

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **TENTERDEN C of E JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Tenterden, Kent

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118671

Headteacher: Mrs J Roberts

Lead inspector: Mr P Sudworth

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> February 2004

Inspection number: 258093

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:	Voluntary Controlled
School category:	Junior School
Age range of pupils:	7 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	338
School address:	Recreation Ground Road Tenterden Kent
Postcode:	TN30 6RA
Telephone number:	01580 763717
Fax number:	01580 766273
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs H Maple
Date of previous inspection:	14 September 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This larger than average junior school with 12 classes is situated in the centre of Tenterden and has 338 boys and girls on roll aged 7 to 11 years. There are many more boys than girls in Year 4. Otherwise, there is a good gender balance in the year groups. Almost all pupils are of white British heritage, with a very small number of pupils from other ethnic groups. There are no pupils with English as an additional language. The school serves an area of largely private houses and two local authority housing areas. The number of parents who apply for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is about average, and eight pupils have statements because they have more profound learning problems. In total, 49 pupils have special educational needs and include pupils with learning, social, emotional and behavioural problems and autism. The percentage of pupils joining or leaving the school at times other than the start of the academic year is below average. Overall, the attainment of the pupils on entry is above average in communication skills, although their skills in mathematics are not as consistently strong on entry. During the inspection one member of staff was on maternity leave.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2700	Mr P Sudworth	Lead inspector	Science; Music; Personal, social and health education; English as an additional language; Religious education.
9457	Ms G Bindoff	Lay inspector	
20003	Mrs S Metcalfe	Team inspector	Information and communication technology; Art and design; Design and technology; Special Educational Needs.
31029	Mr P Thrussell	Team inspector	English.
30717	Mr G Tompsett	Team inspector	Mathematics; Geography; History; Physical education.

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services  
 Anglia House  
 Clarendon Court  
 Carrs Road  
 Cheadle  
 Stockport  
 SK8 2LA

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>11</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>29</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Tenterden C of E Junior School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils in a friendly, caring and welcoming atmosphere where there is a good emphasis on inclusion.** Standards are mostly average. In some aspects of work they are above average. Whilst teaching overall is satisfactory, with a significant number of lessons that are taught well, curriculum arrangements do not ensure a good balance of activities. Pupils mostly achieve satisfactorily. In most lessons, pupils show good attitudes to their work and behave well. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well in reading, speaking and listening, history, art and design and in information and communication technology, but they underachieve in writing, particularly the boys, and standards in handwriting and presentation of work are unsatisfactory.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, though pupils who have more academic potential are not always challenged enough.
- There is a good provision for extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport and the arts, but there are some weaknesses in ensuring all pupils receive their curriculum entitlement.
- The start to the day is too leisurely.
- Monitoring of standards and pupils' progress is not rigorous enough.
- The governing body is well led and plays a key role in the school's work.
- Pupils are well cared for, relationships are very good and most pupils are receptive to learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good, though their awareness of different cultures could be improved.
- There are good links with the community.

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection, though the range of curriculum experiences is not so well assured. There is an improved provision for pupils with special educational needs and the individual education plans are of a better quality. There are more opportunities for pupils to engage in design and technology and to investigate in science. Significantly more parents than at the time of the last inspection state that they are not kept well enough informed about the school and their children's progress.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 results

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

*The grades in the similar school column above have been altered by one grade to reflect pupils' internal test scores at the beginning of Year 3, the large number of pupils with special educational needs, including the high number of pupils with statements of special educational need and the fact that 20 of the Year 2 pupils were not at the school in Year 6 when comparisons were made.*

**Pupils' achieve soundly in the main, though boys do not perform as well as the girls.** There is underachievement in writing, including handwriting, but strengths in reading and speaking and listening. Pupils attain above average standards in ICT, art and design and in history. Standards that were inspected in other subjects were average. Given the results obtained at the end of the infant school, there is some underachievement and this is largely attributable to inconsistencies in the performance of boys. By contrast, girls have frequently done well.

**Pupils' personal qualities are good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall** and their cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have good attitudes to school and to their work and they behave well. Attendance is above average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils.** The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in ICT, science and history and pupils are often stimulated well in these subjects. Reading is taught well. However, teachers do not always keep pupils interested and, whilst the pupils normally adopt good attitudes to work, in some cases they can become bored, particularly boys and especially in a sequence of lessons that involve written activities. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils and adopt a calm manner. Lessons are rarely interrupted for bad behaviour.

The curriculum is satisfactorily organised, though the amount of time given to the range of subjects is inconsistent in different classes. There is good provision for extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport, in which the school is very successful. The staff provides a good level of care for the pupils' welfare and guidance but pupils are not sufficiently aware of how they can improve their work. The school has satisfactory links with its parents and good links with other schools and the community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the headteacher, senior staff and subject leaders is mostly satisfactory.** There is a good ethos in the school and a friendly atmosphere, which is conducive to pupils' learning and a good team spirit. The governing body has a good perception of the school's strengths and its areas for development and it is well led by its chair. It is currently fulfilling its statutory responsibilities, though some risk assessments are not detailed enough.

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

Most parents have positive views of the school and feel comfortable in bringing any concerns forward but many feel that communication about the school's work and their children's progress could be improved. Inspectors support those views. Parents are very supportive of their children's education. Most pupils enjoy school, though significant numbers state that they do not always find their lessons interesting. They find the teachers friendly and supportive.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve standards in writing, including handwriting, particularly for the boys and ensure boys do better in their other work.
- Ensure that more capable pupils are challenged more consistently in their work.
- Ensure that there is an effective curriculum balance in all classes and that better use is made of taught time.
- Monitor standards of work and pupils' progress more rigorously to ensure greater consistency in results.\*
- Improve the provision for pupils' cultural development, particularly in respect of life in a multi-cultural society.

\* *The school is aware of this particular issue.*



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in subjects

Standards in the core subjects are average in the main with some above average aspects and with a significant percentage of pupils operating at the higher levels. Pupils' achievements are **satisfactory overall** with standards **above average** in some aspects of work. Girls do better than the boys in much of their work.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The performance of boys has been, and still is, inferior to that of the girls.
- Standards in writing, including handwriting, are not high enough.
- Pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills are above average.
- Pupils' attainments in ICT, history and art and design are above average.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

