and public spaces in the school have been extensively refurbished. However, there are still some weaker features of the accommodation, some of which negatively affect the curriculum. These include the lack of a designated room for the teaching of pupils with SEN, the lack of a medical room and the limitations of the Foundation Stage classroom, which has not been designed adequately to promote all six areas of learning. There are insufficient staff lavatories.
- 27 Each subject is well resourced. This includes outside toys for the Foundation Stage to use in the good quality, safe outside play area and a newly-refurbished adventure playground that is used by the whole school. The resourcing of ICT is particularly good.

Care, guidance and support

The school cares for its pupils **very well** and gives them **very good** support and guidance. Child protection and health and safety procedures are **very good**. Pupils' views are valued **very well** and they are encouraged to contribute to the life and work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Welfare, support and pastoral care are very good.
- There is mutual trust and respect between pupils and staff.
- Value is placed on pupils' views; they are encouraged to contribute to all school activities.

Commentary

- 28 The school supports its pupils very well. Staff know their pupils and give them very good care and guidance matched sensitively to their individual needs. The school has a caring ethos that encourages pupils to do their best at all times. Child protection and health and safety procedures and the provision made for first aid are all very good. There is a high degree of trust between pupils and their teachers. Pupils say that when they have concerns and need to seek support and guidance they are confident that their teacher will listen and that they will receive appropriate help and advice. The school has developed a very good personal health and social education programme that teaches pupils about personal hygiene and about their relationships with others. The concerns about care and supervision referred to in the report following the previous inspection have all been fully resolved.
- 29 Pupils' opinions are valued and acted upon. School Council members take their responsibilities very seriously and function as an effective consultative link between school management and pupils. The arrangements for settling children into the Reception class are

very good. There are very good links with feeder schools and when children join Reception their parents are encouraged to come into school and stay with their children until they are settled and ready for the routine of the school day. There are good arrangements for pupils who join the school at other times. Pupils are well prepared for the transfer into secondary education.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnerships between the school, parents, other schools and the wider community are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good partnership between parents and the school.
- The support provided by parents to encourage their children's learning is good.
- The quality of information and communication between the school and parents is very good.
- There are very good links with other schools.
- Links with the wider community have been developed well.

Commentary

- 30 The positive views of parents are reflected in their satisfaction with the quality of the education provided and the strong Christian ethos of the school. The partnership between parents and the school is very good and they work well together to support learning. The quality of information and communication between the school and parents is very good. Annual progress reports are clear, concise and helpful and provide guidance on how parents can contribute to their children's future achievement. Individual pupil attainment targets are regularly shared with parents. Good links are sustained with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. Workshops provide parents with specific training in such areas as reading skills. Regular communications keep parents informed about the curriculum and school events. Teachers and support staff make sure they are accessible to parents and this is appreciated. The school has good arrangements for listening to the views of parents and is very open and welcoming. Formal review meetings are very well attended and a number of parents volunteer to help in school and with additional school activities.
- 31 The school has very good links with the community. It is closely involved with the parish church and its congregation and with local organisations such as the Bossingham pre-school group. Speakers from the community enhance the curriculum by giving talks on countryside skills and traditional crafts. The school takes good advantage of its location near to Canterbury with its wealth of places of historic, cultural and religious significance through trips and participation in drama, art and music festivals. These extend and enrich the curriculum. An active parent-teacher association organises successful social and fundraising events and is very much integrated with the village community.
- 32 Links with other schools and colleges are very good. The school is part of a commercially sponsored 'Rural Action Zone' that links nine small village schools, enabling them jointly to participate in a range of workshops that focus on the health, personal development, welfare and additional life skills of pupils. There are also very good links with a secondary school through which pupils are able to participate in projects involving subjects such as science and design and technology. These activities provide a valuable enhancement to pupils' skills and experience and raise their expectations for their future education. Relationships with parents, the community and other schools have improved significantly since the last inspection.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Governance is **good**. Leadership by the headteacher is **good**. This is a significant improvement on the last inspection. Other key staff provide **satisfactory** leadership. Management is **satisfactory**. The allocation of middle management roles needs review. Some subject co-ordinators are effective; however, opportunities for them to show leadership are limited.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors are knowledgeable, involved and meet their responsibilities very effectively.
- There is a culture of good teamwork with a clear drive for improvement.
- School finances are managed well.
- Responsibilities are not effectively delegated; middle management roles need review. Coordinators are not yet as effective as they might be and one occupies an unsatisfactory leadership role. Leadership is unsatisfactory as the coordinator does not teach the National Literacy Strategy or monitor the quality of provision.
- Self-evaluation procedures could be more rigorous.

