

INSPECTION REPORT

MARDEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Marden

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118306

Headteacher: Mrs R Linn

Lead inspector: Mrs J Catlin

Dates of inspection: 1 – 4 March 2004

Inspection number: 262142

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	260
School address:	Goudhurst Road Marden Kent
Postcode:	TN12 9JX
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr L Etheridge
Date of previous inspection:	1 February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is an average-sized school. It serves a rural area of Kent; the socio-economic circumstances of the families are varied but are deemed average overall. Currently there are 260 pupils on roll, with the majority from a white English background. Children enter the school in the term before their fifth birthday. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is about average, as is the proportion on the register of special educational needs. The disabilities include moderate learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties. The proportion of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need is below average. There are an above average proportion of children who have not attended the school throughout their primary education and have not benefited from the school's strong teaching. Consequently, many of these children have not achieved as well as those who started at the school in their reception year. Additionally, standards at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were not as high as those in previous years. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, the high level of pupil mobility and changes in staff all contributed to this. However, for this group of pupils, standards were high enough. The attainment on entry to Year 1 is average overall but slightly below in children's language development.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective school that provides very good value for money and a good quality of education. Teaching is good with some very good and excellent features, and teachers promote an enthusiasm for learning. The leadership of the school encourages pupils to do their very best. The friendly, purposeful atmosphere supports pupils' learning very well.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The quality of the school's self-evaluation is outstanding and places it in a very strong position to improve further.
- The school provides a very good climate for learning, in and beyond the classroom.
- Most lessons are exciting and imaginative, fostering a wide range of skills.
- Current achievement in literacy and numeracy is good.
- The school develops confidence in pupils, caring extremely well for each individual.
- The marking of pupils' work does not always clearly identify what they need to know next.
- The learning environment for the youngest children is not yet fully developed.
- The school's partnership with parents and the community is very strong.

There has been **good** improvement since the last inspection. The school has maintained good teaching despite many changes in staff. Its financial planning is now strong and governors monitor expenditure closely. The development plan is of high quality and is regularly reviewed. The school is very thorough in reviewing its performance with the intention of improving it further. As a result, the quality of self-evaluation is outstanding. The governing body play an effective part in school development and leadership. These strengths of the school are significant aids to raising achievement. The school is aware that the many changes in staff, particularly senior staff, have provided significant challenges to maintaining the ethos and the culture of the school. Curriculum developments and consistency have also been a challenge. Nevertheless the school has coped very well and the potential for further improvement is high.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' overall achievement in literacy and numeracy is good in Years 1 to 6. Many children in reception are on course to achieve expected standards for their age, except in their language development, where standards are below. Very few will exceed the standards expected for their age by the time they join Year 1. In Years 1 to 2, standards are average, although they are better in reading and mathematics than in writing. Achievement for these pupils is good in literacy and numeracy. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are achieving well in English and mathematics, building on their prior attainment. They are achieving satisfactorily in science and information and communication technology (ICT). Standards for the current group of Year 6 pupils are average overall, but were above average in mathematics at the end of last year. Pupils with special educational needs and the few who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as their peers. Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. They have very good attitudes to school and behave well. Attendance is good.

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. It provides a broad curriculum, cultivating pupils' all-round skills both in and beyond the classroom. The teaching is good, with some very good and excellent features. However, the marking of pupils' work does not always clearly identify what they need to know next. Teachers' knowledge, enthusiasm and enjoyment of their work are reflected in pupils' confidence and interest in learning. Pupils learn very well because skills are taught thoroughly and imaginatively, ensuring that they understand. Children in the reception classes make a satisfactory start to their education. The use of space and resources in reception is not yet fully developed to stimulate the children's natural curiosity.

Pupils enjoy and learn from the well-designed outside environment and gain much from the wide range of clubs and special events. The school is becoming a central focus within the life of the community. Parents are very actively involved with the school, and the strength of the home-school partnership is very beneficial to pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is very good and is very effectively supported by the school's excellent evaluation strategies. The governing body is very effective in shaping its character and setting its sights high. The headteacher provides highly skilled leadership and shares her vision for the school with her staff. The deputy headteacher and subject managers are all helping to lead the school forward. The school is very effectively managed to achieve the best for pupils.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Overall, parents are highly satisfied with the school. They are pleased with the teaching and praise the high quality of leadership and management. They value the breadth of education the school provides and the welcoming atmosphere which helps pupils to settle in rapidly. Pupils are proud of the school and appreciate their teachers. The school is very responsive to the views of parents and pupils, which reinforce the sense of community. It has been quick to take steps to improve communication with parents over homework and parents are pleased about this.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the provision for children in reception.
- Ensure that the marking of pupils' work is consistent.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement by the end of Year 6 is **good**. Standards in literacy, numeracy, science, ICT and religious education are **average** and, overall, results are improving due to some strong teaching.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils' achievement is good by the end of Year 6 and standards are high enough for the pupils currently in the school.
- Pupils' skills in ICT are average, but they do not always use and develop them enough in other subjects.

Commentary

1. Attainment on entry to the reception classes varies considerably from year to year but is as expected overall. For the current reception children, standards of attainment in early learning skills are, for a significant number, below average, particularly in language development. Although most have attended the local playgroup with whom the school has close relationships before they enter the reception class, some children do not attend any form of pre-school playgroup and arrive at school with poor early learning skills. Achievement for the current group of reception-age children is satisfactory and the majority will attain expected standards by the end of this school year. However, an above average proportion is unlikely to attain these standards in their language development. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Many of those in the current Year 2, those who entered the reception class in September 2001, had attainment on entry that was slightly below average. Most are now on course to attain average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. This represents good achievement.
2. The school's performance in the national tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2003 was well below average. This was partly due to staffing difficulties, which severely interrupted the continuity of pupils' learning, and partly because an unusually high proportion had special educational needs. Additionally, almost 17 per cent of these pupils did not start their education in the school. With greater continuity of teaching this year, standards have improved and match those seen in most schools.
3. At the end of Year 6 results for 2003 were lower than the previous year. This was mainly because there was an unusually high rate of pupil mobility (25 per cent) in the year group. This interrupted the continuity of pupils' learning and resulted in a significant proportion not achieving as well as they should. Additionally, there were high levels of special educational needs, with 47 per cent of pupils having been on the special educational needs register at some time in their school life.
4. The standards that pupils attain vary widely from year to year for several reasons. The small number of pupils in each group means that each pupil represents a large proportion of the total and so one or two pupils who are more able or who have special educational needs make a big difference to the school's overall performance. In this school, statistics on attainment should be treated with great caution. However, when taking the three years from 2001 to 2003 together, figures show that at the end of Year 2 pupils exceeded the national average for their age group in reading and mathematics, although writing is slightly below this. When the same comparison is made with Year 6 results, figures show that pupils exceeded the national average in English, mathematics and science despite the challenges the school has faced with the higher than usual proportion of pupils with SEN, the above average mobility and staffing difficulties.