#### Commentary

- 1 Attainment on entry is above average. Standards of attainment by age 11 are broadly similar to those at the time of the last inspection in English, mathematics and science, except in writing, including handwriting, in which standards are not as high. Pupils have more opportunities to devise their own experiments in science.
- 2 Pupils' performance in national tests in the last few years is marked by inconsistency in English and mathematics. Results in mathematics in 2003, for example, rose significantly but they were counterbalanced by a fall away in performance in English. Boys do not achieve as well as the girls in the school. Whilst they have been attaining more highly in English than boys nationally, based on the latest three year average, they have been doing less well than them in mathematics and science. Girls by contrast have been attaining more highly than girls nationally in English, mathematics and science. In English, the gap in national test performances over time in favour of the girls compared with the school's boys is almost double that nationally. It is largely the performance of boys in the school that lets down the school's overall results, although boys' attainment in national test in mathematics has shown much improvement since a low point in 2000. Boys under-perform against the girls in both mathematics and science and against the national trend. Overall, the combined results of all Year 6 pupils in the core subjects have been just above the national average. The trend of improvement has been broadly in line with the national trend of improvement, although results by comparison with assessments at age seven have been well below average, as result of the boys' performance in English, mathematics and science.
- 3 Currently, pupils achieve soundly in English overall, although the difference in attainment in favour of girls continues. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening and in reading is above average and they achieve soundly in these aspects. Pupils' attainment in writing is average but pupils are often careless with punctuation, spelling and grammar. Handwriting is frequently untidy with a lack of care in presentation and it is often in an unjoined style. Pupils' achievement in writing is unsatisfactory and teachers' expectations are not high enough in this aspect of English. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily in mathematics and standards are currently average, though with a significant proportion of the pupils working near or at the higher level. There is evidence of the improvement in mathematics standards continuing. Pupils' factual knowledge in science is above average but their skills in scientific investigation are average. Attainment is average overall and pupils make satisfactory achievements in the subject.

- 4 Pupils' skills in ICT are much improved since the last inspection and are above average. Pupils achieve well in this aspect of work because they have good experiences with a range of ICT equipment, including video cameras. They have a good familiarity in the use of whiteboards on to which are projected the computer programs. They use these effectively and this resource helps them to develop a very good level of confidence. Many pupils have home computers, which support their developing skills and, as a result, they are very familiar in accessing and using different programs and the Internet. They make good use of ICT in other subjects. Pupils also achieve well in art and design and history and standards are above average, shown in the fine detail of their observational work in art and in their knowledge and understanding in history.
- 5 In other subjects, standards are average in design and technology, an improvement on the previous inspection judgement, and meet local expectations in religious education. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in both subjects. No judgements were made in geography, music and physical education because they were not a major focus in the inspection.
- 6 The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good and improved on the previous inspection. Because of the care with which their needs are identified, and the use of good quality individual educational plans and carefully graded targets, teachers and supporting adults plan a range of activities that support their learning needs. The development of their language and communication skills is particularly good and they achieve well. The short, highly focused small group and individual work is especially effective in their good progress. Pupils who are more capable achieve soundly in English, mathematics and science, although in other subjects, not enough is done to extend their thinking skills and to challenge their abilities. The small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups make similar rates of progress as other pupils. Pupils with special talents in sport and music have good opportunities to develop them.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.4 (28.9)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.8 (26.8)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	28.5 (29.0)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 72 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

**Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils enjoy school, have **good** attitudes to their learning and behave **well**. The provision for their personal development is **good**. Attendance and punctuality are **good**.

**Strengths and weaknesses:**

- Relationships between the pupils and between the pupils and the adults in the school are very good and help pupils to be confident and to gain self-esteem.
- Pupils are happy at school. They have good attitudes to their learning and enjoy the activities the school provides.
- Pupils' behaviour is good because there is a consistent approach to the management of behaviour throughout the school.
- Good quality assemblies provide very good opportunities for pupils to reflect on the spiritual aspects of their lives and to develop moral values.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is not systematically planned or evaluated. This results in gaps in provision, especially in aspects of pupils' cultural development.

- Attendance registers are not monitored systematically enough to identify specific patterns of absence and to facilitate prompt action.
- 7 Pupils' attendance is good and above the national average. Most pupils arrive promptly for the start of school and the school has good procedures for improving punctuality. Parents have responded well to encouragement to bring their children to school on time. The school does not have effective systems to make an early identification of pupils who develop a pattern of absence or to assess the attendance of different groups of pupils and the impact this has on learning.
  - 8 Pupils like school and have good attitudes to their learning. They particularly enjoy practical lessons, such as physical education and art, but find some more formal lessons uninteresting. When they have challenging work to do, they are enthusiastic and keen to find answers. They enjoy activities that offer them a challenge. Pupils enjoy a good range of activities outside lessons, including sports clubs and music groups. These opportunities enrich pupils' experience and contribute to the development of pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem.
  - 9 The pupils have very good relationships with each other and with the adults. There is a friendly, sociable atmosphere in which pupils feel their efforts are valued. All pupils are fully included in the life of the school and pupils with special educational needs are very well supported. These good features contribute to a good environment for learning. Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school because staff have consistently high expectations and manage pupils well. Support for pupils with disruptive behaviour is good, but it was found necessary to exclude one pupil for a fixed-period in the year before the inspection to maintain the good standard of discipline. The school has good procedures to deal with incidents of bullying and pupils say that bullying is very rare. Some parents believe it to be an issue and that incidents are not resolved effectively. This is because there is not always sufficient communication between home and school to ensure that everyone involved is aware of what action is taken, what support is given to pupils and how the situation is monitored.
  - 10 Pupils make good gains in their spiritual, social and moral development and achieve satisfactorily in their cultural development. Assemblies are planned very well to give pupils very good opportunities to reflect on spiritual aspects of their lives and moral values. Pupils listen intently in assemblies and have good opportunities to be involved actively. They understand that their actions have an impact on other people and they show respect for other people's beliefs. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have responsible attitudes towards younger pupils and to their roles in the school community. Pupils show care for each other and co-operate well in their work, when given the opportunity. The school does not make consistent provision for pupils' personal development over time and this leads to some gaps in pupils' experience, especially in their knowledge and appreciation of the diverse cultures within Britain.
  - 11 Staff work hard to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are confident and have high self-esteem. Adults provide these pupils with good role models, particularly when working with them in small groups. Pupils, whose individual educational programmes have targets for emotional, social or behavioural needs, are given good support to achieve them. They are carefully grouped for activities to enable them to see good practice in social skills. In the better lessons, teachers use positive behaviour management strategies, which further support the pupils' social skills and progress.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence	
School data	4.9

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.2

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.*

## Exclusions

### *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	292	1	
White – Irish	2		
White – any other White background	11		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2		
Mixed – White and Black African	1		
Mixed – White and Asian	1		
Mixed – any other mixed background	2		
Black or Black British – African	1		
No ethnic group recorded	6		

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

**The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils.** The quality of teaching, assessment and learning is satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactorily organised, though the amount of time given to the range of subjects in different classes is not always assured. The wide range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport, in which the school is very successful, supports the pupils' interest in school. Adults provide a good level of care for the pupils' welfare and guidance, but pupils are not sufficiently aware of how they can improve their work. The school has satisfactory links with its parents and good links with other schools and the community.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching, assessment and learning are **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Lessons observed in ICT, science, history and physical education were of good quality.
- Reading is taught well and pupils make good progress in this aspect of English.
- Pupils do not take enough pride in their written work.
- Teachers make good provision for pupils with different capabilities in English and mathematics but they do not challenge more capable pupils well enough in some other subjects.