Commentary

- 33 The previous headteacher guided the school through a period of tremendous change, overseeing major building work and establishing a culture of high expectation and high performance. Since her appointment last year, the current headteacher has quickly gained the confidence of governors, staff, pupils and parents. She provides effective leadership for the school and has a clear vision for its development. Together with the governing body, she is committed to sustaining high standards, but also values pupils for themselves and seeks to provide the broadest range of opportunities possible. She is supported well in this by all teaching and support staff. The school is successful in meeting its aims and values as reflected in its mission statement. A calm and purposeful atmosphere exists. There is a close working partnership between staff, parents and pupils which effectively supports pupils' learning.
- 34 The current staff team has been together only since September and two teachers are recently-qualified. There is now a need, and opportunity, to review middle management responsibilities to ensure that these are shared appropriately among the staff and are discharged effectively. Too much responsibility remains with the headteacher at present. Subject co-ordinators are effective to varying degrees. Some, such as the co-ordinators of art and design and science, have positively influenced practice and standards across the school. Others, more typically, manage their subjects satisfactorily, but provide little leadership. The co-ordination of English has weaknesses. The management of special educational needs, including learning support staff, is fragmented. The system in place for appraisal and performance management of teachers and other staff is satisfactory at this stage. Staff have good opportunities to extend their professional development. New members of staff, including those new to teaching, are introduced to the school and supported well. They immerse themselves quickly in the good team culture.
- 35 The governing body has been very successful in shaping the direction of the school. The school has worked to implement self-evaluation procedures. Good use is made of available data. However, not all judgements are fully justified by the evidence and this is an area where greater rigour is needed. Overall, governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are both challenging to and supportive of the headteacher and staff. Governors are clear about their own responsibilities and those related to the headteacher. They evaluate their own performance regularly and fulfill their statutory duties well. They are involved in discussions about targets for the school development plan and the evaluation of pupils' achievement. The current improvement plan is concise and accessible and sets clear development targets. Governors meet regularly with staff and visit the school frequently. This is a confident governing body with all relevant committees in place. Together with the headteacher, it is committed to meeting the learning

needs of all pupils. As a result, the school is very effective in ensuring that all pupils are included.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	279,638	Balance from previous year	15,311
Total expenditure	277,159	Balance carried forward to the next	17,789
Expenditure per pupil	3,380		

- 36 The governing body manages school funds well. They are rigorous in evaluating the effectiveness of spending decisions. Principles of best value are well understood and applied, and efficient systems are in place to ensure that the school gains value for money. Financial and general administration in the school is currently very efficient. Recent audit recommendations have been implemented fully. The school meets the needs of its pupils well, overall, and currently provides good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children are suitably prepared for transfer to Year 1. Children enter Reception in the September before they are five. The majority have attended pre-school provision. All children make at least satisfactory progress because the class numbers are small, the curriculum is appropriately planned to provide a wide range of activities and children have very good attitudes to learning. Almost every child is in line to complete the Early Learning Goals by the end of the year, with some exceeding these. The recently introduced child-initiated learning is enriching the curriculum and motivates children well. The adult to child ratio is good and adults carefully monitor all activities and children's progress. Teaching assistants are trained to support special educational needs issues, rather than early years' education and although some in-school training is on-going, opportunities to help children learn are sometimes overlooked. The outside accommodation is good. While the inside accommodation is large enough for a small class, it is not fully equipped to support all areas of learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good child-initiated learning programme is having a positive effect on children's personal development.
- The inside accommodation is not adequately equipped to support this area of learning.
- Relationships are supportive; children feel confident and happy.