5. Across the school more-able pupils are supported well so that their achievement and progress matches that of other pupils. Teachers' lesson plans include a section on how the needs of these pupils will be met. In most lessons teachers modify work or provide extension activities so that the more-able pupils are challenged appropriately. They also expect more from them in terms of the quality and quantity of work that they produce. Throughout the school pupils who have special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils due to the good care and support they receive both in and out of the classroom. The additional literacy support for pupils experiencing learning difficulties in reading and writing is particularly effective. The targets in individual education plans are well thought out and quite specific to pupils' needs.

6. Pupils use their literacy skills appropriately in subjects such as science, history, and design and technology. Numeracy skills are used in other areas of the curriculum; for example, in design and technology and science, but teachers do not always provide enough opportunities to develop them because they are not included in their lesson planning. The majority of pupils' literacy, numeracy, and ICT skills are sufficient to enable them to make progress in other areas of the curriculum.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (29.9)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.8 (29.0)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.3 (29.8)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Subjects	National assessments at the time of the last report in 1999	2003 national assessments	Achievement for the 2003 cohort of Year 2 pupils who are now in Year 3	Attainment and achievement of the current cohort of Year 2 pupils
Reading	Well above average.	Well below average due to a much smaller proportion of more-able pupils gaining the higher levels.	Achievement is satisfactory as the majority of these pupils made sound progress since entry into Year 1.	The attainment of the current pupils matches that found nationally. Pupils' achievement is good. New approaches to spelling and phonics teaching are having a good impact on standards.
Writing	Well above average.	Well below average due to a much smaller proportion of more-able pupils gaining the higher levels.	Achievement is satisfactory as the majority of these pupils made sound progress since entry into Year 1.	The attainment of the current pupils matches that found nationally. Pupils' achievement is good and their writing skills are developing appropriately for their age.
Mathematics	Very high.	Well below average due to a much smaller proportion of more-able pupils gaining the higher levels.	Achievement is satisfactory as the majority of these pupils made sound progress since entry into Year 1.	The attainment of the current pupils matches that found nationally. Pupils' achievement is sound and skills are regularly practised and reinforced.
Science	Not applicable, but the report judged standards by the end of Year 2 to be above average.	Not applicable, but teachers assessed standards as average, although there was a much smaller proportion of more-able pupils gaining the high levels.	Achievement is satisfactory because the majority of these pupils made sound progress since entry into Year 1.	The attainment of the current pupils meets expectations and they achieve satisfactorily. Standards are showing improvement since last year.
ICT	Not applicable, but the report judged standards by the end of Year 2 to be average.	Not applicable.	Achievement is satisfactory because the majority of these pupils made sound progress since entry into Year 1.	The attainment of the current pupils meets expectations and they achieve satisfactorily. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
RE	Not applicable, but the report judged standards by the end of Year 2 to be above average.	Not applicable.	Achievement is satisfactory because the majority of these pupils have made sound progress since entry into Year 1.	The attainment of the current pupils meets expectations and they achieve satisfactorily.

Subjects	National assessments at the time of the last report in 1999	2003 national assessments	Achievement for the 2003 cohort of Year 6 pupils who are no longer in the school	Attainment and achievement of current cohort of Year 6 pupils
English	Well above average.	Average, rather than well above average, due to a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs and fewer more-able pupils than at the time of the last inspection.	Achievement is satisfactory as the pupils who were in the school at the time of the Year 2 national tests made sound progress.	The attainment of the current pupils matches that found nationally. Pupils' current achievement is good and there is a strong focus upon reading and writing. Standards are high enough for this group of pupils.
Mathematics	Well above average.	Above, rather than well above average, due to a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs and fewer more-able pupils than at the time of the last inspection.	Achievement is satisfactory as the pupils who were in the school at the time of the Year 2 national tests made sound progress.	The attainment of the current pupils matches that found nationally. Pupils' current achievement is good. Standards are high enough for this group of pupils.
Science	Well above average.	Average, rather than well above average, due to a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs and fewer more-able pupils than at the time of the last inspection.	Achievement is satisfactory as the pupils who were in the school at the time of the Year 2 national tests made sound progress.	The attainment of the current pupils matches that found nationally. Pupils' achievement is sound. Standards are high enough for this group of pupils.
Information and communication technology	Not applicable, but the report judged standards by the end of Year 6 to be average.	Not applicable.	Achievement is satisfactory as pupils have made sound progress.	The attainment of the current pupils meets expectations and they achieve satisfactorily. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
Religious education	Not applicable, but the report judged standards by the end of Year 6 to be above average.	Not applicable.	Achievement is satisfactory as pupils made sound progress.	The attainment of the current pupils meets expectations and they achieve satisfactorily. Standards are high enough for this group of pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance and punctuality are **good**. Pupils' attitudes are **very good** and so also is their behaviour. Relationships between pupils and adults are **very good**. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance and punctuality are good.
- Pupils respond to challenge and concentrate well.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are very good.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