### Commentary

12 Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The presentation of many lessons is good but teaching is judged satisfactory overall, because the teaching of English and mathematics is mainly satisfactory, as are assessment arrangements and the quality of planning. Pupils' attitudes to work are often good, including those of the boys, and they become particularly well motivated when teaching is stimulating. However, boys in particular can become bored when the pace of lessons is slow or the content routine and uninteresting. Pupils are well behaved, try hard and many are keen to contribute answers. They produce a satisfactory

amount of work in their follow-up activities, but the presentation of their work frequently lacks sufficient pride.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	6 (14%)	18 (42%)	17 (40%)	2 (4%)	0 (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 The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school. It is consistently good or better in some classes, satisfactory in others and of mixed quality in the remainder. In total, it is very similar in quality to that reported at the previous inspection. Teaching observed in ICT was consistently good and good overall in science and history and in the two observations made in physical education. Teachers make satisfactory use of the national numeracy and literacy strategies, although in some mathematics lessons, there is little use of a mental session at the start. Reading is taught well and teachers provide good opportunities to develop further pupils' above average speaking and listening skills in purposeful discussions. By contrast, insufficient attention is given to improving writing skills, including handwriting. There is an over-emphasis on grammatical exercises and other text book work that does little to extend the pupils and capture their imagination. In some classes, there is also an overuse of worksheets, as in science, which require little of the pupils' thinking. Significantly, almost one half of the pupils in the pre-inspection questionnaire stated that they do not always enjoy their lessons.
- 14 Teachers have good relationships with the pupils and adopt a calm manner. Lessons are rarely interrupted for bad behaviour. They manage the pupils well. They praise the pupils judiciously for their efforts, encourage them to try hard and pupils usually respond. Routines are well established, although the first part of the day is often sluggish and too leisurely and pupils are not always profitably engaged in new learning. Lessons begin promptly.
- 15 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. They are well supported in class by teaching assistants, who are usually well briefed about their role. The teaching assistants encourage the pupils to answer in class discussions and the pupils' self-esteem is developed well when they contribute answers. The learning support assistants support them effectively in the follow-up activities, so that they can succeed in their work. They also provide well for them in the small group situations when they are withdrawn from class to follow structured programmes designed to improve their knowledge of letter sounds, which prove effective in practice in developing their reading and writing.
- 16 Good attention is given to matching the work to pupils' prior attainment in English and mathematics lessons and those who are more capable are well challenged through the setting arrangements in mathematics. In subjects other than English and mathematics, there is little evidence of teachers challenging more able pupils with increased demands. Pupils with particular talents in sport and music have good opportunities to extend their skills through extra-curricular activities, such as competing in matches with other schools and through the various music activities, such as the choir, recorder groups and instrumental lessons.
- 17 Teachers make effective use of modern technology. The use of whiteboards, linked to projection facilities, speed up the flow of lessons when they are being used. In a Year 5 religious education lesson about a Hindu festival, the well-prepared and colourful presentation using whiteboards gripped the pupils' attention and gave them a better insight into the complex meaning of the festival. In other lessons, straightforward delivery of content, such as that of the process of pollination, lacked the stimulation of video clips to enliven and support the children's learning and understanding.

- 18 The balance of time to different aspects of work within individual lessons is usually good. However, sometimes in mathematics and English lessons, the planned timing goes astray. There is then not enough time to conclude the lesson in a meaningful way to extend what has been taught or to consolidate learning with different examples to ensure the pupils have grasped the point of the lesson.
- 19 Some teaching is particularly imaginative. A very good balance of activity, meaningful discussion and teacher explanation in a Year 6 science lesson held the pupils' attention very well and they worked hard as they planned and set up their experiments to test the effect of fertilisers on plants. Similarly in a very good Year 4 history lesson, the teacher gripped the pupils' imagination and interest from the outset, as they were given 'jobs' for an archaeological dig, before discussing the kind of sources that can be used to obtain information about the past. The follow-up, when they discussed and interpreted mystery artefacts, equally sustained their enthusiasm. They learned well as a result. Teachers make good use of subject specific vocabulary, such as 'artefacts' in history, 'variables' in science and correct vocabulary when discussing their learning in ICT and this develops pupils' general vocabulary. Teachers generally use resources well to help pupils understand. Homework is used appropriately to extend the pupils' learning with satisfactory demands given their ages.
- 20 Assessment arrangements are satisfactory. There are good records of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science, though there has been little development in the recording of key skills in other subjects. The school is beginning to strengthen its systems to monitor individual pupils' progress more thoroughly. Pupils have individual targets in English and these work well, but they are not yet developed as thoroughly in mathematics. The school analyses the results of national tests satisfactorily and makes satisfactory use of internal tests. The individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are of good quality and shared with pupils so that they understand what they need to do to improve. Many of the pupils with special educational needs achieve well as a result of these arrangements. The quality of marking is satisfactory. It is up to date and some, but insufficient, gives pointers as to how pupils can improve their work.

## The curriculum

The school ensures that all pupils have a **satisfactory** range and quality of learning opportunities. It provides them with **good** opportunities for curriculum enrichment. The school's accommodation and resources support learning **well**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- A good use of visits, visitors and events helps to bring the curriculum alive and a good range of out-of-school activities complements these well.
- The school is developing exciting ways of linking different curricular areas.
- Good accommodation is used well to support learning.
- Time is not always used effectively.
- Pupils' entitlement to a balanced curriculum is not assured.

## Commentary

- 21 A full range of subjects is taught and the curriculum satisfactorily meets pupils' needs. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been soundly implemented, although the school has yet to monitor rigorously the provision in order to improve achievement further. Schemes of work in other subjects mainly follow national guidelines. These provide a secure foundation for teaching and learning.

- 22 Time-tabling and the school's use of time have not been fully monitored to help ensure the best provision in all subject areas. A necessary, but heavy, emphasis on literacy, numeracy and science has resulted in some imbalance to the curriculum. Other subjects, for example music, religious education and personal, social and health education do not always receive sufficient time, and in some instances are not covered regularly. This detracts from pupils' full equality of access and opportunity within the curriculum. Curriculum balance is not so well assured as at the previous inspection. There is some lack of variety for pupils throughout the day with the mornings largely given over to literacy and numeracy. Up to half an hour is provided at the start of the day for early morning activities. Whilst these sessions are occasionally used productively for work with pupils who have special educational needs and pupils settle quickly, they frequently lack a good structure and make for a fairly slow start to the day. A similar, but shorter time, is provided after lunch.
- 23 A good initiative that the school has recently followed is its whole school study of Tenterden. This has helped to establish good cross-curricular links, and to make learning more exciting, relevant and purposeful. It has also helped to develop stronger links with the community and with parents. The project's effectiveness in developing specific subject skills at appropriate and challenging levels has yet to be evaluated.
- 24 A good range of visits and visitors supports the curriculum well, particularly in helping to bring history alive. Visiting musicians and a science theatre group have enhanced pupils' experiences in those subjects. Additionally, participation in music festivals and a school arts' week provide a good focus for learning in these areas. A good range of clubs supports learning in sports and the arts. Pupils have good opportunities to take part in competitive sport, and have achieved some worthy successes.
- 25 The school is adequately staffed and the job share arrangements work effectively. Teachers have good qualifications for the work that they do and the age-groups that they teach. They have good opportunities for further professional training to keep abreast of new ideas. A good match of support staff to the curriculum helps to ensure the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Learning support assistants are particularly competent in their support of lower attaining pupils. Overall good accommodation and resources, including a computer suite, new group rooms, outside play areas and a swimming pool, support the curriculum and pupils' learning well. However, the three mobile classrooms are cramped and not in a very good condition and do not make for a good learning environment.
- 26 Provision for special educational needs pupils is very good. Their needs are identified through a range of high quality and thorough assessments and good quality individual education programmes provide carefully planned targets. Those who have a statement of need receive full support in line with that statement, including support from outside agencies. The learning support staff are well skilled and work effectively in partnership with teachers to support their needs and are monitored by the special educational needs co-ordinator, and this adds to the quality of provision for these children.