Commentary

- 37 All children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in their personal development, but with some areas for improvement.
- 38 Each school day starts with a child initiated learning session. This encourages children to make decisions, move to small groups, share resources, taking turns and working together. Children are keen to learn and draw on past experiences to explore and develop knowledge and understanding in a safe environment. This effectively fosters personal development through creativity.
- 39 The outside enclosed play area promotes personal development satisfactorily, but the classroom is less well equipped to promote self-care. The toilet facility is not of a suitable size to encourage independence in personal hygiene. Storage furniture is not consistently at child height, to encourage independence in selecting and returning resources; this too limits development.
- 40 Teaching is satisfactory. The wide variety of activities and good adult to child ratio means that all children, including those with special educational needs, make good relationships with each other and with adults. Children show empathy with others who have special educational needs and include them well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The child initiated learning sessions help to develop children's spoken language and effective communication.
- Reading is taught well and parents support their children's reading at home.
- Some opportunities to challenge children to think hard by asking appropriate questions and opportunities to bring literacy into other areas of learning are overlooked.

Commentary

- 41 The child initiated learning sessions encourage children to organise and clarify their thinking, as they communicate their creative ideas to their peers. They negotiate with others about taking turns and some children are beginning to use language imaginatively. A writing area encourages the development of writing for a purpose and, although not as frequently used as some other areas, the few children who used it made measurable learning gains.
- 42 The provision for reading has improved recently and this is beginning to raise standards. Good teaching was seen when a group of children drew a letter in wet sand to get the feel of its shape and to learn its sound. Parents are encouraged to hear children read at home where regular practice reinforces skills learned at school. Good records of achievement are kept.
- 43 Teaching is satisfactory and almost all children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area. However, although lessons are well planned and careful assessment files are kept, the relaxed learning environment does not consistently challenge children to think hard and work at a brisk pace. In addition, the teaching assistants have not yet completed early years' training. There is still insufficient awareness of how to seize the moment and build literacy into skilful questioning when engaging with the children.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are interested in the good range of activities and resources provided.
- Some opportunities to bring mathematics into other activities are missed.

Commentary

- 44 Almost all children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals, with a few exceeding them. The children are interested in the good range of planned mathematical activities. Their very good attitudes to learning sustain concentration and perseverance. They are beginning to use simple mathematical language when talking about shape and are able to recognise and recreate simple patterns. Many children count securely to ten. A few children are beginning to solve practical problems by using their developing mathematical awareness.
- 45 Teaching and learning are sound overall and give children a chance to show what they can achieve. However, adults sometimes miss opportunities to draw out and extend mathematical understanding in other areas of the curriculum activities, as they themselves do not yet have sufficient understanding of mathematical learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision in this area of learning. However, the work seen was satisfactory with some good features. The children understand that if the fire bell rings they must leave the building. Children make daily use of computers, taking the initiative to switch them on and showing good skills in using the mouse to click a response on the screen. Unusually, the whole class is learning Makaton, a sign language, in order to communicate more effectively with a non-speaking child in the class. From the start children join in school assemblies and learn about the important part they play in the school community.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outdoor play area helps children to develop a sense of space as they use large toys.
- There is a good range of small equipment to develop fine motor skills.

Commentary

- 46 Children have easy access to a range of large equipment outside and this effectively supports the development of gross motor skills. In addition, cycling on large bikes and scooters helps them to develop a sense of space for themselves and others as they negotiate other vehicles on the path. Further climbing and balancing equipment is readily available in the main playground and more regular planned use of this adventure playground would provide a wider range of experiences.
- 47 The planned use of resources, tools and materials in the classroom helps children to learn to use equipment safely and with some control. In addition, children learn about health and body awareness as they are encouraged to eat fruit at snack time and put their coats on to keep warm before they go outside. Teaching is satisfactory. Children make sound progress in this area of learning and careful records are kept. Most are likely to complete the Early Learning Goals by the end of the year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Creativity in the curriculum

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The child-initiated learning promotes one strand of creative development as they respond to experiences and communicate ideas.
- The classroom does not have a suitable 'wet' area for exploring media and materials.