Commentary

7. Pupils' attitudes are very good and as a result they respond to challenge and sustain interest. Most are attentive in classes and assemblies. They enjoy learning and work effectively both on their own and in group activities. They take pride in their efforts and are keen to share their pleasure in achievement. They offer constructive ideas and listen to what others have to say. Pupils' contributions to discussions are thoughtful and imaginative, due to the high focus given to their personal development. They show considerable thoughtfulness to each other and take pride in being part of the school community. This comes from the inspiration of the headteacher and, in turn, the staff, who all provide excellent role models and enable pupils to achieve well.
8. Pupils' behaviour is good because they have a good understanding of school and class rules and respond willingly to what is expected of them. Their good standards of behaviour are underpinned by the staff's high expectations and a valued reward system in which the headteacher and all staff are fully involved. The atmosphere within the school is calm, orderly and purposeful. They respect property such as library books. At lunch pupils are nicely mannered and friendly, making it an enjoyable social occasion. Pupils are polite and pleasantly inquisitive towards visitors. The school's values are appreciated and supported by parents. Pupils are justly proud of their school and know that their contribution matters. There have been no exclusions.
9. Relationships between pupils are very good as a result of the friendly and supportive atmosphere generated by the headteacher. Parents say the school is like one big happy family and pupils are very caring towards each other. Friendships are strong and interactions harmonious. All pupils are valued equally and the school's vision statement is reflected in practice throughout the work of the whole-school community.
10. Spiritual development is good and reflects the school's Christian ethos. Collective worship makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development and opportunities are taken to stimulate pupils' imagination and sense of wonder. Provision for pupils' moral development is good, with the school's aims, values and rules of behaviour promoting a clear moral understanding. Staff act as good role models in helping pupils to develop moral principles. Pupils' social development is good and they are very willing to take responsibility. Classroom tasks improve their self-esteem, while discussions of issues like conservation broaden pupils' social awareness. Good community links, after-school clubs, residential visits and fund raising for charitable causes further strengthen pupils' social development. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. They have a clear understanding of their own Christian faith and a broad awareness of non-Christian beliefs and values. However, there are few in-school displays or guest speakers from different religious and ethnic backgrounds, and some pupils do not fully appreciate the diversity and richness of multi-cultural Britain today.
11. Attendance is good, and good procedures are in place to maintain and improve it. Parents understand the importance of children's regular attendance at school. Punctuality is good and closely monitored.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.7
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.2
National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality of education. Teaching is **good** with some very good and excellent features, and teachers promote an enthusiasm for learning.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is **good** with some very good and excellent features, and as a result pupils **learn effectively**. Assessment is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers maintain high expectations of pupils' performance and behaviour.
- Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and this accelerates learning.
- Teachers provide a consistently productive learning environment in their classrooms.
- Pupils enjoy learning.
- Teachers' lesson planning is clear, detailed and thorough.
- The marking of and responding to pupils' work is sometimes inconsistent.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 42 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (7%)	8 (19%)	19 (45%)	10 (24%)	2 (5%)	0	0

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

12. Teaching across the school is good with some very strong and excellent features. This has been maintained since the last inspection. Teachers and support staff are conscientious and seek to improve their skills through advice and training. The teachers work together as a team and support each other very well. They plan lessons carefully, including precisely what skills are to be taught. The warm relationships in each class and pupils' eagerness to please result from the high levels of care that staff provide for each individual. Teaching is particularly effective where teachers maintain high expectations of pupils' performance and set high standards. It is especially good where teachers have a profound knowledge of the subjects they teach or are particularly enthusiastic about particular areas of the curriculum. This was especially evident in literacy and numeracy.
13. Teachers explain the plan of the lesson clearly to pupils and tell them what they are expected to learn and how they are to conduct activities. Such clear explanations are coupled by a brisk pace that promotes rapid learning. A great deal of learning is packed into most lessons. Teaching is particularly effective when opportunities are grasped to make links with other subjects, as in investigative reports in science and mathematics, which give pupils opportunities to further their literacy skills in a variety of ways.

14. Teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs are good and they achieve well. Pupils are provided with good support from class teachers and support assistants who use individual education plans effectively to guide their work.
15. There is a consistency about the quality of teaching and a similarity in the way teachers use effective strategies to support learning. All, for example, are good at asking challenging questions about how things happen and why things work as they do. This extends learning well and promotes good achievement. A productive learning environment and a business-like approach have been established in each class that generate serious attitudes to learning. Homework is used well to consolidate understanding. Most teachers have a clear understanding of what represents high-quality teaching, and teaching is monitored effectively against a clear set of criteria. The marking of and responding to pupils' work are sometimes inconsistent. There is room for an even sharper analysis of precisely what each pupil knows, understands and can do, so that teachers can show each pupil what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is **good**. The school provides a wide range of purposeful curricular opportunities that caters for the needs, aptitudes and interests of pupils. Pupils build on their learning as they move through the school, in lessons and in activities beyond the classroom.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum provides a varied range of good learning opportunities, including plentiful out-of-school activities which are well attended.
- Curriculum planning gives strong consideration to the way children learn.
- The curriculum for personal, social and health education is well considered and a high priority within the school, and provides a good basis for the personal development of pupils.
- The good accommodation and resources of the school give effective support to the curriculum.
- Cross-curricular links with ICT are not well enough developed.

Commentary

16. The inclusive curriculum, which is responsive to pupils' diversity, is good and meets all the requirements of the National Curriculum and the areas of learning for children in the reception classes. It offers a full range of opportunities to all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with a home language other than English, or who are new to the country, enabling them to achieve well and to develop skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through the school.
17. The curriculum is reviewed regularly and the school is working to increase effective links between subjects. Subjects such as literacy and history frequently complement each other, and pupils apply the skills they have learned in ICT in many other subjects. However, the school acknowledges that further development is needed in this area.
18. The emphasis upon personal, social and health education is a priority of the school and is central to its ethos. The school's strong personal, social and health education programme is supported by a variety of visits and visitors. Pupils understand the need to consider others within a community, and they learn to be good citizens. The school has an effective policy on sex and drugs education, and relationships are taught effectively as part of the curriculum. This contributes well to pupils' personal development.
19. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs, with good support offered to them through teacher assistants and teaching support. Including all pupils in the life and ethos of the school is a priority evident in they are all cared for. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 prepares children well for the later years within the school, and considerable efforts are made to prepare them for secondary school life.