### Care, guidance and support

The school has **very caring** attitudes towards pupils and the **very good** relationships between pupils and staff ensure that pupils are able to feel valued and secure. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they are **well guided and supported** but improvement is needed in the guidance given to other pupils about how to improve their learning and personal development.

### Strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships between pupils and staff support pupils very well and help establish a positive environment for learning.



- Very good induction arrangements for pupils entering Year 3 help them to make a confident start.
- The very caring attitudes of staff provide good role models for the pupils and help them to feel happy and secure at school.
- Good guidance and support for pupils with special education needs help them to achieve well.
- Assessment information is not used systematically enough to help pupils, other than pupils with special educational needs, to improve their achievement in their learning or their personal development.
- Governors are not rigorous enough in ensuring that all requirements for health and safety are fully met.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to make known their views about the school.

## **Commentary**

- 27 The school knows pupils and their families well and staff have very caring attitudes. Pupils respond positively to the care and personal support that they receive and feel happy and secure at school. The very good relationships between the pupils and the adults in the school establish a good environment for learning. The strong emphasis the school places on the inclusion of all pupils ensures that pupils and parents feel that they are treated fairly.
- 28 Provision for child protection is good. Staff are well trained and procedures for reporting concerns are clear. Improvement is needed in the planning for pupils' personal development and health education to ensure that they are as well prepared as they can be for making decisions about their personal lives, including ways to keep themselves safe. The school premises are secure and governors are actively involved in monitoring health and safety aspects of the building and grounds. Good provision is made for first-aid. However, governors are not rigorous enough in ensuring that risk assessments are in place for all aspects of school life, and this reduces the effectiveness of their provision for the safety of pupils, staff and visitors.
- 29 Some aspects of the guidance and support pupils receive are very good and contribute well to pupils' achievement. There are very good arrangements in place to help pupils settle confidently into Year 3 on their transfer from the Infant School. They have very good opportunities to get to know the school, the headteacher and the class teachers before they arrive. Close links between staff at the Infant and Junior schools enable information about pupils and what they have achieved to be shared effectively so that class teachers in Year 3 know where pupils are in their learning at the start of the academic year.
- 30 Support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs are also good and contribute to the pupils' good achievement. Their progress is carefully recorded and monitored by the co-ordinator for special educational needs and the support given by learning support assistants is matched well to their individual education plans. Guidance is not used as effectively to help other pupils' improve their achievement. Assessment information is not used systematically enough to identify what pupils need to do next and pupils' personal development is not tracked throughout the school.
- 31 Pupils' views do not contribute sufficiently to the future direction of the school. Although there is an active school council, there are not systematic procedures to ensure that there is good liaison between the elected members of the council and other pupils in their respective classes. Many pupils are not aware of what the school council does or what issues have been discussed and therefore, do not contribute their ideas. There is some good practice - for example pupils' views about their work in art have been gained through a questionnaire - but this is not part of a systematic procedure to find out what pupils' experience of learning is like as a means to inform future planning.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Parents are actively involved in the life of the school and the links between home and school are **satisfactory** with some very good features. **Good** links with other schools and with the local community enrich pupils' experience.

### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good links with parents of pupils with special educational needs contribute well to pupils' good achievement.
- Parents make a good contribution to the life of the school.
- Good links with the community enrich pupils' experience.
- Good liaison with the infant and secondary schools helps pupils to transfer smoothly between phases of their education.
- Governors do not have a good overview of the partnership with parents because they do not have systematic procedures to gain parents' views or to assess the effectiveness of the communication between home and school.

### **Commentary**

- 32 The school provides satisfactory information to parents about its day-to-day life and about what pupils will learn. Opportunities for parents to gain information about how their children are getting on are also satisfactory and the school is beginning to give parents more details about achievement in relation to National Curriculum levels and expectations. There are some inconsistencies in homework, especially in marking, and some parents do not have a clear idea of what their children should do or how they get on. Governors have not assessed the partnership between home and school in order to improve communication and help parents to be more effective in supporting their children's learning.
- 33 There is a supportive and close link between the school and parents of pupils with special educational needs. Information is shared very well and there are very good relationships between parents, the co-ordinator for special needs and learning support assistants, which ensure that everyone involved knows what pupils are learning and what they need to do to improve. Parents of these pupils have very good opportunities for consultation. This very good partnership contributes to the pupils' good achievement.
- 34 The school has a friendly, welcoming atmosphere and parents say that they feel comfortable approaching the school when they have a question or something they wish to discuss. There are good opportunities for informal contact between parents and teachers. Parent volunteers make a very good contribution to the life of the school and to pupils' learning by hearing pupils read, supporting arts projects and helping with other activities. Parents also make a significant contribution to raising funds for new resources for learning and to organising social events, which successfully bring the school community together.
- 35 Parents do not have enough opportunities to contribute to plans for school improvement. Although most parents have positive views of the school, a significant minority have concerns that they do not feel are effectively dealt with. Governors do not have regular procedures for consulting parents and taking account of their views. In consequence, they do not have evidence of parents' concerns and are not informed well enough to include parents' views in their decisions about the future direction of the school.
- 36 Links with the local community are good and contribute well to pupils' learning. The school makes good use of local resources and pupils are able to contribute well to the life of the town. The recent school project on Tenterden is a very good example of the collaboration between pupils and members of the community to extend pupils' understanding of the town's history and current life. Year 6 pupils had a very good opportunity to share their learning with parents, pupils from the infant school and people from the town when they presented their

completed project. The project enriched pupils' experience and gave a very good opportunity for pupils to gain self-confidence. The pupils were justly proud of their achievement.