Commentary

- 48 Teaching in this area is satisfactory. The daily child initiated learning sessions give children time to respond in different ways to their senses and to develop confidence in expressing and communicating their ideas. Over time this good provision will help children to complete the Early Learning Goals for this area of development. In addition, children are encouraged to use their imagination in role-play and story making.
- 49 The classroom does not have a 'wet area' where children can systematically develop a knowledge of colour, texture, shape and space in two- and three- dimensions, using a variety of materials. Most of the floor is carpeted and therefore is not designed for this area

of learning. In addition, sand and water can only be used outside and so related creative play is governed by the weather.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The recent focus on reading for younger pupils is raising standards.
- Good teaching and learning was observed in most lessons.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and work hard.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- The role of the co-ordinator is underdeveloped. Leadership is unsatisfactory as the co-ordinator does not teach the National Literacy Strategy or monitor the quality of provision.

Commentary

- 50 Standards in English are average. They are rising in the current year because of the school's response to identified weaknesses. There have been some variations in attainment from year by year, particularly at Year 2, because of the make-up of particular year groups, though, until 2003, performance at Year 6 had been consistently high. National data in 2003 indicated that, in Year 2, standards in reading were average, but above average in writing. Year 6 results were average for the majority of pupils but well above average for higher attaining pupils. They were significantly affected by the inclusion of a number of pupils with special educational needs. As a result, the school's performance in 2003 did not compare as favourably as it might have to similar schools. There is evidence of an improved picture in the current year and pupils' achievement is better.
- 51 The school has recently placed a stronger focus on developing reading skills for younger pupils. In Reception and in Years 1 and 2, a phonic scheme has been introduced and there are signs that this is beginning to raise standards in reading. The school continues to target reading as an area for improvement further up the school, particularly for boys. General book areas in classrooms are well organised but the library is multi-functional and displays are unlikely to capture pupils' interest.
- 52 Pupils with identified needs in Years 3 and 4 receive additional literacy support. Extended writing is promoted well through other subjects and this has a positive effect on the overall quality of written work. Inspection evidence suggests that these measures are beginning to make a difference. However, the quality of handwriting and presentation of older pupils' work is sometimes untidy. There was no evidence of variations in performance relating to gender.
- 53 Teaching and learning are good overall, enabling pupils to achieve well. This is an improving picture but the consistency of teaching quality has yet to be reflected fully in test results. In the best lessons, there was evidence of good subject knowledge. Learning objectives are shared with pupils, giving them a greater involvement in their own learning. Planning is good and uses assessment well to ensure that tasks are sufficiently challenging and appropriate for the learning needs of the pupils. Time is managed well. The pace is brisk so concentration is sustained and pupils are challenged to think hard. Good use is made of additional support from teaching assistants, often withdrawing groups of pupils to teach them effectively. In mixed age classes pupils are grouped by levels of attainment rather than age, though planning for higher attaining pupils is sometimes pitched to the needs of the younger rather than the older age group. Also, the marking of pupils' work is variable as it does not consistently set targets and identify areas for improvement.

- 54 Throughout the school teaching shows a good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy with high expectations for pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards their work. Pupils respond very well, sharing resources sensibly and working with partners or in small groups, without losing concentration. The subject is well resourced.
- 55 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teaching assistants support these pupils well, especially out of the classroom. Work is set at an appropriate level to enable them to achieve well. This contributes well to their personal development.
- 56 The management of English is sound. Appropriate priorities have been put in place to raise the standard of reading and to support lower attaining pupils. Overall, the key issues from the last inspection have been tackled well. However, the role of the co-ordinator remains underdeveloped. The co-ordinator cannot lead by example as she does not teach within Years 1 to 6. Some initiatives are started in the Foundation Stage. However, issues relating to pupils further up the school are not being identified promptly enough as pupils' work is not sampled and the co-ordinator has no opportunity to monitor teaching. The leadership role exercised by the co-ordinator is thus unsatisfactory.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

- 57 Pupils use their language and literacy skills well in other subjects; for example, in extended writing in history and geography and some good quality work was evident across the school. Work in, for example, physical education and in art and design draw upon work covered in literacy sessions, such as characters from Victorian novels. The school has worked successfully to link subjects in this way.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average. Pupils achieve well through the school.
- Teaching is good overall. Pupils are challenged well in most lessons.
- Pupils are highly motivated and keen to learn.
- The co-ordinator leads the subject effectively.
- The quality of marking is good overall.
- Occasionally, planning in mixed-year classes does not focus sufficiently on the needs of the older, higher-attaining pupils.