20. The school provides a rich and varied range of experiences for pupils. They visit a variety of places of interest and welcome many visitors to the school. They have the opportunity to choose from a very wide range of after-school clubs. Some of these activities such as drama, craft, recorders, choir and music enable pupils to reach the artistic goals set for them. At the same time the sporting activities of the school at the time of the inspection include swimming, netball and football, while Latin is an interesting and unusual addition to the clubs on offer. Rugby, French, gardening and cookery are on offer at other times of the year. The school participates enthusiastically and successfully in activities with other schools and in the local community.
21. Good resources support teaching in all subjects. Teachers and learning-support assistants are well qualified and experienced. They are enthusiastic and eager to continue developing their expertise and improving their skills and knowledge.
22. The accommodation of the school, although built a number of years ago, provides an effective environment in which pupils flourish both academically and personally. The classroom converted into a computer suite is a particular asset to learning, whilst there are good swimming facilities on site. Although the hall is relatively small, it is well maintained and provides a suitable base for many activities, whilst the separate building used as a dining hall is an asset that means other rooms such as the hall are available for greater periods of time. The resources of the school are good and used well to support the curriculum and improve the achievement of all pupils.

Care, guidance and support

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pastoral care and welfare are very good.
- Pupils receive very good guidance and support.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are very good.
- Induction arrangements for pupils are very good.
- The involvement of pupils in the school's work is good and their views are valued.
- Child protection and medical arrangements are good.
- Health-and-safety procedures are satisfactory overall.

Commentary

23. Pupils are very well monitored and supported. This is because staff work together as a strong team with the common aim of encouraging pupils to develop confidence and self-esteem, and to reach their potential. Staff know them very well as individuals, as can be seen in some very perceptive comments on the annual reports. 'Circle Time' is used effectively to discuss areas of personal development. Older pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for younger ones, and all pupils contribute to the community by taking on duties. In the pupils' questionnaire nearly every pupil confirmed that there is an adult they can go to if they are worried at school. Their relationships with staff are very good. Academic achievement is supported well because each pupil has personal targets. Pupils know what these are and their achievement is now being monitored effectively. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils feel nurtured and secure because relationships between them and adults are very good and therefore they are happy to confide in their teachers if they are worried or upset.
24. Induction arrangements for new pupils are very well managed with a strong focus on welfare and ease of settling in. The school has strong links with the adjoining nursery, and staff visits

take place across the year. Nursery children use the school playing fields and attend reception class lessons and school events. New parents are made very welcome and given a helpful introductory booklet. The school works closely with them from the outset. Parents' responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting confirm that they greatly appreciate and are very confident in the school's high levels of individual care and support for their children.

25. Pupils know that their views are important and respected because they are encouraged to participate regularly in discussions about aspects of school development. Their views are sought through assemblies, class discussions and questionnaires. These views are valued and, where appropriate, acted upon, the new school uniform being a good example. Pupils are pleased with the part they play in school life.
26. Child-protection procedures are well known to staff. The child-protection officer is diligent, and good links are established with outside agencies. Arrangements to deal with accidents, illness and medicines are good, with a number of staff holding first-aid qualifications. Road safety at the school gate is a concern which is currently being addressed.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Parental links and the school's efforts to involve parents in school life are **very good**. Information given to parents is also **very good**. Community links are **good**. Links with other schools and colleges, including transfer arrangements for pupils to secondary schools, are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Information given to parents, including that on pupils' progress, is very good.
- The school consults parents and their views are valued.
- Parents make a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- The school is well integrated into the local community.
- Educational links, including transfer arrangements, are good overall.

Commentary

27. The quality of information the school provides for parents is very good and contributes well to the school's effective links with parents. Regular newsletters are sent out and teachers are always available to speak to parents after school. There are two formal parents' evenings and an open evening each year. Additionally there is a third parents' evening available to those parents who wish to discuss their children's end-of-year report. School reports are very good, include suitable targets for improvement and ensure that parents are well-informed about their child's progress. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are well-structured and helpful, and meet statutory requirements.
28. The school seeks parents' views through telephone calls, discussions, questionnaires, parent governors and helpers. Parents are very pleased with the school's provision for their children. Concerns and complaints are dealt with quickly and appropriately.
29. The contribution parents make to pupils' learning is good. The school values the part they play, and encourages their interest in all aspects of school life. Many parents respond and some help in school and with educational visits and after-school clubs. Celebratory assemblies and school occasions are well attended. The home-school agreement is good. The parent/teacher association is active and runs a variety of successful fund-raising events.
30. Community links are good and local people are supportive of the school. Speakers from the Salvation Army and welfare organisations lead assemblies, and pupils attend Harvest Festival and Christmas services at the church. The school takes part in village activities. The school choir visits senior citizens' clubs. Pupils donate to national charities and to local appeals; for

example, for the Air Ambulance. Educational visits into the community enrich the curriculum and contribute well to the good achievement of pupils.

31. Links with other schools and colleges are good overall. Secondary school and college students undertake school placements. The transfer arrangements for pupils to some secondary schools are well established, but the links with others are only activated after pupils have been accepted. The school advises parents about their choice of secondary school. It has strong links with the Institute of Education, the National Leadership College and a school in East Kent.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **very good** overall. Governance is also **very good** and the school is **very well** led and managed.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is very well served by its governing body.
- The headteacher's excellent vision and values permeate the whole school.
- Many people are contributing to leading the school forward.
- The school is very thorough in reviewing its performance, intent on improving it further. As a result, the quality of its self-evaluation is outstanding.
- The school's budget is used efficiently and effectively to raise the achievement of pupils.