- 37 The school also has good, improving links with other schools, which enrich the curriculum and help pupils to transfer smoothly between phases of their education. Staff and pupils from the local secondary school contributed to a week-long arts project based on a circus theme, which pupils had very much enjoyed. Good professional links with staff at the infant and secondary schools, for example in the teaching of mathematics, ensure good continuity in pupils' learning and a link with a local special school effectively supports work with pupils with special educational needs. Very good induction arrangements and liaison between schools ensure that pupils have confidence when they transfer into Year 3 and Year 7.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory** and the governance of the school is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body is well led and fulfils its statutory duties effectively.
- There is effective long-term and day-to-day financial management.
- Governors are well aware of the school's strengths and areas for development and challenge and support the school effectively.
- Monitoring of the curriculum and of teaching and learning is not rigorous enough.

### Commentary

- 38 The strengths in the governing body identified in the previous inspection report have been maintained. Governors are highly committed and continue to make a very positive and effective contribution to the running of the school. They are regular visitors to the school and to the classrooms and, consequently, they have a good knowledge of the school's work. They attend training courses, have carried out a critical self-review of their work and have their own development plan. The hard working and perceptive chair of governors leads the governors very well in their role of critical friends. They are not, however, aware of the dissatisfactions and concerns of a small minority of dissatisfied parents because parents have not taken up the opportunities that have been provided to meet with them. The governors have not formalised sufficiently risk assessment procedures to cover all aspects of school life. The governing body's committee structure works effectively and written terms of reference guide the work of committees effectively.
- 39 Leadership is satisfactory and broadly similar to that at the last inspection. The leadership of the headteacher is satisfactory. The headteacher forms an effective partnership with the deputy head and each has clearly assigned roles. A good ethos is created and there is a good sense of staff and pupils caring for one another. The imaginative assemblies, led by the headteacher, contribute much to this good ethos. Teachers ensure that the school is an inclusive school and that there are good opportunities for pupils who have different interests. The headteacher works harmoniously with staff and all staff understand their individual roles, although not all staff have been equally effective in knowing what is taking place throughout the school and with a clear view about standards.
- 40 The work of the senior management team is satisfactory, though it has not been sufficiently alert to aspects of monitoring, particularly about standards and curriculum opportunities. Members of the senior management team have not ensured that there is an effective and rigorous plan and routine for monitoring teaching and learning. Teachers have not had enough regular time to fulfil their leadership roles successfully. As a result, they have not been rigorous enough in checking the regularity of teaching and the allocation of curriculum time to some subjects, such as religious education and music and personal, social and health education.

- 41 Management in the school is satisfactory. Performance management has been organised effectively with assigned duties to different members of the senior management team. Some of the teaching staff's targets are linked clearly to whole school issues for improvement. The whole staff is involved in the process for determining priorities on the school improvement plan, although parents' and pupils' views are not yet fully included in this process. Teachers track progress through national tests and are beginning to be more perceptive about tracking pupils' progress over time. The subject leaders for English and mathematics are more to the fore in this knowledge and have identified some shortcomings in the achievements of average pupils in mathematics. The staff are given good opportunities for professional development and new staff are inducted well to the school. There are good links with a teacher-training institution and the school makes a good contribution to initial teacher training. The workload of staff is managed satisfactorily.
- 42 The school improvement plan is satisfactory with indicative time-scales, success criteria, lead personnel and identifies current concerns in standards, though it is weaker in its long-term view and in the way the success of the different initiatives are to be measured.
- 43 Financial planning is good and the finance committee takes its duties very seriously. The budget is managed well on a day-to-day basis. Good account is taken of best value principles when purchases are made and the governing body considers various options when it plans the financial year ahead. Effective budgeting means that the school has managed its funds to support initiatives, such as raising standards and improving the premises and facilities.
- 44 The quality of leadership by the special educational needs co-ordinator is very good. She monitors and assesses the quality of work of all support staff very well. Her very good quality assessments help track the progress of all pupils with special educational needs very well. Very good links are maintained with external agencies. She supports staff well with helpful advice and guidance. The work of the special educational needs co-ordinator is a key factor in the good achievements that pupils with special educational needs make.
- 45 The harmony and teamwork, the very good relationships and staff's willingness to provide extra curricular provision to cater for the pupils' interests, including residential weeks, are key factors in the school's successes. These factors, help to produce a thinking school that is constantly alert to improving itself. Combined with the good level of involvement by the governing body in the school's work, there is a keen sense of purpose in wanting to do the best for its pupils. The absence of consistent monitoring has been an impediment to pupils' sustained good progress.

**Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	694,790
Total expenditure	633,689
Expenditure per pupil	1,944

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	49,018
Balance carried forward to the next	61,101

# PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking and listening and in reading are above average.
- There is some underachievement in writing and pupils do not take enough care with handwriting.
- Lessons are prepared effectively and learning resources are used well.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and have positive attitudes to learning.
- The monitoring of lessons has not been effective in improving the quality and consistency of teaching and learning.
- The use of the library is underdeveloped.

#### Commentary

- 46 Standards in Year 6 overall are average. Although pupils achieve satisfactorily in speaking and listening, and in reading, and standards are above average, the above average standards in writing reported on entry to the school, are not maintained. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, due to the effective support they are given in lessons to reach their literacy targets.
- 47 Most pupils speak confidently, and readily answer questions about what they are doing in school. Good opportunities are provided to promote speaking and listening. Pupils are paired up and are often asked to discuss points with their neighbour. In the better lessons seen, questioning expected reasoned responses as much as factual answers, and this approach helped to promote discussion. The recent whole-school cross-curricular study of Tenterden has provided good opportunities for pupils to use their skills in a planned and more formal way. This was shown well in the film made by a Year 6 class, in which local people were interviewed. In one Year 6 lesson, where pupils were debating the issue of toll roads, higher attaining pupils, especially, listened carefully to each other and were able to develop their own ideas further.
- 48 Quiet reading times and regular guided reading sessions provide opportunities for pupils to develop the skills of comprehension and inference and are well demonstrated by higher attaining Year 6 pupils, many of whom are avid readers. However, a particular weakness is pupils' knowledge in locating non-fiction books. The school library is used infrequently by pupils, with teachers themselves frequently withdrawing books for aspects of study. All classrooms have an adequate supply of fiction books for pupils to choose from. However, there are few displays of books, either in the library or in classrooms, to promote a greater enthusiasm for reading and to encourage pupils to read a wider range of books and authors.
- 49 Whilst leadership and management are satisfactory overall, insufficient monitoring of lessons has resulted in some inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning, and, therefore, in the progress pupils make, particularly in writing. The school now tracks individual progress and is beginning to recognise this underachievement. Further support is given to help pupils, through ability groupings in lessons and other focused group initiatives. However, the reasons for this underachievement have yet to be more fully identified by the school. The skills of punctuation, spelling, grammar and handwriting are taught consistently. The expectation that these skills should be applied more fully and appropriately to writing, both in English and other subjects, is not sufficiently apparent. This is particularly the case in handwriting where, by Year 6, some pupils do not take enough care, and are still writing in an

unjoined script and frequently untidily. Pupils often prepare their writing in draft form, but do not sufficiently plan their work or look at ways of making it more structured and interesting. The school recognises this.