Commentary

- 58 Standards in mathematics are above average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve well in mathematics. The progress they make is good. Year groups vary and overall attainment usually reflects the proportion of pupils with significant special educational needs in each group. Teaching is good at present and there is broad consistency of practice and expectation across the school. In 2003, an average proportion of pupils achieved the challenging Level 3 in Year 2, while a well-above average proportion of pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in Year 6. Predictions for the current Year 2 indicate a similar picture, with improved overall performance at Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs do well, making good progress overall. Girls have tended, over time, to out-perform boys, but no significant variations in attainment by gender were noted during the inspection.
- 59 There is a strong focus on securing basic numeracy skills, particularly in Years 1 and 2, and there is evidence of very thorough work to reinforce basic understanding. There is a good focus on independent recording from an early stage, with minimal use of worksheets and high expectations of presentation. Overall, the level of challenge is good, supporting the good achievement seen. In the later years, the pace of learning is effectively sustained. This is particularly good in most year groups in the juniors. However, there is some loss of pace

in Year 6 and less rigour in the teaching than is evident elsewhere. Problem-solving is a key focus for the school and there was good evidence in a successful Year 5 lesson that this is being tackled creatively. Curriculum coverage is good. Year 6 pupils, for example, have a secure understanding of the properties of the more complex two-dimensional shapes and have covered a range of topics, including fractions, decimals, percentages and ratio. Some use is made of investigative work to secure pupils' understanding of key mathematical concepts.

- 60 Teaching is good overall. Common strengths include the careful planning of lessons and the accurate match of work to pupils' needs. Occasionally, in mixed-year classes, work planned for the higher-attaining pupils is better matched to the needs of the younger age-group than the older and this needs to be monitored closely. Overall, pupils are challenged to succeed and expectations are high. The pace of lessons is not as brisk as it might be in Year 6 and this affects pupils' learning. Good knowledge and understanding of the subject support the rigorous approach of many staff. They challenge pupils to think and to develop strategies to enable them to deal with mathematical problems. This was seen in Year 5, for example, where pupils acted as teachers, developing their own understanding through explaining their methodology in problem-solving to the rest of the class. In some lessons pupils receive good support from the well-prepared support staff. Teachers use language well and question pupils carefully to ensure that they understand. There is good use of computers to support learning in mathematics; for example, when pupils were using a data-program independently in Year 2. Across the school, pupils' learning is strongly supported by the very positive attitudes which pupils bring to their work and by their ability to work co-operatively and creatively, without fuss.
- 61 Most teachers use assessment well to guide their planning of future work. The school has identified targets for each year group. Individual target-setting, with short-term, achievable targets has been implemented for the older pupils. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own understanding and this is a strong feature. Marking is thorough in most classes, with clear guidance as to how pupils can improve their performance, though there are some variations in practice. Homework arrangements are consistent and satisfactory.
- 62 The co-ordinator is effective and has had good opportunities to monitor teaching and learning. These have been used well. She has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and knows what still needs to be improved. Resources are good. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.
- Mathematics across the curriculum**
- 63 Pupils regularly use mathematics satisfactorily to support their work in other subjects and there is evidence of this in science and in geography. They use graphs and tables to record data in science and practise their skills in measuring when they undertake practical tasks in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average. Pupils achieve well.
- There are very good opportunities for investigative work across the age range.
- Teaching is good. Expectations are high. Pupils are encouraged to become independent in planning and recording their work. Pupils' work is marked thoroughly.