Commentary

32. Governors, led by the current chair and recruited for their wide range of expertise, are actively involved in shaping the vision and direction of the school. The governing body has worked with commitment and vision to provide strategic guidance. The school's improvement plan is of high quality and is regularly reviewed. Governors are well informed about pupils' achievement, thoroughly reviewing targets and results. The governing body is now instigating a programme of evaluation of each of the school's main areas of work.
33. The headteacher, since her appointment in 2002, has set the tone of the school, creating a climate where pupils are valued and understood so that they grow in confidence and have a strong sense of belonging. She sets the school's sights high and fosters enjoyment in learning. She knows pupils and their parents very well and enjoys their trust, confidence and respect. The deputy headteacher, who started at the school this term, is energetic and effective, as are many of the subject managers, and the headteacher guides and enables the team so that leadership is broadly based. Most subject leaders are knowledgeable and enthusiastic in planning the development of their subjects and providing guidance for others.
34. The headteacher and her senior staff monitor the school's performance closely and are increasingly involving others in reviewing the quality of teaching and pupils' work. She spends time regularly in classrooms and is very aware of the impact of teaching and the progress of individual pupils. The communication between the headteacher, staff and parents about pupils' needs and achievements is very strong. This is seen in the effective management of provision for pupils with special educational needs, and sensitive support, in consultation with parents, for pupils who are learning English as an additional language. The school's leadership ensures that the aim of being an inclusive school is translated into effective action on a daily basis.
35. Assessment information has been very carefully analysed and targets set to increase pupils' attainment. The school's leadership is effectively monitoring the value added by the school, and working successfully to pinpoint what could be done to help pupils achieve even more.
36. A large surplus was carried forward last year to give the incoming headteacher opportunities to initiate new developments and to employ new staff. The available surplus is being used successfully to develop staff expertise and to employ a greater number of learning-support

assistants. Further money has been used to develop the outdoor play areas for children in reception to extend provision in the required areas of learning. The school's financial planning is very strong and governors monitor expenditure closely. They are rigorous in applying the principles of best value in ensuring that expenditure serves the school's educational aims and is evaluated accordingly.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	552, 814
Total expenditure	550, 630
Expenditure per pupil	2, 070

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	71, 012
Balance carried forward to the next	73, 196

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**.

37. The children in the reception classes are given a satisfactory start to their education. They enter school with a broad range of early learning experiences, but a number have limited vocabulary and find it difficult to express themselves clearly. Children's attainment on entry to the school is lower than at the time of the last inspection, when it was above expectations. Consequently, the standards that children attain at the end of the reception year are not as high as they were when the school was last inspected. Teaching is satisfactory in all the areas of learning, and sound planning and assessment help children to achieve satisfactorily in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Therefore the attainment on entry to Year 1 is average overall but slightly below in children's language development.
38. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory, although the teaching is not as good as it was at the time of the last inspection. This is due to the loss of a very experienced and talented teacher. Teachers' questioning skills do not encourage children to explain what they know and understand. Although the activities that teachers plan, in order to develop and extend children's learning, are satisfactory there are sometimes weaknesses in classroom organisation. Consequently, some sessions run out of steam, or the necessary resources are not readily available. Furthermore, the activities provided are not always specifically linked to the Early Learning Goals and consequently staff do not always have a clear view of what goal is being tackled as a result of the activities provided. This makes it difficult for staff to assess exactly where each child is in terms of their progress through the various stages of learning in each area. Also, assessment procedures are not presently used systematically to respond to children's individual needs and this is an area for future development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have settled well and are developing independence in looking after themselves.
- Children co-operate and behave well, beginning to work collaboratively.
- They do not have sufficient opportunities to investigate independently.

Commentary

39. The children quickly develop confidence and have established good relationships with one another, the class teachers and the classroom assistants. They generally behave well and are encouraged to be considerate of others. The teachers and support staff capture children's interest and attention, ensuring that concentration is fostered and maintained well. Virtually all the children can change for physical education with minimal help. They receive plenty of praise and encouragement, which are effective in building up their self-esteem and confidence. Children with special educational needs are well supported, helping them to participate and to learn effectively.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is sometimes an insufficient focus on developing children's speaking and listening skills.
- Foundations are being well laid in the early stages of writing.
- There is a limited range of books for children to enjoy.

Commentary

40. Adults usually encourage children to talk about what they are doing, but there is not the language-rich environment usually found in reception classes. Most children, when listening to stories such as 'The Enormous Turnip', join in enthusiastically and give alternative words for 'huge', 'big', 'large' and 'small'. A further group worked well with the classroom assistant, where there was good language development, to make models of the characters from 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. There were good links with other areas of learning in this session as children had tested different materials to see which would be most effective as leaves for Jack's beanstalk. Writing is encouraged, many children are writing their names unaided and letter formation is often correct. Examples from last year show that some were able to write legible, coherent sentences by the end of their time in reception. This is laying sound foundations for the future and contributing to the school's pursuit of higher standards in writing. Satisfactory use is made of classroom computers to support children's early reading and writing skills, though the provision of books for them to enjoy by themselves is rather limited.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children count with confidence; most can recognise numerals to ten, and some to 20.
- Their mathematical vocabulary is developing well.

Commentary

41. The children are making satisfactory progress in their early understanding of number, shape and measure. Good use was made of number cards to ten to encourage the children to order numbers. Children sort equipment according to criteria such as colour, shape and size, and begin to explore concepts of capacity and measures when they use sand and water to fill containers of various sizes. Some know the names of simple two-dimensional shapes such as 'circles', 'square' and 'triangles'. The children's use of mathematical vocabulary such as 'one more' or 'one less' is developing well.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in each of these areas of learning is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The environment is not richly developed to help children choose and experiment with resources, and to investigate further.

Commentary

42. Children use computers with confidence. They have the skills to click, drag and drop items on screen. They engage in a good range of activities to develop physical control of large and small movements. They use the large equipment in the school hall and have a range of equipment such as bikes, balls, bean-bags and hoops to use in their own dedicated outdoor area. They follow a well-balanced programme of exercise which includes gymnastics and dance. There are

good opportunities for construction and for role-play in the 'Garden Centre' and when constructing Jack's beanstalk. They learn about the world around them, observing autumn colours on a local walk, and painting and printing autumn pictures. Pupils enjoy all these activities, though resources are not always organised richly enough to stimulate enquiry and investigation within independent play by children, some of whom have only been in school for seven weeks. Plans are in hand for the further development of the outside play area for reception.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have access to a well-resourced outside area, which promotes physical development well.
- They have a good programme of physical development including gymnastics, dance and outdoor activities.

Commentary

43. The wide range of outdoor equipment and physical-education activities led by adults help children to make good progress in the development of their physical skills. The outside area is attractively arranged with both hard and soft play surfaces. A good selection of ride-on toys and climbing apparatus helps them to balance, run, jump and climb, as well as giving them opportunities for adventurous play. In both classrooms, through a variety of construction equipment, pencils, crayons, brushes and scissors, children are encouraged to practise and develop the finer movements necessary for drawing, cutting and sticking. They achieve well in their physical development, and the provision for them to do so has improved since the last inspection. By the time they join Year 1, standards are close to those expected for the children's ages.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-equipped play areas.