- 50 The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Two very good lessons and an unsatisfactory one were among those seen. The very good lessons provided a quality of questioning that helped pupils to further their own understanding and teachers to assess this. Very good support was given to pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to be fully included in the learning. The planning was thorough and indicated good subject knowledge. Information and communication technology was used well and appropriately to support pupils' learning. Good pace encouraged pupils to work hard and to progress well in their learning. As a result, a Year 5 class was able to draw out the features of myths and legends from texts of varying difficulty. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, the lesson lacked pace and challenge. Expectations were too low to promote effective learning. Lessons are generally well prepared. Resources are at hand so that the lesson's progress is uninterrupted and little time is wasted. Teachers manage lessons well. They form good relationships with their classes, which result in pupils' good behaviour and their strong desire to learn.
- 51 Pupils mostly know the individual targets that have been set for them. Although these reflect the short-term improvement pupils are expected to make, they are not always sufficiently challenging, or focused enough on the level towards which they are expected to be working. Marking of pupils' work is variable. At its best it refers to learning objectives and targets, informs pupils how well they are doing, and gives pointers for improvement. Although time is given at the end of lessons to make a check on how well pupils have got on in lessons, little time is given for pupils to evaluate this learning for themselves, with opportunities, for example, to discuss what they have found easy or difficult.

### **Literacy across the curriculum**

- 52 The development of literacy across the curriculum is good. Attempts are made to ensure that pupils are offered opportunities to develop their literacy skills in other subjects. However, the planning for this is not yet sufficiently systematic. The opportunities provided do not always take enough account of the particular levels at which individual pupils are working. A recent initiative to link literacy skills with other curricular areas in a whole school study of Tenterden has been received enthusiastically by pupils. Good use is made of computers for word-processing and setting out work with an audience in mind.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- In the 2003 tests, the pupils' performance was above the national average and test results were improved.
- Good evaluation of teaching, learning, progress, standards and planning by co-ordinator and head teacher, though subsequent action is not very effective in raising standards.
- Recently there has been improved consistency in the teaching of the subject, as a result of staff training.
- Some inconsistencies are still evident in the quality of lessons.

### **Commentary;**

- 53 Currently, standards of pupils' work are in line with national expectations and most pupils achieve satisfactorily, though the current Year 6 group is not quite as able mathematically as

the previous group. Nevertheless, there is some underachievement given the results at age seven, particularly amongst the boys. Pupils' overall attainment is similar to that reported previously. Results at age 11 have fluctuated widely in the last few years but they were above average in 2003 with a larger percentage of pupils than that nationally reaching the higher level and fewer pupils not reaching the expected standard.

- 54 Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory and similar to the previous inspection but several lessons observed lacked a brisk mental introduction. This omission is not helping the pupils to think quickly enough and to develop strategies for working things out in their heads. In the main, teachers show good subject knowledge, teach the pupils the correct subject vocabulary and plan well for all abilities. Where there is good teaching, the pupils are very well motivated, work at pace and are challenged to move onto the next level of learning. Pupils with special needs make good progress because of the good support they receive and the setting arrangements, which allow the work to be matched well to their capabilities. The more capable pupils make satisfactory progress. The best lessons are thoroughly prepared and teachers ensure that pupils remain focused, work hard and achieve well in lessons. In other lessons, the work is occasionally not suitable for all abilities, especially the higher achievers, and consequently they are not challenged sufficiently. In the unsatisfactory lesson, the pace was slow and poor classroom management led to many pupils going off task and the boys particularly becoming bored.
- 55 The leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory. The work of the subject co-ordinator has led to a more consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics across the school and has led to an improvement in standards in the last two years. There is still room for more effective and stimulating teaching with a better use of the start to the day to capitalise on the pupils' early morning enthusiasm.
- 56 Regular assessments are made with a good analysis of trends from national tests, but ongoing test results and evaluations of pupils' performance are not used effectively to inform or amend future planning and set challenging targets for the pupils to achieve. Monitoring of standards and teaching are evaluated but there has not been enough sharing of good practice across the school in order to raise all to some of the good standards of teaching and learning seen.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

- 57 There was some evidence of planning that had gone into the teaching of mathematics across the whole curriculum, with links to ICT and history with good use seen of the use of the local census of 1881 with data handling. In science, pupils calculate the results of experiments and measure to good effect. However, teachers do not seek out enough opportunities to apply mathematics skills across other work.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have a good general knowledge of, and interest, in science for their age.
- Their investigative skills are not so well developed as their knowledge.

### **Commentary**

- 58 Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are average. The National Curriculum Programmes of Study are fulfilled imaginatively in science enabling the pupils to cover a wide

range of activities. Pupils come to the subject with a good background knowledge from their interest in learning. This contributes to their above-average factual knowledge in science. Their investigative skills are average. Overall their combined level of attainment in these two aspects is mostly average in Year 6, similar to the previous inspection, though a significant number of pupils are working above expectations.

- 59 Learning is good. Pupils have good attitudes to their work, are well motivated and show a lively interest. This, combined with the imaginative activities, helps them to enjoy their learning. They readily accept the challenge to design investigations and organise themselves successfully. They co-operate well in investigative activities and share their ideas and thoughts well in pairs and groups when they consider how to conduct their experiments. In a very good Year 6 lesson, pupils worked well in small groups to design an experiment to evaluate the effect of the use of fertiliser on plants they had nurtured from seed and this led on well from previous work about germination. In their written work in some classes, they are not sufficiently encouraged to reason their conclusions and predictions. Their presentation of work often lets them down. Their handwriting is often slovenly, although they make good use of diagrams to inform their written work. Most pupils are confident to explain what they have done to the rest of the class and they demonstrate good speaking and listening skills in whole-class discussion.
- 60 Teaching is good overall, and ranges from very good to satisfactory. Teachers research the content of their lessons well and select judiciously from the good range of science resources. This helps pupils' understanding and appeals to their interest in specific science topics, such as the use of a range of fabrics to test for their absorbency properties. However, some lessons lacked visual material, such as video clips to support work, such as that on pollination. Teachers make good use of science vocabulary and draw well on the list of suggested science vocabulary to be taught in different year groups so that by Year 6 the pupils have a good background vocabulary for the subject. They are given helpful hints to remember more precise terms such as 'stamen' being the male part of a flower. Teachers maintain a good balance between discussion and activity.
- 61 Teachers manage their pupils well, which enables them to hand over responsibility to the pupils when carrying out experiments. Time is used well in lessons. In a minority of classes too much use is made of worksheets which are often too simple, pupils merely filling in gaps. Some teachers do too much of the thinking for the pupils when they come to record their data and provide the table for the pupils to complete. Pupils do not then do enough thinking for themselves. A little work was seen for older pupils, which all pupils had merely copied from another source. Good use is made of ICT in science, as when pupils use spreadsheets to analyse and average results, but there were also some missed opportunities in general class work to record their work and design tables using computers.
- 62 Leadership and management of science are currently satisfactory with some good elements. The subject leader is new to the post but has a good background in science and has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve the pupils' attainment. Attendance at a recent course for teaching science investigation to be followed up by training staff further in this aspect clearly indicates an understanding of where development is needed.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average and achievement is good for pupils across the school, reflecting good quality teaching and learning.
- The curriculum is good and well focused on the development of pupils' skills and knowledge with some very good links to other subjects.