Commentary

- 64 Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in 2004 are likely to be above the national average. This represents a significant improvement on the situation at the last inspection and also on the 2003 national test results. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected level by the end of Year 6 had declined in 2003, following several years of very high performance. This directly reflected the proportion of pupils in the year group with significant special educational needs. Even in that context, however, an above average proportion of pupils achieved the challenging Level 5. All pupils in Year 2 are likely to achieve the expected level in 2004, an improvement on the 2003 performance. Pupils are eager to learn and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. Pupils' factual knowledge of life processes and living things, and of materials and their properties, is good.
- 65 The key strength in the teaching of science is the very good support for the development of pupils' investigative skills. The influence of the co-ordinator, a science specialist, has contributed to staff confidence in adopting a very practical approach in their teaching and a review of pupils' recorded work indicates that this is a strength across the school. A positive feature is the opportunity given to pupils to record their investigation, in a freely extended manner, without relying on a rigidly prepared framework. This, together with high teacher expectations, contributes significantly to extending their thinking. Clear evidence of the maturity and quality of pupils' scientific thinking was observed during a Year 5 lesson about 'Keeping Healthy', where pupils discussed the factors which affected the rate at which blood is pumped around the body. This session was run in conjunction with the Year 1 and 2 class whose work on 'Health and Growth' was planned to dovetail effectively with their older peers. This was a creative and productive session for both groups and extended the learning of both groups well.
- 66 Teaching and learning are good, although pace is a weaker feature on occasion. In one lesson for the younger pupils, after a lively initial discussion, too little thought was given to the written task which was mundane and insufficiently challenging. However, the level of challenge provided for Year 5 pupils in another session was significantly greater. Nearly all teachers have good subject knowledge which they use effectively to explain scientific processes and provide opportunities for pupils to devise their own experiments. Very good examples were evident in pupils' recorded work, particularly in Years 3 and 4, where pupils have tested the durability of paper towels and the elasticity of their teacher's tights when studying forces and have radically intervened in the growth cycle of plants in order to discover what factors are crucial if plants are to thrive. Teachers pay particular attention to the importance of fair testing and the acquisition of specific scientific vocabulary. This enhances greatly pupils' knowledge and understanding and it was evident in discussion that they fully grasp the principle of fair testing. Pupils think of themselves as 'young scientists'. Good use is made of ICT for research purposes and also for the logging and analysis of data. The purposeful atmosphere created in all lessons contributes well to nurturing the already good attitudes and enthusiasm for learning of nearly all pupils. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and effective in promoting the subject. Although opportunities for direct monitoring of teaching have been limited, she looks at pupils' work and analyses this carefully. Good links have been established with a local grammar school, with specialist science status.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff are well-trained, with secure skills in the subject. The quality of teaching is good and expectations are high. Pupils are achieving well.
- Resources for ICT are much improved.
- Cross-curricular use of ICT is a strength.
- Although assessment procedures are in place, this is an area for development.

Commentary

- 67 Standards in ICT are above those expected at both Years 2 and 6. Provision has improved significantly in recent years, and particularly since the ICT suite was introduced four terms ago. Standards have caught up quickly. Pupils are achieving well at present as a result of the consistently rigorous teaching across the school, and there has been rapid improvement in pupils' skills, underpinned by the good access of a number of pupils to computers outside school. Like their peers, pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Year 2 pupils were observed coping competently and independently with a spreadsheet where they were recording mathematical data and then printing the final draft. There is evidence of recent work in data-handling where pupils have recorded the results of a traffic survey. They have also undertaken a food survey to support work in science and recorded their findings on ICT. Older pupils were observed generating a repeating pattern design using symmetry and reflection. They demonstrated a very good knowledge of the program and its tools and were able to manipulate their designs confidently, evaluating their work constantly. Year 5 pupils were refining a Powerpoint presentation and adjusting its features to meet the needs of differing audiences, looking, for example, at the level of language used and the speed of presentation in relation to the reading skills of an audience. Again, pupils constantly evaluated the quality of their work, focusing on its fitness for purpose. There is good evidence of pupils using the Internet for research purposes in a range of subjects. They use digital cameras with confidence and skill.
- 68 Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have all had recent training, have good personal skills in ICT and have a good understanding of the management of the suite and of the programs used. Expectations are high, and consistent. Most teaching is rigorous and challenging. Learning objectives are clearly defined and shared and there is a concise presentation of the procedures which pupils need to follow in each lesson. A clear strength is that pupils are constantly asked to evaluate their work and that of others, and to judge whether lesson objectives have been met. Pupils learn well because of the high expectations of the teachers and because of their own very positive attitudes and interest in the subject.
- 69 The recently-appointed co-ordinator has made a good start and has a good knowledge of the contribution of ICT to the wider curriculum. She plans to improve the current assessment system to focus more closely on the development of pupils' skills. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good, particularly in view of the significantly raised expectations in the subject.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 70 The use of ICT to support work in other subjects is good. There is evidence of ICT being used across a range of subjects, including science, mathematics and design and technology. Teachers consciously work to identify opportunities in each subject and this is, for the most part, successful.