Commentary

44. The many activities for creative play support other areas of learning. For example, imaginative play in the 'Garden Centre' involves manipulative and counting skills. Children are keen to sing and enjoy action songs. They sing tunefully, and frequently sing songs, such as 'Ten in the Bed' to reinforce learning in other areas. They use a wide range of materials to explore colour, shape and texture. They also use the computer to explore colour, shape and pattern.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in the majority of classes.
- Achievement is currently good.
- Pupils respond well to well-planned and structured lessons with clear learning objectives and a clear focus.
- The school encourages reading and the enjoyment of books in a variety of ways.
- Teachers are well supported by two knowledgeable subject managers.
- The quality of marking is not always consistent.
- On occasions, the use of the school's agreed spelling policy is not consistent.

Commentary

45. In 2003, results in national tests at the end of Year 6 were in line with the national average. Test results at the end of Year 2 were low in both reading and writing, but there were a significant number of pupils in this group who had low prior attainment or special educational needs. The school has analysed the reasons for the variable performance of pupils in recent years and has taken steps to rectify them. The school is now working to raise standards in English and is doing this successfully.
46. The current groups of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are working at levels that are in line with national averages in reading and writing. Pupils in other year groups are attaining expected standards in relation to their age. There is a relative weakness in boys' writing at the end of Year 2 but the school is addressing this. There have also been new approaches to spelling and phonics teaching, although they are not yet evident in all classes. Pupils with special educational needs, or who are learning English as an additional language, make good progress and achieve well because of the imaginative teaching and support they receive.
47. Speaking and listening skills are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Pupils develop confidence in asking and answering questions because teachers ask questions skilfully and give clues as necessary to help pupils respond appropriately. Generally, they listen very well to the activities of the lesson. Good support for pupils with special educational needs enables them to join in group sessions and to feel that their contribution is valued. Opportunities for discussion with a partner are used well. Pupils are encouraged to listen to others, to take turns in speaking and to think things through before expressing an opinion. Pupils' verbal responses are generally good throughout the school and they express their thoughts clearly. Pupils have opportunities to speak in front of their class and this helps to develop confidence in addressing an audience, and active listening in responding to others. Pupils gain skills by participating in class discussions, for example, in personal, social and health education lessons.
48. Standards in reading are average in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a good understanding of a range of strategies to help them with their reading. Teachers encourage an enthusiasm for reading which results in good reading fluency and encourages good reference skills. Group reading times are purposeful and enable pupils to develop skills in predicting endings and comparing one book with another. Teachers and support assistants hear pupils read regularly, and books for younger children are changed frequently. There is a good range of books in the library which pupils use to seek out information for their topics.
49. Standards in writing are improving. The range of opportunities to practise writing is being extended and staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. For example, in Year 2, pupils write profiles for characters in a Mandarin story, while in Year 4 they write texts to explain how to do things such as riding a bicycle. Pupils in Year 5 write sentences designed to have a greater impact on the listener while Year 6 pupils produce a balanced argument about bringing mobile telephones to school. There are some good links with other subjects, such as poems about water in Year 5 linked to pupils' geographical study on rivers. Their writing skills are developing appropriately for their age levels and good teaching clarifies the thought processes necessary for this to take place in some classes. Pupils are aware of their targets in writing and

know what they have to do to improve their work. Many pupils have still to consolidate basic skills in writing and teachers are presenting skills in new and exciting ways.

50. Teaching and learning are good because teachers and learning-support assistants make learning fun and stimulating therefore in nearly all classes pupils are enthusiastic, keen to learn, respond well. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' good achievement. They work purposefully and effectively with pupils with special educational needs and with those who are learning English as an additional language. A further strong feature of all the lessons seen was the way teachers shared the learning intention with pupils at the start of each lesson. Consequently they know what they are expected to learn. In many lessons questioning was good and teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and plan lessons well to meet the learning objectives. Lessons are well focussed according to the needs of the pupils and the time available is well used. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the learning-support assistants and the special educational needs manager and their work is guided by short-term targets and they achieve well. Where teaching is less successful, it is where behaviour management is unable to ensure the engagement in learning of all pupils who then become disruptive to their own learning and the learning of others.
51. Teachers use assessment well to check pupils' reading, writing and spelling skills and this factor helps to support good achievement. These assessments are used in target setting for pupils and setting the levels they are expected to reach by the end of the year. The quality of marking varies somewhat although some examples of good marking, particularly in Year 6, gives good comments and indications of how to improve further.
52. The leadership and management is good because the subject managers have a clear vision of ways in which reading and writing can be improved, and practised and applied in other subjects.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

53. There are some good examples of thoughtful planning to develop pupils' skills in language and literacy in other subjects. Good discussions are encouraged in personal, social, health and citizenship education lessons and in geography. Drama is an important part of personal, social and health education and religious education. Staff and pupils use ICT confidently in literacy. This complements the learning in lessons effectively.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are taught well so that basic skills in numeracy are well established.
- Pupils learn to reason mathematically and to apply their skills in solving problems.
- Teachers use resources effectively in helping pupils learn.
- Work is not always demanding enough for higher-attaining pupils in Year 2

Commentary

54. Pupils throughout the school are achieving well in mathematics. Standards in the work seen are average overall in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6, though stronger in some year groups than in others, reflecting the prior attainment of different cohorts. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language is also good.
55. Work is planned well so that teaching builds steadily on what has gone before. Skills are regularly practised and reinforced, for example, when in counting on and back and in twos, fives and tens, in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' knowledge of number helps them in solving more complex problems and in investigating patterns. Pupils are challenged to apply mathematical reasoning,

and to think for themselves, estimating before they measure or calculate in order to check their accuracy.