- Leadership and management are good.
- The resources are out of date and cause technical problems.

- 63 The provision in information and communication technology has improved well since the previous inspection. Pupils achieve well as they progress through the school because they have regular, good quality learning experiences. Standards are above average in each year group and for all pupils regardless of their gender or special educational need, in part because many pupils use computers regularly at home. Pupils use information and communication technology equipment with confidence. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are familiar with the operation of equipment, such as the interactive whiteboards, overhead projectors, digital cameras and scanners, as well as the computers in the suite and in their classrooms and are very competent in their use. By Year 6, they have mastered well more advanced features of professional software, such as presentation packages and video filming, and with dexterity, produce good quality work in preparation for presentation to their parents and other visitors.
- 64 The quality of teaching and learning is good, a good improvement on the previous inspection. Staff are generally confident, effective teachers of information and communication technology skills. Staff who are less confident and knowledgeable are being supported well by others to develop their skills. Learning support staff are used well to support pupils, especially in the computer suite. Lessons are well planned and paced and focus strongly on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding of how computer use can support learning in other subject areas. Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and pupils respond fully to this expectation. Pupils' learning is good. In the suite they work hard and produce good amounts of work. They listen carefully to instructions, concentrate and are able to work independently, as well as collaboratively. Older pupils, in particular, show good levels of initiative, as they suggest approaches to tasks. They suggested the use of formula as they recalled their learning from previous sessions when linking manual, statistical analysis of the 1881 census information to the work in the suite using spreadsheets.
- 65 The curriculum for information and communication technology has developed well since the previous inspection and covers all national requirements. It is rich in its variety, especially in its links to other subjects and pupils enjoy its practical nature. Pupils are not always expected to produce a finished product, but rather have many opportunities to practise skills and investigate a good range of programmes. Each pupil has its own folder of work, which can be accessed from any computer in the suite, and they enjoy revisiting activities and work from earlier years.
- 66 The information and communication manager gives a good lead to the subject in informal advice, though little time is given for monitoring teaching and learning. The school has a good range of equipment, such as projectors, interactive whiteboards and digital cameras, as well as a healthy ratio of computers to pupils. However, the equipment in the suite is outdated and cannot accommodate the latest computer programs. They also take up much of the subject leader's and technician's time in attending to faults. There are plans to upgrade to overcome these problems.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

- 67 Information and communication technology is linked well to other subjects and so skills and knowledge are promoted effectively in information and communication technology itself and in other subjects, such as mathematics, English and history. Links with history and geography and the development of research skills are especially strong. Pupils research the local area through a number of community web-sites. Pupils use their word-processing and spreadsheet skills in explaining and analysing the data. Year 6 pupils use this information well in slide show presentations. In most year groups there is good evidence of computer use to organise and present mathematical data in graph and table forms and Internet sites to research their world faith studies in religious education.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography, history and religious education

- 68 Due to the nature of the timetable and the inspection focus, no **geography** lessons were seen and no judgement can be made on teaching and learning. Evidence of previous work seen indicates that there is a satisfactory coverage of the curriculum and that pupils make satisfactory progress.
- 69 The school has maintained the above average standards of **history** seen at the last inspection. Pupils make good gains in their learning about historical events, the lives of people in the past, the reliability of evidence and in acquiring a sense of time. Teaching in history is often good. A very good lesson about the reliability of historical and archaeological finds as evidence of the past moved at a good pace. The pupils were very well motivated to investigate the 'discovered mystery artefacts' to compare today's household objects with some realistic Tudor items given to them to examine and research. Their knowledge of the background of the Tudor times is good. Pupils made good advances in their learning in a well planned and executed lesson about World War 2.
- 70 The teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and these are achieved. Links between history and other aspects of the curriculum have been developed effectively as in design and technology, art, geography, mathematics and information technology. The planned pattern of visits and trips to enrich the history teaching is very effective and greatly enhance the pupils' learning and knowledge. The good quantity and quality of historical artefacts are very well used to enrich the pupils' learning.

### Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good links with the church and acts of worship support pupils' understanding of the Christian faith.
  - Pupils study a good selection of world faiths.
  - Video material could be used more to help pupils' understanding.
  - There is inconsistency in the regularity of provision from class to class.
- 71 Pupils reach local expectations in religious education and achieve soundly, similar to the previous inspection. The curriculum satisfactorily covers the content of the local agreed syllabus, though there is not enough difference in the approaches to the study of Christmas from year to year as recommended by the scheme. The depth of study and the time allocated to religious education and the interest and confidence afforded to it by teachers are, however, inconsistent across the school.
- 72 Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils' interest in lessons ranges from satisfactory to good but it is satisfactory overall and is a direct reflection of the quality of teaching, which is satisfactory in the main. In the best lesson seen in Year 5, the teacher's lively and brisk presentation, very good subject knowledge and good use of a slide show gripped the pupils' interest and enabled the pupils to make good progress in the difficult content about a Hindu legend. The pupils tried hard to understand the background to the Hindu Festival, which was the subject of the lesson and remembered much of the detail. They gained a good understanding of re-incarnation and the idea of good against evil. Pupils contributed well to discussion and listened attentively to what each had to say.

- 73 A Year 4 class made good use of the Internet to research the Seder Plate from the Passover meal in their study of Judaism before sharing together in a Passover meal. This good sequence of study helped pupils to understand the meaning of the celebration.
- 74 In a Year 3 lesson about Sikhism, objects related to the religion were used well to create an initial interest but follow-up worksheet and activities that included reading from a text did not arouse the pupils' interests. Some pupils were unsure which religion they were studying. The lack of a visual aid to show how the various items that the pupils handled were part of Sikh dress limited the lesson's overall impact.
- 75 The subject leader has only been in post for a short while and currently leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. There is a good range of artefacts to stimulate pupils' interest in different faiths, but video material could be used more to help pupils' understanding. Good use is made of the local Christian churches to help pupils gain an understanding of church design and furniture and, through good use of visits, pupils are able to understand some of the differences in the way different Christian denominations worship.
- 76 Good quality assemblies, with good levels of pupil involvement, contribute effectively to pupils' understanding of the Christian faith and reinforce Biblical knowledge. Local clergy contribute to some of these. Pupils gain a good knowledge of Christian festivals through the celebration of harvest, Easter and Christmas. Assemblies observed were well planned and imaginative and challenged the pupils' thinking, as they reflected on excerpts from *Pilgrim's Progress*. The assemblies contributed much to pupils' spiritual development and supported their knowledge of the Christian faith.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

### Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education

Two lessons were observed in **physical education**, none in **music**, three in **design and technology** and one in **art and design**.