HUMANITIES

- 71 No lessons were observed in history. It is not therefore possible to make a firm judgement about provision. However, it is clear from teachers' planning, displays around the school and subject portfolios that work planned in **history** is varied and interesting. The school is successfully developing a cross-curricular approach so that history is linked to other subjects. This was evident in Years 5 and 6, where pupils studying the Victorian era have studied local history to learn about the conditions found in a Victorian workhouse in Canterbury, have studied Victorian prose and are interpreting this information in hand sewn banners in art and design. The sound scheme of work is planned in a two year cycle, with evaluation at the end of a unit, to give pupils a systematic acquisition of skills. Resources for history have improved significantly since the last inspection. Samples of work indicate that by the end of Year 6 pupils are likely to attain standards similar to those attained nationally.
- 72 In **geography**, scrutiny of work and subject portfolios shows that pupils are developing knowledge, skills and understanding through a carefully planned scheme of work which runs in a two year cycle. Pupils' work is evaluated at the end of a unit. Once again, a cross-curricular approach is successfully developing. Younger pupils were observed investigating what jobs people do in a contrasting community – a remote Scottish island. This led to a valuable discussion, developing literacy skills, as pupils searched the written and pictorial resources for evidence. The standard of work achieved suggests that by the end of Year 2 pupils are likely to attain standards in line with national expectations. Good use is made of visits and visitors. For example, younger pupils have learned about the Kent Apple Harvest. Resources for geography are much improved since the last inspection and the use of ICT to support learning is growing as cross-curricular skills are strengthened.
- 73 No lessons were seen in **religious education** and so no judgement is made about overall provision. A proportion of work in religious education lessons centres around discussion, so the amount of written work available was limited. However, scrutiny of available work and discussion with the religious education co-ordinator suggests that pupils' achievement is sound throughout the school and the weakness in Years 5 and 6 reported at the last inspection has been effectively addressed. The ethos of the school warmly encourages pupils to apply religious doctrine in their everyday lives. In assembly, pupils asked for prayers for people they knew. Good use is made of visits and visitors. There are good examples of cross-curricular links. Older pupils have made icons in art, using a limited palette, to reflect work from the Byzantine and other eastern churches. Pupils have visited Canterbury Cathedral and the Ramsgate Synagogue. The school follows the Kent Agreed Syllabus for religious education, which is currently under review. The quality and quantity of artefacts continues to develop and have improved since the last inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

- 74 In **music** no lessons were observed and, although the whole school was heard singing in assemblies, it is not possible to make a judgement about standards of attainment or provision. Discussions with the music co-ordinator show that, as part of the promotion of creativity in the curriculum, the school has recently invested in a new scheme of work for music and all staff have received appropriate training. The scheme has assessment built into each unit and is designed to suit the non-specialist teacher. At the time of inspection this was in use in Reception and in Years 1 and 2, with plans to extend it further up the school. The resources for music are sound in quality but the number of instruments is limited. The curriculum is enriched with guitar club, drum lessons and visitors, such as a jazz group. Concerts and performances also contribute to pupils' musical experience. The positive picture indicated at the last inspection has been maintained.
- 75 No lessons were observed in **design and technology**. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision. However, evidence indicates that standards attained are likely to be similar to those expected nationally at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Work is always

clearly linked to a purpose and ideas are carried through to fruition. There is a clear progression from initial ideas, through detailed research, planning, making and thorough evaluation. Pupils in Year 5 outlined their conclusions following their research into different types of biscuits. Year 3 and 4 pupils have approached their sandwich-making with considerable rigour. Pupils undertake projects sufficiently frequently to enable them to develop their craft skills. There is good evidence of research carried out using ICT in all the junior year groups. Achievement is sound, as is improvement since the last inspection. There is now a scheme of work and an assessment system and the co-ordinator has put together a detailed portfolio to guide staff in their work.