56. Teaching is skilful. Teachers set a good pace, switching activities when concentration falters. They involve pupils actively, looking for answers on pupils' whiteboards to check their understanding. They provide more practice or explanation when it is needed. The whiteboard in each class is used well to make points visually, for example, when demonstrating how to calculate the area of a shape in Year 5. Teachers use mathematical language very well, listing vocabulary for later reference and using it in context so that pupils become familiar with technical terms.
57. In some lessons, for example in Year 6, extension work challenges higher-attaining pupils to think more deeply and to apply what they have learned. In Years 1 and 2, younger pupils are achieving very well for their age, benefiting from the challenge in the mixed-age classes, but the work is not always demanding enough for higher-attaining pupils in Year 2. In Years 3 and 4, the range of attainment is very wide and this poses some problems in addressing the needs of all pupils. Learning support assistants are deployed effectively to work with different groups during parts of lessons, and this work is matched well to pupils' needs. The use of assessment and target setting is also helping to ensure that work is pitched appropriately for different groups of pupils.
58. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The use of assessment and the monitoring of teaching and learning have been developed to provide a very clear overview of strengths and weaknesses in learning, and directions for improvement. Inspection findings show that current standards in Year 6 are not as high as last year's test results or those reported at the time of the last inspection. However, they are high enough for this year group which contains over 24 per cent of pupils on the register of special educational need.

Mathematics across the curriculum

59. The school is very alert to the links between subjects and this is reflected in planning. Opportunities to apply mathematical skills in data handling, and to practise basic skills in number, are extended through the use of ICT. Mathematical skills are applied across the curriculum, as seen in the recording of surveys about favourite books in literacy and in plotting places on maps in geography. In science, pupils apply mathematical skills in measuring accurately and in recording data collected in the course of investigations.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching was seen in the lessons, which fully involved pupils in conducting their own tests.
- Lessons and work in pupils' books both indicate improvements in standards in relation to investigations.
- Pupils' attitudes are very positive. They collaborate very well.
- Leadership has had a positive impact on teaching.
- Marking does not always show pupils how well they have succeeded or how to improve their work.

Commentary

60. Standards at the end of both key stages, as shown in the 2003 end of key stage national assessment tests, are similar to the national average for the subject. This is not the same as at the time of the last inspection when standards were well above. Since 1999 test results have fluctuated according to the number of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6.

Inspection findings suggest that standards in science are showing improvement on last year's results but are not as high as those reported in the previous inspection.

61. Teaching is good overall, with some lessons being very good. In the best lessons teachers rightly place an emphasis on investigations and use of enquiry skills.
62. Science lessons were observed in two infant classes. The previous report judged teaching to be satisfactory for seven year old pupils. Inspection findings this time are that teaching for these infant pupils is good. In a good lesson in Year 2 the lesson was well planned and the activities were well matched to the pupils different levels of ability. More-able pupils were encouraged to organise their own investigations into which of two toy cars would move the furthest. Relationships are good between the pupils and adults. Good classroom management in both classes and the good contribution of learning support assistants (when available) encourages good attitudes and behaviour from the pupils. The analysis of work in Year 2 shows that the pupils have an appropriate understanding of the importance of healthy eating. They have some understanding of forces such as pushing and pulling. Pupils record their work in a variety of ways, for example using tally sheets when investigating favourite foods. Examination of pupils' previous work shows that understanding of some concepts such as changes to materials when they are heated, dissolved, etc is vague. Teachers' marking often does not tell the pupil how to improve or how well they have achieved.
63. All year groups except Year 6 were observed in the junior classes. The teaching was good in most classes and there was some very good teaching. In the best lessons, teachers used a wide range of questioning skills to provide a challenge and built learning on the contribution that the pupils made to the lesson. For example, in a Year 5 lesson where the pupils were considering how to 'get back' the salt and sugar they had dissolved in water, the discussion widened to include desalination plants and the Red Sea. The teacher of this class furthered learning by frequently giving the pupils 'thinking time' before rushing in with an answer. Scrutiny of the work of pupils at 11 years of age shows that standards being achieved by the majority of pupils are in line with or above what is expected nationally. The last inspection reported that pupils' work on scientific processes such as predicting, fair testing and isolating variables in a test situation was undemanding. The subject manager has addressed this by having a whole-school focus on this area of learning. Most pupils are now able to plan an experiment using headings to show what will be tested, how the test will be set up, how the test will be made fair and how the results will be recorded. Each investigation includes the pupil's prediction of the outcome. Teachers' planning shows that areas of the curriculum are covered. The achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language is satisfactory. There was no notable difference between the achievement of boys and girls observed during the inspection.
64. Marking is not always consistent. Looking at the work of Year 6 pupils showed that there was a considerable improvement in the spring term over what was being achieved in the autumn term. Marking in the autumn term was unsatisfactory because it consisted of merely a tick at the end of the piece of work. The new teacher marks very thoroughly, showing the pupil both how well s/he has achieved and how to improve. This has enabled pupils to make great strides in a short time.
65. Literacy skills are promoted well in science. Pupils are encouraged to record for themselves. Those who find it difficult to write information down are assisted. Additional adult help and simplified versions of recording sheets are available to help them complete their tasks. This makes certain that they are fully included. Investigation reports give pupils opportunities to further their literacy skills in a variety of ways. The school is very focused on this aspect of its work. Labelling, list making and research all contribute well to developing these skills further.
66. The leadership and management of science are good. The subject manager has drawn up a comprehensive action plan, which is designed to improve standards. Her analysis of test results and lesson observations has correctly acknowledged areas of strength and weakness. She has targeted investigative science as an area to develop and has put together an assessment

package so that a start can be made on tracking achievement as pupils move through the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff are well trained.
- Since previous inspection a well-equipped ICT suite has been installed.
- Expertise and use of teaching assistants makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
- Links with other subjects are not well enough developed.