- 77 Though no lessons were seen in **music**, observation of extra activities indicates that pupils enjoy extra-curricular provision, particularly the girls who predominate numerically. Groups of recorder players performed at a satisfactory level for their age in lunchtime groups. The choir sang harmoniously and pupils, who were to take part in a musical production, sang with enthusiasm and tackled difficult rhythms with a good level of determination, matching the words to the melody. Pupils in such groups use their skills to perform publicly and these opportunities give a sense of purpose to their activities.
- 78 A major problem in general classroom teaching is the lack of consistency in provision. Whilst some classes receive regular teaching, other pupils have music lessons less frequently, much depending on individual teachers' confidence. Provision is more regular where informal arrangements are made to use teachers' greater expertise and interest across classes.
- 79 The subject leader has good skills and enthuses the pupils who attend the extra-curricular groups for singing and recorders. Pupils have good opportunities to learn a musical instrument and a significant number of pupils take up this opportunity, mainly learning stringed instruments.
- 80 Two lessons were seen in **physical education** and, in these, pupils enjoyed their work and made good progress. The good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities greatly enhance the curriculum. Pupils are particularly successful in swimming, largely as a result of the use of the school's own pool in the summer term. The school has been very successful in a range of competitive team sports against other schools.

81 Teaching and learning in the two lessons observed were good, and based on the limited evidence an improvement since the last inspection when the teaching was judged to be sound, with some weaknesses. The good level of accommodation, equipment and facilities enhance the pupils' progress and achievements.

Provision in **art and design** is **very good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in art and design are above average across the school.
- Pupils' good achievement is celebrated and given a high profile in display.
- Teaching and learning are of good quality.
- Leadership and management are both good.

82 Standards are above average and pupils achieve well. Some pupils achieve very good levels of personal skill, especially when making close observational drawings and working in inks on miniatures of flowers and leaves. The well-planned curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their artistic and creative skills, using a wide range of media. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates, as a result of good quality support from teachers and learning support assistants. Year 6 pupils in their researches into the town of Tenterden had made detailed observational drawings of buildings in the local area. Using these, along with photographs, they made clay models of these buildings, devising their own ways to give textures, such as brick, and adding such features as chimneys and gables. Earlier in the lesson and using a range of miniature houses, the teacher spoke informatively of how a potter had achieved the quality of finish. In their later work, they drew effectively on these ideas. There is no difference in the quality of work produced by boys and girls.

83 Pupils' displayed art and design work is very carefully mounted and demonstrates the wide range of experiences provided and the range of artists studied. Pupils' good quality dream paintings, using the style and colours of well-known artists, are displayed effectively along with printmaking using African themes. Observational drawing of buildings in the local area in pencil sit alongside pencil-crayoned detailed flowers, leaves and other natural phenomena, demonstrating the good quality of skill teachers encourage pupils to develop. Three-dimensional work including plaques and plates of flowers on clay are exhibited alongside models of Roman Villas and Celtic Roundhouses, all of good quality and showing how teachers carefully plan for art and design knowledge and skills to support different curricular areas. Teachers know the curriculum very well, plan challenging sessions and give pupils time to practise and use their learning to produce work of good quality. Teachers provide a range of good quality resources and through careful structure of their lessons develop pupils' confidence and competence well.

84 Leadership and management are very effective in ensuring that the art curriculum is accessible to all in the school, that good support is given to teachers and that good quality resources are available to support the work. The co-ordinator is influential in enabling art and design to be linked across the curricular themes and reflects the work of different cultures through the acquisition of artefacts and fabrics.

### **Design and technology**

Provision in design and technology is **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is well planned to provide a range of worthwhile design and making experiences.

- Work is sometimes restricted to assembling a limited range of resources rather than investigating materials and different ways of making artefacts to meet the design brief.

85 It was only possible to see a limited number of lessons during the inspection, but standards are satisfactory overall, with some pupils attaining above average standards and achieving well. Most achieve satisfactorily. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. There is no difference in the achievement between boys and girls. This is because teachers plan a good range of worthwhile experiences to help pupils develop their designing, making and evaluating skills to a good standard. Year 4 pupils examined a number of manufactured torches, before designing their own. Their detailed plans at the design stage indicated the processes to be followed to make their object, a resources and materials list and how they would test their artefact. Pupils come up with some original and imaginative ideas. One pupil hollowed out the inside of a novel for his torch, fitting battery and wires within with a bookmark as switch. In other work, good use had been made of cams and levers in their own designs of moving objects after investigating moving toys.

86 In the lesson seen, the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall with a range from satisfactory to good. Teachers plan an effective curriculum with an interesting and challenging range of activities to stimulate pupils' involvement. Teachers make clear the learning expected in each lesson from an evaluation of previous lessons. They give pupils direct teaching of skills along with opportunities to investigate the properties of the materials provided and the opportunity to evaluate manufactured articles. Guidance to help pupils to record their plans and instructions is also given. There are good opportunities for pupils to engage in discussion and to work collaboratively on their projects with well planned attention given to the systematic development of design and technology processes. However, in some lessons, all pupils are given the same, limited range of resources and teachers retain too tight a control of how these are used. The investigative elements of design and technology are limited and the session becomes a 'production line'.

87 Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is not able to monitor the quality of teaching and learning within classes. She does, however, ensure that advice is available to all teachers and that the school has a good range of resources. The curriculum is fully in place in accordance with the national guidelines.

## **Personal, social and health education**

Provision is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development.
- There are some differences in the regularity of teaching this subject in different classes.

88 The school's curriculum for personal, social and health education gives a sound structure for each year group with a good list of ideas and suggested resources. However, teachers in successive year groups do not give the subject the same amount of importance and teaching time and the frequency of lessons ranges widely.

89 Staff set a good example for pupils in helping to create a good school ethos. This is taken up in some lessons, such as that in Year 3 when pupils discussed the things that make them happy or sad. They reflected on ideas they could adopt to cheer up people who are feeling low.

90 The health aspect is covered well through studies in healthy eating in science and reflecting on the importance of activity in physical education. In one lesson, pupils reflected on the media's attempts to influence eating habits and they examined with interest magazine adverts and a video clip's attempts to persuade the customer in the choice of food bought.

91 Pupils with behavioural difficulties are helped to manage their difficulties with the help of advice and a contract is often arranged with such children. These have proved effective in making pupils more aware of their difficulties and how they might overcome them and these have proved to be successful in some cases in modifying patterns of unsatisfactory behaviour. Pupils develop a good sense of democracy through elections to the school council raising matters for their elected members to take forward and in the relaying back to other pupils about matters discussed and decisions reached, though there is room for improvement. The pupils are guided well in matters such as sex education, and parents are consulted widely and kept well informed on this matter. Good use is made of the school nurse in this part of their education.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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