- 76 Only two sessions of dance were observed in **physical education** and, consequently, it is not possible to judge standards or provision either in Years 1 and 2, or across the breadth of the curriculum. However, the school curriculum overview indicates that pupils experience the full range of activities expected, including outdoor and adventurous pursuits (primarily through the Year 6 residential journey). Swimming is covered in Years 2, 3 and 4 at a local pool and records indicate that a satisfactory proportion of pupils achieve the expected standard (25 metres unaided) by the end of Year 4, or later. Standards in dance are similar, overall, to those found in schools nationally, though better than that in the Year 3 and 4 lesson observed. Pupils show a good level of confidence and interest in dance and have developed good co-ordination. They achieve well overall and this is underpinned by the very good attitudes which they demonstrate in lessons. There has been a recent increase in the range of extra-curricular sporting opportunities. These include dance club, football, netball, cross-country and kwik-cricket.
- 77 Imaginative cross-curricular links have been developed. Year 6 pupils based their dance work on the Artful Dodger, from a text being studied in Literacy, while the observation of movements in dance provided the stimulus for a recent art project on 'Futurism'. The co-ordinator has a clear view of the standards being achieved. Basic assessment procedures are in place and there is some documentation to guide staff in their planning. Identified staff training needs are being met and the recent input to dance has been successful in raising standards in the subject. The school now has good facilities for physical education – a significant improvement on the last inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

Provision in art and design in Years 3 to 6 is **very good**. No judgement is made on provision in Years 1 and 2 as there was insufficient time to gather evidence in those years.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in art and design are well above average for the older pupils.
- Pupils' creativity is skilfully extended in their art and design activities.
- Teaching is good; attitudes are very good.
- Pupils are given good opportunities to evaluate their own and other pupils' work.
- Cross-curricular links are very effectively developed.
- The co-ordinator is highly effective.

Commentary

- 78 Standards of work are well above those normally found in Years 3 to 6 and pupils achieve very well because of the high quality of the teaching and the positive influence of the knowledgeable co-ordinator who has specialist skills in the subject. Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject. They are encouraged to take control of their own learning. From a young age they make their own decisions when selecting tools and materials or evaluating one another's work. They are encouraged to think of themselves as artists and the focus of the lesson often takes pupils' work as its starting point, linked to that of famous artists. As a result, pupils are used to discussing features of artwork and honing their critical skills when comparing different styles. Much of the work is planned to provide pupils not only with the

skills appropriate to particular media, but to enable them to experience as broad a range of opportunities as possible.

- 79 Some of the work seen is of particularly high quality, such as the recently-produced icons on wood. This involved a significant amount of background research and experimentation with materials and colours to achieve the desired effect. Other recent work includes Indian designs, where pupils had to make their own paint from berries, a textile frieze where Year 6 pupils recounted the Hansel and Gretel story for Year 2, imaginative sculptures involving clusters of pencils in Years 3 and 4, charcoal sketches to illustrate the 'Lady of Shalott' in Year 5 and artwork using natural materials after Goldsworthy in Years 3 and 4. Links with other subjects, such as literacy, music, religious education and history, are used very effectively to enrich pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. For example, a particularly effective study of 'Futurism' involved pupils in the recording of physical movement and body-line, based upon detailed observation of physical movement during dance lessons. There are very good opportunities for using ICT as an aid to design and the Internet as an information source.
- 80 The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as the others, largely because of the good support they receive. Pupils with particular talents in art have very good opportunities to extend their skills. Teachers celebrate pupils' success in the classroom and corridor displays. They reflect a broad and imaginative curriculum and promote pupils' self-esteem well.
- 81 Resources are used very well. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. There is a scheme of work which includes appropriate emphasis on creativity – a current focus for development in the school. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of artists are well-developed. Their enthusiasm is evident when pupils talk about how they feel about art and their shared work with others. Art and design is a strength of the school at present.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**.

Commentary

- 82 The school has a good curriculum to support pupils' personal development. It includes sessions on world affairs and relationships, covers sex education and education of the dangers of drug misuse, and provides pupils with good information to help them make decisions about their own lives. Specific lessons and focused assemblies are a regular feature within the curriculum and are used effectively. In addition to the specialist lessons, there are good opportunities in other subjects to promote personal development. This is a strength of the school. Pupils' views are sought through the School Council and pupils are given good opportunities to listen, think, and speak as they explore a variety of issues relevant to their own lives. They consider how to develop understanding of themselves and the way they live their lives, and how to deal with difficult situations that might arise, such as the consequences of aggressive behaviour.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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