Commentary

67. There has been good improvement in the provision of ICT since the last inspection. Previously the lack of resources and poor staff confidence inhibited the teaching and therefore the learning in the subject. These issues have been dealt with well and have increased pupils' achievement in this area of learning.
68. Achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, is good. By the end of Year 2, pupils are able to use a control program to draw two-dimensional shapes and to program a programmable toy to follow a planned path. By Year 6 pupils have learned to use Excel to find information from given data and have used Power Point to present work. The attainment at the end of each key stage is improving. Year on year the attainment of each year group is better than that of the previous year as work is consolidated. A display of work in the ICT suite demonstrates the progress pupils make from year to year. Year 1 pupils used simple programs to explore symmetry in their lessons and Year 5 pupils used a more advanced program to create their own symmetrical patterns.
69. Teachers now have better subject knowledge than at the time of the last inspection. All staff, including teaching support staff, have had training which has boosted their confidence. Support staff contribute significantly to the learning and progress in lessons. A small group of four Year 2 pupils was observed working with a teaching assistant in the computer suite. They were retelling the story of Cinderella using a word bank. They had quality time and benefited from being part of such a small group. An excellent lesson was observed with a Year 6 class. Pupils were beginning to combine their Internet research skills and their presentation skills to produce a page for a children's book. The teacher had previously taught them these skills and during this lesson they were given time to 'test out' what they had learned. The topic they were given to research was *water*, which linked well to their geography topic. Teaching and learning were most successful in lessons where behaviour was well managed and pupils knew what was expected of them and showed respect for each other and showed a commitment to their work.
70. The subject manager has only been in post since January but she has already made a significant start on leading and managing the subject. She has completed a thorough audit of strengths and areas for development throughout the school and the results of this have been fed into the school improvement plan. One area identified for development is the use of ICT in other subjects. This is also an area that was identified during the inspection. Another area is to improve the assessment of pupils' attainment, which is at a very early stage at present.
71. ICT contributes well to pupils' personal development as they learn to share work and respect others work and show respect for the equipment in the suite.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

72. During the inspection use of ICT in other areas of the curriculum was observed, for example, using the web for research in a religious education lesson and programming the programmable toy in a mathematics lesson.

HUMANITIES

Religious Education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory** and pupils attain average standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The locally agreed syllabus for the subject gives a clear structure to lessons and continuity to pupils' learning.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and participate in lessons well contributing their ideas and reflections openly and with confidence.

Commentary

73. The work undertaken by pupils provides a clear reflection of the vision and values of the school and follows the locally agreed syllabus. This provides a clear curriculum plan, which is followed by teachers to provide continuity in learning and ensure pupils achieve as well as possible.
74. Teaching in the lessons seen during the inspection was satisfactory and pupils responded well. In Year 3, the lesson dealt with the topic of Lent and was linked to the idea of being able to say no. When questioned pupils respond well to relate their experiences about using quiet places to think and the difficulties an individual faces in saying no. Older pupils in Year 6 are engaged and committed to their studies of how and why Christians understand and help each other. They respond energetically to requests to research the activities of various organisations that help others and they work co-operatively to support the member of their group who is required to feedback to the whole class. Pupils with special educational needs integrate well into the lesson and make a full contribution to the activity.
75. The assemblies in school provide an appropriate context for the daily act of collective worship. Pupils respond and contribute well and are understanding of the learning needs of others, for example, when a visiting group give an assembly based upon Noah's Ark which uses puppets to tell the story.
76. A new subject manager has taken responsibility for this area of the curriculum and a number of targets have been set for future developments including the fostering of links with other areas of the curriculum.

Geography

Insufficient lessons were seen in geography to make an overall judgement about provision. Scrutiny of pupils' work across the school indicates that standards are satisfactory.

77. Some very good teaching was seen in a **geography** lesson in the mixed Year 4 and 5 class which was about the physical features of the River Severn and the pattern of settlement in the area. Pupils know about meanders being features of the lower part of a river system, canals are man-made and that rivers are less polluted at their source. In this lesson, the skills of pupils were higher than in many schools.

History

Insufficient lessons were seen in history to make an overall judgement about provision. A scrutiny of teachers' lesson planning and pupils' books indicate that standards are satisfactory.

78. In a Year 2 **history** lesson an interesting approach was taken to encourage further thought and investigation about space exploration while the whole school benefited from a performance about the Tudor period from a visiting theatre group.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

79. Work in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education was sampled. Two lessons were seen in physical education. No lessons were seen in art, design and technology and music. It is therefore not possible to make a firm judgement about provision in these subjects. A scrutiny of planning and discussions with subject leaders suggest that standards are at least satisfactory and similar to those of the previous inspection in art, music and design and technology. In physical education, indications are that by Year 6 standards in dance are above expectations, as previously reported.

80. In **physical education** one lesson with Year 6 was observed. Teaching was excellent because it was well planned. It enabled all pupils to take part in activities to develop their understanding of movement in time to music. The school is fortunate to have two outdoor swimming pools, which are used during the summer term and during the remainder of the year they use the pool at a local secondary school. There is a well-supported swimming club, which meets once a week after school. Swimming is a strength of the curriculum. Provision for extra-curricular sport is good.

81. Pupils were seen in assembly and hymn practice enjoying their singing and working well at learning a new song. A Year 2 teacher led the hymn practice and encouraged and refined pupils' skills as they practised. This helped them achieve a good standard. A specialist **music** teacher is employed to teach all classes on Fridays.

82. Lesson planning shows that there is a satisfactory coverage of **design and technology**. The small amount of work on display around the school is of at least a satisfactory standard. There is currently no subject manager.

83. **Art** displays around the school and work in pupils' individual art portfolios show a satisfactory standard. Year 2 pupils created pleasing pictures of trees at sunset using a blow paint technique. They also learn to use different shades of the same colour and at present are working on the willow pattern design using small brushes to paint the detail on paper plates. Famous artists such as Matisse inspire other artwork. Year 5 pupils have successfully designed containers for a treasured possession. They used a design sheet that includes comments for how their work is progressing. They have also created a display for the library of well-illustrated cautionary tales using different media. This display shows some high quality work.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Provision is **very good** and is a strong feature of the school's work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This is taught well across the school and is reflected in pupils' attitudes to one another and their very good relationships with teachers and other adults.

Commentary

84. The school places a high priority on pupils' personal development and social learning and the teaching of personal, social and health education is an integral part of the life of the school. Consequently, pupils are confident to express their feelings in a trusting and secure environment. The curriculum includes a wide range of relevant topics that are planned to build pupils' skills and knowledge as they move through the school.
85. In the lessons observed, teaching was very skilled and sensitive so that pupils learned in a warm, but challenging atmosphere that ensured that they all took part. Teachers are confident in their teaching of this sensitive area with timetabled sessions and its inclusion within subjects; for example, in science, the importance of a healthy diet and in physical education lessons the effect of exercise on their bodies.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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